

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.

NEW ITEMS IN THE MUSEUM



Election Files

The museum has compiled material from the earliest of times to the latest elections in Union City, the Tri City, Alameda County and the United States.

We have posters, election brochures, campaign material and even election buttons.

If you need to know about past elections, please visit the Union City Historical Museum.

Materials from other Museums

If you're looking for materials about the different museums in the Tri-City area and Alameda County, the Union City Historical Museum has them. They are filed in binders and can be browsed through by visitors interested in learning about the other museums in the area.

Old Newspaper Clippings

News starting from 1939 through 1972 are now copied from old newspapers donated by Union City residents and

preserved and compiled in large white binders. The newspapers are:

ALVARADO PIONEER

The ALVARADO PIONEER was published weekly in Alvarado, Alameda County, California, Home of Holly Sugar Corp and Leslie Salt Company. George H. Oakes was Editor and Publisher.

A subscription was \$1.00 per year. NEWSPAPER OF LEGAL STATUS-by Judge Harries and entered as second-class matter March 26th, 1947, at the Post Office at Alvarado, California, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Come and read through it and past memories might come flooding back in your mind. There are pictures too.

THE LEADER

The Union City Leader was an independent weekly newspaper published Fridays, and entered with second class mailing privileges at the Post Office, Union City, California. It was decreed a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court, Alameda County on July 20, 1961.

The subscription rate by mail was \$4.00 per year and the price per copy was 10 cents. Richard L. Folger was the Publisher, Peter Owens, Editor and Larry Orozco, Sports Editor.

Know the happenings during that time and you will know the history of your city.

Photos Of School Kids

The teachers of the Union City elementary schools take their third graders to the Museum for a tour and presentation of Union City history.

We take pictures of each class and put them in white binders for guests to see. We have pictures of these kids since 2001. We also preserve their thank you letters and posters.

Union City Council Meetings

The City Council meetings are filed in white binders chronologically. If you want to know about their discussions, please read through it. Stay up to date with the happenings in your city.

Union City Churches

Union City boasts of many churches that are helping to shape the well being of our residents and enhance the quality of life in our city. We compiled stories and news clippings about the following churches:

- Apostolic Assembly
- Assembly of God
- Baptist, American
- Baptist, Southern
- Brown Temple
- Hillview Baptist
- Primera Iglesia Bautista
- Ebenezer
- Buddhist Church
- Our Lady of the Rosary Church
- St. Anne Catholic Church.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

Published by the **ALVARADO
PIONEER, August 4, 1939**

Holly Sugar Starts Next Week Here

Ben Koontz, Superintendent of Holly Sugar Corporation at Alvarado, announces that the Sugar Mill will start operations in a week. The mill is in fine condition and he plans a fine season similar to last year's.

Master Mechanic Jorgensen has charged of the mechanical operations of the plant. Three shifts will operate-that means continuous work, night and day.

Beets will be used next week not only from Alvarado but also from the Sacramento Valley -by the trainloads.

The head office for the Holly Sugar Corporation plants in this part of California is at Stockton. Several officials from the Stockton main office were over here this week and commented on the fine work of the staff. General Superintendent Ziegler divides his time between the Holly plants in Tracy and Alvarado.

MORE HISTORY.....

Union City

Union City today was a combination of three towns hurriedly created to cater to and earn from the rapidly expanding population of a tent city that grew to be San Francisco.

The first of the three towns was laid out by South County pioneer **John Horner** in 1851.

Horner was a farmer, who came west to try his hand at a number of ventures and failed at each of them, except farming, where he was very successful. In 1850, he was farming the rich bottomlands around Alameda Creek, and like the other farmers of the area, bringing his harvest to the mouth of the creek for shipment across the bay. The steamer he purchased was the "Union" which that year began a career of ferrying produce across the bay. The steamer gave Horner's little town, and today's Union City, its name.

Henry Smith, the storekeeper at the Mission San Jose, bought property a half mile east of Union City on Alameda Creek. It was an excellent location as a shipping port.

Smith was elected to the three-year old California Legislature in 1852. And after, more than a year of political wrangling, pushed a bill through the assembly creating a new County of Alameda, the 28th county in the state. As county seat, the investment minded Smith proposed and got, his own town of Alvarado.

In 1870, the **Decoto brothers** built out a town beside the tracks of the Central Pacific Railroad on property they had farmed for three years. The town of Decoto was founded to take advantage of a key-shipping route.

The Decotos led by the eldest brother, Ezra, planted 27,000 evergreen trees to adorn the town site and soon several warehouses, stores and eventually industry moved in to Decoto.

Today's Union City is a combination of these three towns.

The First City Council

The first City Council was comprised of local nursery owner, Tom Kitayama (mayor); Pacific States Steel purchasing agent, Oscar Dowe; retired oil man, Joseph Lewis; maintenance mechanic, George Seoane Jr.; and Holly Sugar Plant Superintendent, John Ratekin. This council and more specifically Mayor Kitayama fueled the spectacular growth of modern-day Union City

When Union City was incorporated in 1959, a one-room building at the back of the Alvarado Fire Station, now the Union City Historical Museum, served as its first City Hall.

The First Police Department

The first Police Department was on H Street and Decoto Road, later it moved Whipple and Central Ave. In April 21, 1979, the Police Department moved to a new location in the Civic Center at Alvarado-Niles Road. In July 2000, Chief Randy Ulibarri was sworn in as the new Police Chief.

The Alvarado Fire Station

In 1943, the corps of firefighters assigned to the Alvarado Fire Station was an "all volunteer" company until 1964. During that period, the Fire Chief (Mr. Elvin Rose) lived approximately

one block away from the station, where he lives to this day. To contact the Fire Department, a citizen would call the number assigned to the firehouse, which would ring at the Chief's house. He would then push a button to activate the siren on the rooftop of the firehouse, thus summoning the volunteer firefighters. Another method existed that the citizens could use: a button located on the front of the firehouse could be pushed to activate the siren on the rooftop.

In 1964, Union City had enough firefighters to assure that the Alvarado Station was manned full time by city staff, so the volunteer department was disbanded. The firehouse was closed in 1984, and remained empty for several years, until a Union City Police Officer rented it from the city to use as his residence for a few years. When the officer moved away from Union City, the building remained empty until the Union City Historical Museum occupied it in 2001.

The Union City Drive In Theater

After 32 years, the Union City Drive In Theater closed in 1998. The event was marked by a farewell gala billed as "The Last Picture Show," showing classics including the 1957 movie "I was a Teenage Frankenstein."

Closing the Union City Drive-In was like destroying the American dream. Watching a movie in a car under the stars in Union City is now history. A mix of high land prices and commercialization drove the Union City Drive-In Theater out.

RECENT HAPPENINGS....



At the City of Union City Council Meeting of February 12, 2008, the city council had Proclamations Recognizing the 2007 Employee of the Year Recipients: Alison Buenaventura, Public Works Maintenance/Leisure Services/Transit, Cassie Castain, General Government and Anthony Hansen, Public Safety. Congratulations to all of you.



Former Volunteer Fire Chief Elvin (Al) Rose posed for a picture at the recently changed name of the Old Alvarado Park. Al Rose fought hard to get back the name Old Alvarado Park from the name Cesar Chavez Park.

VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM



David Emanuel Pitta

Officer Mendez of the Union City Police Department informed David of the Union City Historical Museum. He urged David to visit the Museum to tell his story to this Editor. David was born in the Decoto District at the corner of 3rd and E Street. He has a lot of vivid memories of both Alvarado and Decoto. He is a member of the AME Church on 2nd and E Streets.



Mark Leonard

Mark Leonard, Community Development Director of the City of Union City, was instrumental in giving the Museum two window display cases at the Quisnos Sub Store on Alvarado Square at Union City Blvd. Please visit the Museum historic display when you pass by the Alvarado Square development. Thank you, Mark.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Ray and Myrla Raymundo celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary last February 9, 2008 with Father Geoffrey Baraan giving the blessing at St. Anne's Catholic Church.



Friends and relatives attended the reception at Kapistahan Express in Union City. The officers and members of the Union City Historical Museum were among the attendees. It was an occasion to remember.



Helen Cabiles is Treasurer of the Union City 50th Anniversary and Chairperson of the New Year's Eve Gala. Helen is also Union City Human Relations Commissioner.

The **Union City 50th Anniversary** meets every third Monday at 7 pm at the Tropics Mobile Home Park, 33000 Almaden Blvd, Union City to make plans for a very important event in Union City, the 50th Anniversary of our city. Everybody is welcome to attend and help in the planning stages.



Museum Director Dom Filardo with wife Bessie at the **Seniors' Thanksgiving Dinner** at the Rugierri Senior Center. Dom is also the City's Senior Commissioner



The **Friends of the Union City Library** helps in funding the activities of the Union City Library. Seated: Diane Cisneros, Vice President, Ethel Alt, Secretary/Treasurer, and Myrla Raymundo is President. Standing: Sadie Khan, volunteer and Mira Geroy, Union City Library Manager.



Museum President Tessie Gatan and Museum Founder and CEO Myrla Raymundo posed for a picture at the bust of former Mayor Tom Kitayama at the Union City Civic Center.



Union City Fire Department staff Ty Wilson stands in front of the old Alvarado fire truck, which was transferred in the back area of the Museum. The fire truck was the original fire truck used by the Volunteer firemen headed by Volunteer Fire Chief Elvin (Al) Rose.



Josephine and Hugh McNamara

Hugh is our loyal and tireless Museum Treasurer who always cares about how the Museum business is run.

Josephine is always ready to help in every event in the Museum.

New Development in Union City



If you pass by Union City Blvd., you'll see rows of beautiful homes developed by the Pinn Brothers. The homes are located at 30643-30933 Union City Blvd. in Union City.



This is the plaza with a beautiful state of the art presentation of depicting the whole town.

Union City Historical Museum Window Display

The City of Union City gave the Museum the use of two windows at the Quiznos Sub Store at this new development for display of Museum artifacts. Please visit the store and you will see the nice display created by our member Josephine McNamara.



This beautiful housing development at Alvarado Square in historic Alvarado district was the site of the First County Court House.



Alvarado was the first Seat for Alameda County in 1853-1855. First County Court House was on the second floor of Smith's store. Today the plaque of the First Court is located at the Alvarado Square.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Teresita "Tessie" Gatan

We're now into our 9th month of leadership of the Museum. The leaders are working diligently to adhere and to follow the objectives of the Union City Historical Museum.

We are now presenting to you a much-improved layout of artifacts, nice presentation of records and photographs and a welcoming atmosphere in the Museum.

With the assistance of our fundraising chairperson, we plan to come up with some fundraising ideas to generate the funds to keep the Museum going.

I enjoin our members to participate in the Museum by being docents, working on special projects, helping with fundraisers and writing articles for the Newsletter.

We need volunteers for manning the museum during operating hours. The need for volunteers for this purpose is year-round. As members, your contribution of time will ensure that the

Museum is always operating at its best. We thank you for your help.

The volunteers from Logan High School are doing a good job. They come in and help in the clerical functions of the Museum and also in acting as junior docents. I like to thank them; they are a big help to us.

We need your help in sprucing up our surroundings. This entails removal of weeds and debris from the Museum grounds

Our officers and directors are working hard on their respective committees.

Please continue to support us for the betterment of our Museum. We will continue to work hard.

I am inviting you to tell your friends to join the Union City Historical museum.

As members, they have free admission to the Museum, free use of the Historical Library, a one-year subscription of the Museum Newsletter featuring Union City history, oral history from long time residents and news, and invitations to events and programs.

I extend my thanks to the officers, directors and members who helped us shape the Union City Historical Museum as it is today.

TESSIE GATAN

FOUNDER'S NOTES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM!

February 23, 2008 is the Museum's 7th year.

As we all know, the Union City Historical Museum is dedicated to recording and preserving the history of Union City.

The organization's primary goals are to record an oral history from people living in the community, identify and encourage preservation of historical buildings and homes and maintain a museum containing artifacts, historical document, and historical books.

By recording the oral history of the people of Union City, we are preserving the most precious gifts of the wisdom and traditions that make up the culture of Union City. The stories of our residents tell us the way people lived.

The artifacts that are displayed in the Museum tell us how the early residents lived. They tell the story of our city.

It is my passion to search for the common thread of the lives of the city's past residents, great leaders and their traditions.

I go to all nooks and crannies in the city doing my research. I click on my digital camera whenever I see old buildings, historic homes and surroundings. Doing this, I find some remnants of the past that tell the story of how people lived in the early years.

I do not overlook the present times. I take pictures of the upscale homes, state-of-the-art commercial and office buildings, the public arts, the roads with thematic signage, and beautiful streetscape. Doing this I preserve the continuing history of our city.

The past then can connect with the present times.

Seven years of collecting history makes the Museum what it is today, a very special and thriving Museum.

The Union City Historical Museum, in its 7th year of existence, will continue to provide services to our residents and visitors from outlying areas and will continue to present history to young minds, to instill in them their culture and heritage.

Please continue to donate artifacts to the Museum, continue to tell your stories to us, continue to help us preserve our historical buildings and homes, and continue to preserve our culture and heritage.

MYRLA RAYMUNDO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Founder/CEO

Officers - July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008

Teresita Gatan, President
Joey Golaw, Jr.-Vice-President
Marina Bamont-Secretary
Hugh McNamara, Treasurer

Directors – July 1, 2006-June 30, 2008

Mike Christ
Miles Price
Rorie Rabuy
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Directors- July 1, 2007- June 30, 2009

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Ben Elias

EDITORIAL BOARD

FY 2007-2008

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.

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.

MUSEUM LIFETIME MEMBERS

Phil & Leila Verzola
John & Cathy Tester
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
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Fernando & Helen Cabiles
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Josephine Pando
Frank, Jr. & Elvamae Borghi
Angelo dela Cruz
Marcos. Jr. & Tessie Gatan
Joey and Vilma Golaw

The book “**UNION CITY THROUGH THE YEARS**” authored by Myrla Raymundo, is available. Call her at (510) 489-0133 if you wish to buy the book about the history of Union City from its beginning to the present.