

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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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 STORY OF THE WHIPPLES

By Myrla Raymundo

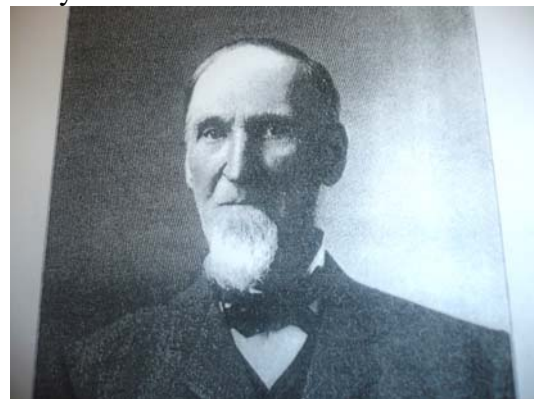


Gilbreth F. Whipple

One quiet Friday morning at the Union City Historical Museum, while I was busy doing historical records and my husband and co-worker Ray was doing the museum artifacts, a very nice gentleman entered the museum and said, "Hi, I am a Whipple."

"Oh my God," I said, 'I'd been waiting for this moment that a descendant of a historical figure should come in at the door and provide me with very important pieces of history."

And here he is at last, Gilbreth F. Whipple, coming from a far away place called Pacific Grove, California in the Monterey Peninsula. And so here is the story.



John Whipple 1

John Whipple 1 came all the way from New York to try his luck in farming in Union City in 1860.

Later, John Whipple's brother, Samuel Whipple and his children came from back east to join him in Union City. Among them was Rufus Whipple, Samuel Whipple's son and the great-grandfather of Gilbreth F. Whipple.

John Whipple II, son of Rufus Whipple, was the grandfather of Gilbreth F. Whipple. John Whipple II and James Logan, another historical figure, both died in an accident in 1932.

John Whipple III is the father of Gilbreth F. Whipple. He worked for the Holy Sugar Factory from 1940 through 1948. He passed away in 2003 in San Jose, California.

So here comes Gilbreth F. Whipple, the living descendant of John Whipple I. He said he will be attending the 50th year reunion of his classmates from Washington High School.

Gilbreth was born on October 8, 1940 in San Jose, California. He came back to Union City when he was 5 years old. He attended Niles Elementary School in Fremont and graduated from Washington High School in 1958. He went to UC Berkeley and studied Latin American studies. He learned Spanish and taught bilingual education.

He started working at the Whipple Ranch from a very early age until age 20. He drove tractors, worked on irrigation systems, and checked cards on tomatoes picked. He worked with a lot of Filipinos and Mexicans in the area. He learned their languages too.

His sister Laurel Whipple lives in San Jose and has two boys, Joseph and John. Many of the Whipple family ancestors

who passed away are buried at the Chapel of the Chimes Cemetery in Hayward, except for Gilbreth F. Whipple's parents, John Whipple III and Josephine M. Whipple.

<p>UNION CITY'S NAME CAME FROM WHAT OR WHERE?</p>
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Around 150 years ago, a town was located on the banks of Alameda Creek, near a point known as Devil's Elbow.

In 1850, settlers John and William Horner built an eight-block settlement in this town and called it Union City. Now part of the Alvarado District, the town's name came from the first steamship that was used to carry produce from the agricultural lands in present-day Alameda County to San Francisco and the world. That ship, owned by the Horners, was called "The Union."

The steamer was built in New Jersey and was brought in sections aboard a ship, which sailed around Cape Horn.

Many people, however, think the name of Union City came from the merger of the Decoto and Alvarado districts when the city was founded.

When incorporated in 1959, so many people did not even know anything about the ship. It's just the natural thinking when two cities got together, they think it is the union of the two cities.

So, where did the name Union City come from? It could either be from the steamer's name or the union of two cities. What do you think?

**TOM KITAYAMA – LONG TIME
MAYOR OF UNION CITY**

By Myrla Raymundo



Former Union City Mayor Tom Kitayama occupied the positions of planning commissioner, councilman and mayor of Union City for 32 years and has made the greatest contribution in the history of Union City. He was the biggest force behind the formation of a new East Bay City – now Union City, California.



When California began to experience incredible growth, Southern Alameda County developed quickly and the cities of Fremont, Newark and Hayward began to eye the townships of Union City, New Haven, Alvarado and Decoto for potential inclusion into their city boundaries. To preclude such an event, a citizens committee composed of Tom

Kitayama, John Ratekin, Oscar Dowe, Kenneth Garcia, Joseph Lewis and Elvin Rose, was formed. They petitioned for incorporation, and on January 13, 1959, the City of Union City came into being, binding together the four areas. Tom Kitayama became its first mayor. He was the first Japanese-American to hold public office in California, just 14 years after the end of World War II.

Tom Kitayama will go down in the annals of history of the City of Union City as the mayor who has the longest political career in Union City. He had a 32-year political career, and was a successful businessman with 43 years as the head of a multimillion-dollar empire growing and wholesaling fresh-cut flowers.

Tom Kitayama moved his family to California in 1947. He and his wife Heidi and three brothers bought land in Alvarado in 1950. They reared six children. His son Tom Kitayama Jr. died in 1983 in a hang gliding accident and a daughter, Susan, died in infancy in 1953 due to cirrhosis of the liver (the tubules in her bile duct were not developed and she had a cerebral hemorrhage.)

Today, the 15 square-mile city is growing rapidly as new residents and companies wishing to expand or relocate in the Bay Area turn to the attractive environment of the City of Union City.

Tom and Heidi moved to their new home on Cherry Blossom Way and contemplated the progress of the little town that he once managed and administered. He retired in 1991 and enjoyed his favorite past times, fishing and stamp collecting. He traveled with Heidi everywhere, attended the Lion's

Club events, kept active as a member of the County Fair Board, and worked on different committees at Washington Hospital in Fremont and other county activities. Although he was troubled with the adult form of Muscular Dystrophy, he was able to drive which enhanced his retirement life. He still followed the politics of Union City and was still very much concerned; he sometimes helped in city events and kept in touch with the people of Union City.

Tom Kitayama, once dubbed the “King of Carnations”, was instrumental in the growth of Union City, has an elementary school named after him, and had seen his nursery transformed into a beautiful residential community. He was amazed with the big changes in the city such as Union Landing, the new homes in Decoto, the new schools and, most of all, the big businesses that came to the city as offshoots of the sprawling Silicon Valley.

His family now enjoys the fruits of his labor from when he and his brothers first established the business that now has plants in Watsonville and Colorado, as well as fourteen wholesale outlets throughout the country.

Tom Kitayama, Union City’s first mayor, is very much part of Union City’s history. He passed away in 2007. He left a legacy behind him, the City of Union City that was incorporated in 1959.

Tom Kitayama will always be remembered by the people in Union City.

Long Time Alvarado Resident

By Myrla Raymundo



Stanley Anderson

Stanley Anderson heard about the Union City Historical Museum and came to the Museum to visit. He brought with him artifacts and old newspaper clippings about old Alvarado. He said the Museum is the proper place to deposit all the mementos of the past.

Stanley, born on August 12, 1934, and wife Shirley lived at 30941 Watkins Street in old Alvarado. He attended Alvarado School and graduated from Fremont High School.

He worked for 42 years at Federal Pacific and retired in 1996. He had a short stint with the U. S. Army from 1995 through 1997. He was assigned in Vietnam and Korea that time.

He remembers the Ratekin house, now called the Filipino Community of Alvarado and Vicinity. He also reminisces about taking the bus in front of the old Post Office in Alvarado. He remembers the old Chinatown just behind where the Museum is situated right now.

Thank you Stanley for sharing your part of the history of Union City.

OUR EARLY RESIDENTS

Ben Matsumoto - Ben Matsumoto, well known in Union City because of his grocery store on Smith Street, was born in Alvarado. So were his sisters, Grace Handa, Alice Motozaki, and Dorothy Matsumoto. He said that there was a one-armed bandit in there. In 1924 the boarding house burned down.

Ben Matsumoto remembers there was a store on Smith Street, where the park is now. Across the street from his store was a whole string of gambling dens and a Chinatown. People used to come out from Oakland in the evenings after work. Then, in the mid 1920's or so, the town decided to clean out Chinatown so they vacated the prostitution and gambling house and burned the buildings down.

Peter Pinto - Peter Pinto's father set up a shoe repair shop. Farmers gathered around a pot-bellied stove to talk and play cards while their boots and harnesses were mended

Genevieve Dutra - The Alvarado Post Office opened in 1877 as a third class office and had, as its first postmaster, Edwin A. Richmond. Mrs. Genevieve Dutra served as postmistress from 1936 to 1950.

Mae Santos - Mrs. Mae Santos was born on Leevee Street in Alvarado. Her husband, Antone Santos, opened the U-Auto Stop Service Station in Alvarado on the corner of Horner and Vallejo Streets in 1927. Mrs. Santos owned the house on Horner Street, which was likely, the second Alvarado School. Mrs. Santos' daughter Alvina Brune worked part-time at the old Post Office,

which was located behind the bank on Smith and Union City Blvd. Then she worked full-time at the new post office (opened on Nov 1, 1954) on Smith Street in Alvarado. She later became the postmaster and retired from the Post Office in 1981.

I.V. Ralph -The Bank of Alvarado was founded in 1906 with I.V.Ralph as president. He was succeeded by August May II in 1908. In 1910, the May family changed the name of the institution to the Bank of Alameda County, with a branch in Irvington. In 1916, the Bank of Niles was purchased by the Bank of Alameda County to form a third branch. August May Jr. remained president of the bank until his death in August 1939. The bank was then merged into a larger chain banking system

George Henry Oaks - The Alvarado "Pioneer" newspaper was founded in 1925 by George Henry Oaks. His son, George P. Oaks continued publishing the newspaper until 1946. George Oaks bought the Centerville News from Miles Smith and merged it with the Township Register, which was owned by Stuart Nixon, to form the News Register. The News Register would become the Argus, an ANG newspaper

John Ralph - The first volunteer fire department had been formed in 1905 with John Ralph as chief. Its equipment consisted of a hose reel and a hose truck to transport it. In 1940, the Alvarado Fire District was enlarged and a pumper was purchased later. A brick headquarters building was built on Smith Street and a second truck purchased. Anthony Vargas became the fire chief.

OUR EARLY BUSINESSES



Alvarado Hotel - The Alvarado Hotel, located on Smith Street, was originally built in 1863 by Henry Smith. The hotel, owned by Robert Adair in 1910, was the center of the Alvarado community, serving as a town square where folks gathered to visit. It was later owned and operated by Fred Paredes.

Riverside Hotel -The Riverside Hotel, built by Farley B. Granger around 1861, was once located on New Haven Street close to the train depot. The hotel catered to rail travelers since it was less than 50 yards from the train station. It was a place of “refreshment, physical and spiritual,” uplifting.

U-Auto Stop Service Station – This station, owned by Antone Santos, was built in 1927. It sold gasoline for three companies, Shell Oil Co., General and Richfield. In 1928, it became the first station in Washington Township to sell only Shell gasoline. The original station was demolished in 1961 and a new one was built at the same location and was closed in 1978 after 50 years

F. C. Harvey & Co. - The F. C. Harvey & Co. store was on Smith Street in Alvarado. Sam Dinsmore of Alvarado worked for Fred C. Harvey. When Fred

C. Harvey died, Dinsmore took over the store. The building is now known as Bronco Billy’s Pizza Parlor.

Hellwig Brothers’ Butcher Shop – This butcher shop located on Union City Blvd, in Old Alvarado, was known all over the Washington Township. Hellwig meat was consumed all over the area.



Silver Dollar Saloon - Mr. Antone Santos was the owner and bartender of the Silver Dollar Saloon, located in Alvarado.

Odd Fellows Hall
The Odd Fellows Hall, built in 1864 as the Armory for the Alvarado Guards, was located on Smith Street across from F. C. Harvey & Co. On September 23, 1864, the guards held a grand opening ball known as the “greatest social event of the year.” The building became the home of the Alvarado Eagles. It was used as a dance hall and a theater.

Alvarado Station – A depot was built in Alvarado close to where Smith Street crosses the railroad tracks. A spur line ran to the Alvarado Sugar Beets Factory (Holly Sugar Factory) to haul beets for refining and for taking the sugar to market.

NEW IN UNION CITY

The developments in a city will eventually become the history of that city. This recording of new developments are important for the continuation of our city's history.



Alvarado Square in the Old Alvarado district.



The new St. Anne Catholic Parish on Dyer/Cabello Street.



The new Union City Fire Department.



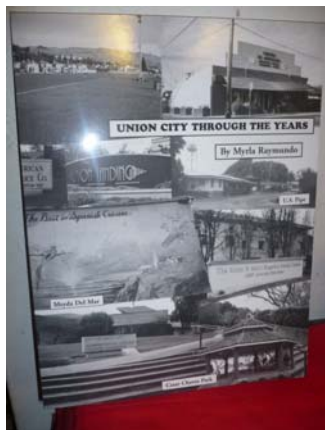
The Nakamura Clinic



1st United Services Credit Union

“UNION CITY THROUGH THE YEARS”

by Myrla Raymundo



Local author and historian *Myrla Raymundo* has written a careful and detailed accounting of the very first beginnings of the community known as Union City. She has described the significant people, industries, events and places that made up the culture of Union City. People such as Ezra Decoto, E. H. Dyer, John M. Horner, and Henry Smith all belong to the heritage that can be seen in Union City today. Myrla Raymundo believes that every resident, especially the young people, should be exposed to the rich history of his or her community.

Also included in the book are the recent happenings and development in the City of Union City, such as Union Landing, the commercial and business establishments, the big and beautiful homes, and the people that now comprise Union City.

The book is available at the Union City Historical Museum, 3841 Smith Street, Union City.

“UNION CITY ORAL HISTORY”
by Myrla Raymundo

Local author and historian *Myrla Raymundo* speaks about her new book “**Union City Oral History**”, which will be published soon.

A lot of people have changed Union City in many ways. They were the first people in Union City, the pioneers, the residents, the builders, the business people.

This book tells about the early people who came to Union City. This book also tells stories of the people who are continuously forming the course of history in our city.

This book yields a bounty of information on these people whose lives are chronicled on these pages. These are the people who inspired us with their words, their deeds and their sheer guts. By writing their life stories, I hoped to discover how they overcame obstacles, how they conquered their fears, and how they accomplished what they did.

Their biographies are more than just a list of facts. They are a window into their personal characters.

The book will be available at the Union City Historical Museum, 3841 Smith Street, Union City.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Teresita "Tessie" Gatan

The Union City Historical Museum officers and directors are working for the continuation of the progress of the Museum.

The Museum continues to record and preserve the history of Union City, continue with the strategic plan started by the Founder/CEO, which would be the end result of the objective and purpose of the Union City Historical Museum.

Please help us in being a docent, working for a special project, or helping with fundraisers.

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

I would like to thank all the officers, members and volunteers of the Union City Historical Museum and the community for their valuable contributions to the Museum....*Tessie Gatan*

BOOKS IN THE MUSEUM

There are numerous books available at the Museum.

Miles Price "Union City Scrapbook"
Miles Price "Union City Incorporation"
Myrla Raymundo "Union City
Through the Years"
Early Glimpse of Union City

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.

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.

FOUNDER'S NOTES



Tom Kitayama and five others petitioned for incorporation of the City of Union City on January 13, 1959. That was when some cities began to eye the townships of Union City, New Haven, Alvarado and Decoto for potential inclusion into their city boundaries.

Let's review the happenings during that very important year of 1959.

January 26, 1959 - The City of Union City council duties began in the Alvarado Fire Department building, now the Union City Historical Museum– Joseph Seaone Jr., Joseph Lewis, Tom Kitayama, John Ratekin and Oscar Dowe. Tom Kitayama was unanimously elected mayor of Union City by the City Council. Union City operates under a “Council-Manager” form of government.

May 26, 1959 - The City of Union City hired its first Fire Chief, Kenneth Garcia.

The Fire Protection Districts of Alvarado and Decoto merged and became an integral part of the Emergency Services for the City of Union City. Under the direction of Chief Kenneth Garcia, the Fire Department expanded and the new fire station in the central district became a reality. In 1984, the antiquated station

in the Alvarado District was replaced with a new multi-engine facility.

September 22, 1959 – The City of Union City leased its first City Hall at 309 H Street.

The following were the Union City Mayors from 1959 to present:

1959, Tom Kitayama
1960, John Ratekin
1961, Oscar Dowe
1962, Tom Kitayama
1963, John Ratekin
1964, Willard Davis
1965, Irv Williams
1966, Bernie Morales
1967, Bernie Morales
1968, Leo Alvelais
1969, Tom Kitayama
1970, Manuel Garcia
1971, Henry Franco
1972, Don Miller
1973, Don Miller
1974, Tom Kitayama
1991, Dick Oliver
1993, Mark Green

Gertrude Corchero was Union City's City Treasurer for 24 years.

October 22, 1959 – The local newspaper Union City Leader first edition came out. Dick Folger was the publisher.

As Union City celebrates its fiftieth birthday as a City in 2009, the Union City 50th Anniversary Committee is gearing up to year-long festivities and events. *Let us all join in the celebration!*

Myrla Raymundo



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Founder/CEO**

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