

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.



**CHRIS VALUCKAS
Recreation Supervisor
Kennedy Center, Leisure Services
By Myrla Raymundo**

The City of Union City now has an accomplished artist and at the same time, a Leisure Services supervisor who help leads others in the department and trains by example.

Chris Valuckas, who is originally from Springfield, Massachusetts, came to California in 1992 to pursue his Theater Degree at Cal State Hayward, now Cal State East Bay. He also lived part of his life in Connecticut.

After college, he worked as a Recreation Specialist for both the City of Union City and the City of Dublin.

Scott Ferries, former Recreation Supervisor in the Leisure Services Department, hired him full time in 1999 as a Programs Coordinator of Special Services in Union City.

When Scott Ferries took a job with the City of Berkeley, Chris took his place. Chris has now been the head of the Kennedy Center Leisure Services for two years now. He has four (4) fulltime

employees and 30 part-time employees. Jill Stavosky is his direct supervisor.

When not busy with work, he does yoga and checks out different sports competitions in Manteca, where he presently resides.

Chris works on a small scale with the Public Arts Review Board and the Sports Advisory Committee. He was staff to the now defunct Union City Arts Council. Chris worked at the Senior Center for 3-1/2 years. His office was at the Ruggieri Senior Center.

He lives in Manteca with his wife Christine and son Lennox, age 1 ½ years old. Chris and Christine tied the knot on a Sleigh Ride in Lake Tahoe on a crispy Christmas Day in 2003. Christine, who is working on a nursing degree, is the daughter of Teresa Medeiros, who also works for the City of Union City.

Chris' mother lives in San Antonio, Texas, and his father lives in Connecticut. His three (3) sisters live in New Hampshire and Connecticut and his brother, in Ohio. Once a year he goes back home to visit.

Asked how he feels about his job at the City of Union City, he said, "I love my job. It is very interesting; there is something new every day, very exciting and never boring." He is part of the Special Needs Program, which he really loves. He had been a coach for this program for ten (10) years now, " I enjoy being with people." He quipped.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS/DIRECTORS

June 2, 2008, is the Union City Historical Museum General Membership Meeting and Election of 2008-2009 Officers and Board of Directors.

If you wish to run for any position, please obtain a Board of Directors application by calling the Museum at (510) 324-3298.

All Museum members are invited to attend the General Membership meeting.

MUSEUM TOURS

Tours are conducted by Museum docents every Thursday and Friday. If you are interested in knowing the history of Union City, please stop by and visit 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.

VISITS TO THE MUSEUM



Union City Fire Inspector Denice Daly visited the Museum and was amazed to see how organized the whole museum is. She is shown with past Fire Chief Al Rose, who gave her a historical tour of the Museum.

and won a seat. He was one of the five Union City Council members who spearheaded the incorporation of Union City in 1959. He was head of the Chamber of Commerce. He worked for the Standard Oil for 43 years.



Stanley and 3 children



STANLEY J. LEWIS

Stanley J. Lewis, age 80, son of Joseph E. Lewis, one of the five first elected to the City Council, visited the Museum with his family.

His father, Joseph E. Lewis, was born in and lived at Driscoll and Mission Blvd. (Mission San Jose.) During those times, he was very active in the community. He worked hard for the city's incorporation by gathering signatures for the incorporation. He ran for councilmen

NEWEST LIFETIME MUSEUM MEMBER



JAMES CELCER

James Celcer joined the Union City Historical Museum in 1999. His father, James Celcer, Sr. was a historical figure in Union City and was a School Board Member for several years.



I. V. Camarillo

I.V. Camarillo, who now resides on Bulmer Street in Union City, was born in Colorado on December 28, 1923.

He moved to the Decoto District in Union City in 1946, and lived at Horner Street in 1950, and back to Bulmer Street in 1979.

He worked at a Nursery in San Leandro and belonged to a labor union. He worked as a carpenter and retired in 1980.



I. V. Camarillo and daughter Alexandra

**TV STATION KPIX CHANNEL 5
COVERAGE**

TV station KPIX Channel 5, came to the Museum last March 13, 2008, and interviewed Myrla Raymundo, Museum CEO, and Al Rose, the last surviving person who saw the wreckage of the crash of Flight 615.

The United Airlines Flight No. 615 crashed in the hills above Union City in the early morning hours of August 24, 1951. All 44 passengers and six crewmembers were killed.

The show will be viewed on Channel 5 in May 2008.



The Museum officers shown with the Channel 5 crew and, Ruben Maness, Producer of the “Eye on the Bay”

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE.....

THE GRAFFITI BUSTER



Wayne Cruz

When Union City acquired the Graffiti Buster, the graffiti in our city was minimized.

Thanks to Wayne Cruz, the Graffiti Buster.

Wayne Cruz is in charge of the “Graffiti Buster.” He drives the white truck and tows a 16-foot trailer around town. A power-wash unit is used for blasting away spray paint. Ten large hoppers are filled with a wide variety of paint colors. A computer unit allows him to match colors. He takes a reading, mixes the paints, and gets a color almost identical to the area to be painted.

THE UNION CITY SKATE PARK

The Union City Skate Park opened on September 14, 2003, after nearly a decade in the making. The 19,400 square-foot, \$531,000 facility at William Cann Civic Center Park, 34009 Alvarado-Niles Road, is the second

largest public skate park in the Bay Area. The park features several ramps, a half pipe, grinding curbs, stairs and a concrete volcano-shaped mound for Bay Area skaters. The park is owned and operated by the city.

DRIGON PARK

There is a Dog Park in Union City. It opened in 2003. It is located at Seventh Street and Mission Boulevard. It is a real treat, not only for dogs, but also for their happy owners. The park was named after Union City’s first police dog. This is a place where dogs are allowed to run around off-leash, exercise and interact with other dogs. Owners don’t have to worry about their pet running away or endangering and annoying other people.

BUST OF FORMER MAYOR TOM KITAYAMA

There is now a bust of former Union City Mayor Tom Kitayama at the entrance of the Union City Civic Center. This is to honor Tom Kitayama, who had been our mayor for many years.



THE ALVARADO HOTEL STORY

By Myrla Raymundo



As you drive through Union City, you will notice a historical building on the corner of Union City Blvd. and Smith Street.

It used to be the Alvarado Hotel or the Alvarado Hilton, as it was popularly known.

Fernando Paredes and wife Delores Paredes bought the hotel in 1939, about 11 years after he immigrated to the area from Spain. He spent a lot of money in remodeling it. It was a major move for one who some years before had started out with a five-stool hamburger restaurant across the street.

The remodeling job left the building, said to have been relocated in the late 1800s by horse and wagon from the salt works, hardly a shadow of its former self. The frame, gabled building with its rambling veranda became a flat-topped, stucco structure decorated with wrought iron balconies.

Everybody, it seems, came to the Alvarado Hotel at one time or another. Senators, judges, farmers, truck drivers,

policemen, executives, construction workers, and kids, doctors, mayors and transients, but mostly men. Some just for coffee and all they can eat.

It was Fernando's tradition that made the restaurant such a popular spot. And it was Fernando's tradition that has led to its demise. The Alvarado Hotel eventually closed its doors.

"He fed too many too well for the price he charged." the younger Paredes said. "My father spoiled all those people. He just enjoyed feeding people. We had trouble with him in the last few years. He just was not making any profits and we could not get him to raise his prices."

Fernando Paredes has three sons, Tony, Fred and Pete.

Pete, who lives in Oregon, read all about the Union City Historical Museum on the Internet and decided to call this Editor. He told a lot of stories about his life in Union City and sent a lot of pictures and news clippings.

Fred, who lives in Southern California, also called this Editor and also gave a lot of pictures and news clippings.

Doris Paredes, Tony's widow, still lives in Union City and also connected with this Editor. She had a lot of stories to tell. Doris has been singing in the St. Anne Church choir for quite some time.

It is so nice to hear from the early residents of Union City and hear their stories. They were the pioneers who helped change Union City to what it is today.

INTERESTING PLACES IN UNION CITY

Let me take you and remind you of nice places to visit in Union City.

SDES

The SDES (Sociedade Divino Espirito Santo de Alvarado) is located at 30846 Watkins Street in Old Alvarado.

I was able to talk with Gil Lima at SDES long time ago and he gave me a tour. I was impressed at the front hall of the building. I saw pictures of past queens: to name a few: Queen Hazel Rodrick (1926) and Queen Madeline Dutra Soares (1931). There are also little queens.

Every year, SDES holds the Portuguese Holy Ghost Festa at SDES of Alvarado in Union City.

A past newspaper article shows former queen Mikaela Silva, 7 years old, and Queen Christina Vargas, 7, both Union City, as Silva hands over the crown as part of the festa.

Almost every Portuguese-American girl dreams of being queen at her local Holy Ghost festa. The crown, the crowds, the velvet capes, and of course, the blessing of the Holy Spirit, are enough to awaken any young lady's inner princess.

The Holy Ghost Festival is a 600-year-old Portuguese Catholic tradition, but today's California festa mixes old-world Catholicism with plenty of American flair.

The original festa sprouted from the religious custom of making a promise to

the Holy Spirit: a spiritual kind of IOU. One asks for divine help under the condition that when the help comes, one will do something good for the community.

Every year, SDES in Union City celebrate with a parade and queens, lots and lots of good food and gift booths.

Dry Creek Cottage

Dry Creek Cottage, a small summer cottage with a large garden, sits just off Mission Blvd. at the end of Whipple Road. The garden, along with a large parcel of 60 acres hidden in the Union City hills for nearly 100 years, was named after the stream with S-shaped curves throughout the four acres of landscaped grounds. The land on which the cottage now sits used to be owned by Jonas B. Clark and was used as picnic ground during the late 1800s. The gala event of the year during pioneer times was May Day, celebrated at the picnic grounds. In 1884, August May, Sr. bought the land and named it Dry Creek Ranch.

After so many years of being hidden, the Dry Creek Cottage is now open to visitors.

The Masonic Home

The Masonic Home, standing majestically in the Decoto hills opened in March 1899 and the first residents were 21 men and women. It is the home of residents ages 60 and up and is licensed by State Department as a continuing care facility.

It is now open to visitors.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Teresita "Tessie" Gatan

If you have not visited the Union City Historical Museum, please come.

You will see historical things, read a lot of interesting historical facts and enjoy the tour provided by our docents.

Children, in their tour, learn local history. Groups from different Board and Care Homes enjoy the presentation of history. Researchers come and do their research in the many binders that contain the history of our city.

Our officers and directors man the Museum and are working on their respective committees.

The volunteers from Logan High School are doing a great job. They come in and help in the clerical functions of the Museum and also in acting as junior docents.

Again, 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 will be at its best.

The officers and directors would like to thank the Union City Police Department for responding quickly on our call when the Museum was burglarized recently.

We also want to thank the Public Works Director for fixing the broken window right away.

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

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



It is with pleasure that I thank the community for recognizing that there is now a Museum in Union City.

At the opening day of the Museum seven years ago, my speech was, “The spirits up there are rejoicing. Now we can see them in pictures and we remember them. We thank these pioneers who paved the way for all of us.” To name a few, they are:

John Horner, with his brother William, shipped crops netting almost \$100,000 and laid out a town eight blocks square in 1851. He located the streets on the south side of the Creek, purchased a small Sacramento River steamer called The Union and named his settlement Union City. John Horner started a general store.

Henry Smith – Smith was a storekeeper and American Alcalde in Mission San Jose, sold his store and moved to Union City near John Horner. Smith built two warehouses at the wharf in Union City. He started a settlement called New Haven, named for his hometown in Connecticut. It was north and east of the great elbow of the creek. Hotels and

eating places sprang up along with saloons and gaming rooms.

Ebenezer H. Dyer - In 1870, Ebenezer H. Dyer, along with his brother Ephraim bought a beet sugar factory, which was built on his property, and turned it into the first successful one in the United States.

Ezra Decoto - He was the first of three brothers to move to Alameda County. After buying, farming, and selling different parcels, he and his two brothers bought 334 acres of land near the right of way of the Western Pacific Railroad. The Decoto Land Company bought 284 acres to develop a railroad town

I feel so elated when I see visitors from Union City and from other cities.

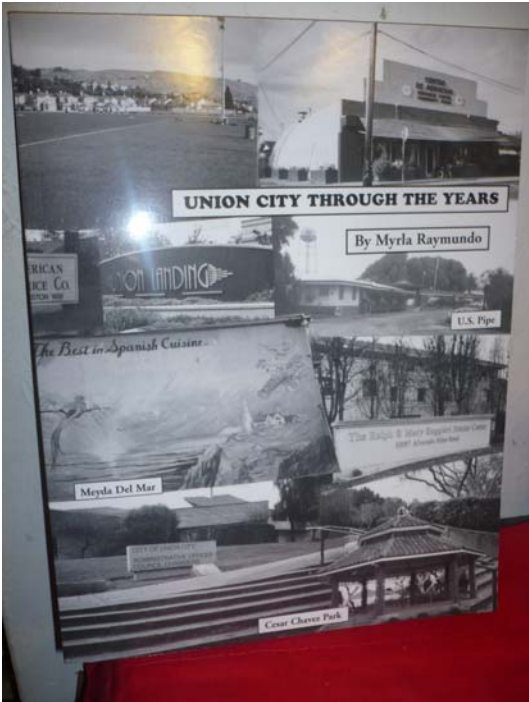
As we all know, the Union City Historical Museum is dedicated to recording and preserving the history of Union City. We will continue with that objective.

The community helps by donating artifacts, old newspapers that contain the history of our city and by telling us their stories.

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

UNION CITY THROUGH THE YEARS by author 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 developments 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.

If you wish to purchase a book, please drop by the Union City Historical Museum, 3841 Smith Street, Union City or call Myrla Raymundo at cell phone 378-6376. The 145-page book was published by Folgers Publishers.

You will be visiting our new website soon!!!

This Union City Historical Museum web site is an introduction to the content and capabilities of the Union City Historical Museum and a welcome invitation for you to visit us. The website contains the following:

About the Museum
The museum, its location, and becoming a member

History of Union City
From the past to the present

Interesting Facts about Union City
The Union City story

Museum Artifacts and displays
Things of the past

Museum Newsletters
Bimonthly issues of the newsletters

Oral History
Stories of people who helped changed Union City

Preservation of Homes and Buildings
Homes and buildings that are designated as historical



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