

UNION CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Founded by Myrla Raymundo, MBA

3841 Smith Street, Union City, California 94587

Three Components

**(1) Museum & Artifacts, (2) Oral History (3) Preservation of Historical Homes
Museum Board meets quarterly at the Museum at 7 PM**

VOL. Twelve NO. 2

September 2010

Visit us at www.unioncitymuseum.com/

**Myrla Raymundo, MBA, Founding Editor/Writer
e-mail: ligfinio.raymundo@sbcglobal.net**

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.

UNION CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Change of Command and Badge Pinning Ceremony of the Union City Fire Department was held July 1, 2010, at Station #1 on Central Ave., Union City.

The theme was Honoring our Past, Present & Future.



The Oath of Office was conducted by Fire Chief Sheldon D. Gilbert.

The Union City community greatly benefits from the decision to become part of the Alameda County Fire Department in many ways.

Becoming part of a regional fire service model provides the community with a greater depth and breadth of resources that were not available in the past. The enhancements to emergency and non-emergency response also result in greatly improved efficiencies and significant cost savings.

**HISTORY OF THE UNION CITY
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

1905 - The Alvarado Fire Department was founded.



1906 – The Alvarado Volunteer Fire Department was founded.

The corps of firefighters assigned to this 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.

1984 – The Alvarado Fire Station closed 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 firehouse remained empty. The firehouse went through several building stages: the engine bays were built in 1943, the front office was built in 1948, and the rear sleeping quarters were built in 1962.

1925 - The Decoto Volunteer Fire Department was formed. The Decoto Fire District was formed as a special district with the purpose of providing fire service to a major portion of the land, which is now part of Union City.

1959 – 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.

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.

1985 - Chief Ken Garcia retired and Chief Mike Vonada was hired.

1994 –The City decided to merge their fire department with the Fremont Fire Department because of financial difficulties.

2000 - The Union City Fire Department was re-established. It was responsible for providing fire and life safety emergency services in the City of Union City.

Chief Chris Maxwell played a major role in re-establishing the Union City Fire Department after the department’s six-year absence in Union City, when the City was served by the City of Fremont. During that time, lots of firefighters had to be hired, equipment had to be purchased and a new fire station built.

Chief Maxwell oversaw four fire stations with 47 uniformed “Line” personnel and a \$7.9 million annual operation budget. The Fire Station are #1 located on Central Ave., Fire Station #2 on Alvarado Blvd., and Fire Station #3 on 10th Street. The newest fire station is Fire Station No. 4 located on Eastin Ct.



Station #1 on Central Ave.

2001 - The Union City Historical Museum occupied the vacant Alvarado firehouse.

2001 - The dedication of the new Fire Station #4 was held. Fire Chief Brian M. Kelly was the Master of Ceremony. The members of the Union City Council performed the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Top of the line features of this new Fire Station are: Lobby, Apparatus Bay for two units, spacious day room, dining room, four dormitories, men’s locker room, turnout room, laundry room, patio with barbecue, health screening room, Captain’s Reception Room, nine storage areas, phone booth and community meeting room.



Station #4 on Eastin Ct.

2005 – Gerald Simon was named Fire Chief.

2006 –Carlos Rodrigues was named Fire Chief.

2010 – Completed merger with the Alameda County Fire Department.

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

Induction of officers/directors of the Union City Historical Museum



Councilmember Carol Dutra Vernaci



The Installation of Officers was held on July 5, 2010. Councilmember Carol Dutra Vernaci installed the new set of Officers.

Councilmember Vernaci then transferred the rein to the incoming President, Dom Filardo.

After the installation of officers, there was a sumptuous dinner coordinated by Josephine McNamara.

James Logan Graduation



The James Logan High School 2010 Commencement held on June 19, 2010, was well attended. Around 900 students graduated, some of them with high honors. We are proud to say that eight of the Museum’s James Logan volunteers graduated with high honors. Congratulations to all.

Installation Ceremony Honoring LALI TOOR, Postmaster

LALI TOOR was sworn in as the new Union City Postmaster as of July 9, 2010, at the Union City Post Office, 33170, Alvarado Niles Road in Union City.

As Union City Postmaster TOOR oversees 85 employees who process and deliver to 22,050 addresses on 42 routes. Union City also serves 1,950 Post Office boxes.

“It is a great honor to be selected as Postmaster of Union City.” TOOR said. “I would like to serve the citizens of Union City and continue to provide them with first class service.”

A reception followed the ceremony.

LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY....
Taken from old and yellowed newspaper
clippings

Union City Transportation

In 1972 the Union City BART Station opened giving Union City residents access to the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) passenger service linking Union City with San Francisco, Oakland, the entire East Bay and other major cities. The BART Station is located at Decoto and Union Square next to the El Mercado Shopping Center.

Union City is served by three bus transit systems, Union City Transit (UC Transit), AC Transit, and the Dumbarton Express. The Union City BART Station closely ties UC Transit.

The rail lines run through Union City (the Mulford line west of I-880 and the Union Pacific and former Southern Pacific Line east of I-880) and provide service to industrial customers. The Capitol corridor passenger rail travels through Union City on the former Southern Pacific line but does not stop. Peerless Lines and Greyhound provide other modes of public transportation for Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, as well as the state and nation.

Directly accessing Union City is Interstate 880. Two bridges, the San Mateo and the Dumbarton, also provide access to Union City as well as Silicon Valley, and the Peninsula.

Our Lady of the Rosary Church

The founding of Mission San Jose as the first Catholic outpost in Alameda County had been followed by the founding of other churches such as Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church in Decoto.

In April 1907 the first mass was offered in Decoto in a hall located at 10th and I Streets owned by Albert Silva. On October 13, 1907, the first mass was offered in the new mission church at 13th and H Sts by Fr. Governo of Holy Ghost church in Centerville. The new church was dedicated to the Holy Rosary and was thusly named. It is now known as Our Lady of the Holy Rosary and the canonical parish was given that name when Rev. Father Ralph Duggan became administrator in August 1950. He resided at the Parish house in Niles for a few weeks until he moved to establish residence at the rear of the church located at 13th and H Streets.

On October 17, 1952 the church was destroyed by fire and mass was offered in the recreation hall located at 6th and C Streets, which is used as the present church. In addition to the church, a school was purchased from the Decoto School District in 1953. It is located adjacent to the parish house and parish church. Rev. Thomas C. Reilly and Associate Rev. Ronald Burke took charge of Decoto church in 1956.

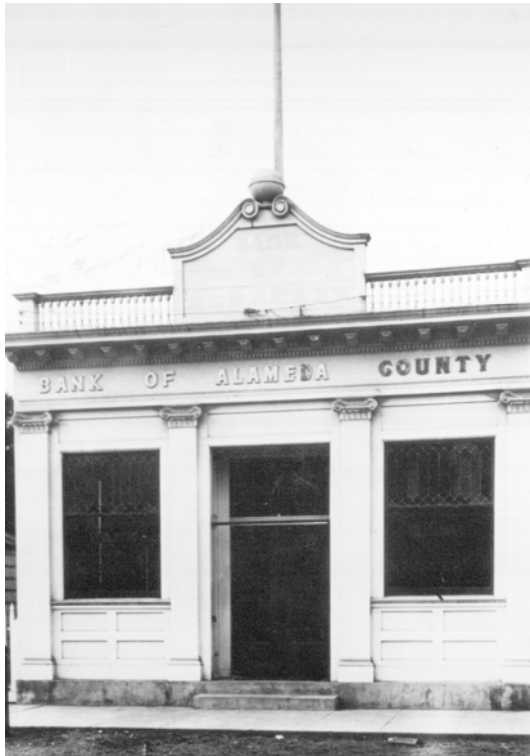
In the early history of the parish, Holy Ghost fiestas were held annually for a few years, after which they were dispensed with and the fiestas were combined with the Niles Parish.

PAST HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN
UNION CITY

The Union City Historical Museum lets you glimpse into the past.



Whipple House



Bank of Alameda in Alvarado



McKeon House 1890



Alvarado Print shop



Helwig Meat

VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM

It gives me great pleasure when guests come into the Union City Historical Museum after reading articles about Union City in the Tri-City Voice newspaper. It gives me double pleasure when they look for Myrla Raymundo, who writes the articles. It was so sweet talking to them about the history of Union City.



Sharon Backmann



Mark Ingles

Mark Ingles, a close friend of Sharon Backmann’s family, read about the Union City Historical Museum in the Tri-City Voice. He immediately contacted Sharon Backmann to tell her about the article “The Crash of Flight 615.”

United Airlines Flight No. 615 crashed in the hills above Union City in the early morning hours of August 24, 1951. All 54 passengers and 6 crewmembers were killed.

Sharon Backmann became so emotional seeing the remnants of the plane. She remembered her late father Cecil Wiseman, a Deputy Sheriff of Alameda County. Her father was called from home to report for duty. He was one of the investigators who examined the wreckage of the Flight 615. He was pictured in the document that is displayed in the Museum. Sharon was 11 years old when that happened. She saw the incident.

Sharon’s father committed suicide in 1980 after a lingering illness. Her mother Mardell Wiseman died in 1989.

Sharon worked as Assistant Manager/Secretary at the Spanish Ranch #1, a Mobile Home Park in Hayward. She retired in 2010 at age 66.

Sharon has a daughter Lehuanani Luia and a grandson Jacob.

She is an avid collector of antiques; she said that her home is like a museum. She loves gardening and landscaping.

Thank you Sharon for adding more history to the Crash of Flight 615.

While Lupe Lozano was waiting for his call at the Doctor's Office, he was reading the Tri-City Voice Newspaper. He noticed the article about the Union City Historical Museum. He became interested to visit the Museum and inquire about the Crash of Flight 615.



Lupe Lozano

Lupe was 13 years old when he saw the plane come down in the hills above what then was called Decoto.

He said, "Up there bodies were scattered all over. Human meat were hanging everywhere. It was crazy. They took all the bodies at the old Decoto School."



Lupe Lozano and Francis Lozano

Lupe was born at Highland Hospital in Oakland in 1938. He grew up in Union City, went to school at Decoto School,

Barnard White and then Washington High School in Fremont.

He worked at Holly Sugar Mill for a number of years. He retired from Crown Cork and Seal in 1999.

Lupe and Francis were married in 1961 and they have four children, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. They now live in Newark.

Lupe's parents came from Mexico and Arizona. His dad worked for the Pacific States Steel.

Francis' parents are from Arizona. She grew up in Russell City.

Lupe reminisces. The house on 7th Street, where they lived is still there. He was an altar boy at the old church in Decoto, now the Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. He remembers the old Decoto Theater.

He also remembers old Alvarado, Alvarado Theater, Dinsmoor Store, the flooded Alvarado streets, and the fruits and vegetables that were abundant during that time. He remembers Bernie Morales, Bert Perez, Jess Orozco and Shorty Garcia.

He showed me his picture in the Washington High School Memorabilia, displayed at the Museum, for graduates of 1934.

Upon leaving the Museum, he showed me a "DECOTO" tattoo on his right leg. He is a Decoto boy. His parting words were, "who is this RAYMUNDO in the picture in the articles in the Tri-City Voice Newspaper." His curiosity was solved.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



We live in a great city, Union City. It is a city that is still continuing to grow. The city has its natural beauty and resources, rows and rows of big and beautiful homes, a Union Landing, which caters to not only the Union City people, but also people from nearby cities. These people enjoy the many plush restaurants and a big cinema.

The city also has a vibrant and continuously changing culture and population, and a history that ultimately is blessed.

Most of all, it is also a great place to live and work.

We have to remember that on this sacred ground long time ago, our early people lived and enjoyed our place. We also have to remember our past city leaders and ancestors who worked hard to make our city what it is today.

The Union City Historical Museum is the place to go and read all about our past and to spend moments to relive the olden times. The Museum speaks to our commitment as a city, to going back and educating us about our culture and

heritage.

The Board of Directors thanks you for giving us the opportunity to serve as your officers. We will continue to help in the progress of the Museum and of our city.

Thank you all who have helped, one way or the other, in making the Union City Historical Museum the success as it is.

Let us continue to make our city, the City of Union City, a great place to live and work.

DOM FILARDO

FY 2010 – 2011
MUSEUM MEETINGS - MONDAYS
7:00 PM AT THE MUSEUM

JULY 5, 2010

OCTOBER 4, 2010

JANUARY 3, 2011

APRIL 4, 2011

JUNE 6, 2011

FOUNDER'S NOTES

Myrla Raymundo, MBA



The Union City Historical Museum lets you glimpse into the past.

Pictures of many Union City's firsts – its first church, school, saloon, post office, and businesses are on display at the Union City Historical Museum, which has provided a link to the City's past since the museum's inception in 1998.

The displays are housed, fittingly, in Union City's first firehouse.



An old Singer sewing machine

Other artifacts and pictures range from those linked to the earliest Ohlone Indians who settled here, to the first pioneers who arrived by railway, to its first city council and the now defunct Pacific States Steel and Holly Sugar

businesses, which provided many area residents with jobs.

The Museum's goal is to preserve these artifacts, as well as collect oral histories from residents, and also to preserve the 400 historical structures that still exist.

I recalled the past. The first time I went to the firehouse was in 1972, the first time we moved to Union City, to get directions. I visited the Alvarado School with my then five and two year old sons and then I didn't know how to go back to my house. I was so nervous and in near tears.

The fireman, from the old brick building, gave me a ride back in his fire truck to my house.

Today, I am thinking that it must be fate that I am now running a historical museum from the old brick building.

And today, the glimpse into the past will continue in this old brick building for the next 100 years or more.



And also today, the Tri-City histories are compiled in the big white binder for the future. The historians are Philip Holmes and Myrla Raymundo filling the binder with information about the Tri-City.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Myrla Raymundo, MBA,
Founder/CEO**

Officers -July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011.

Dom Filardo – President
 Allen Cecil – Vice-President
 Marina Bamont - Secretary
 Hugh McNamara – Treasurer

Directors

July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2011.

Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo
 Joey Golaw, Jr.
 Georgia Megue dela Cruz
 Angel (Jun) Villorente
 Carlen Gregorio

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2012.

Rorie Rabuy
 Fely Garcia
 Livjot Cheema

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
 Steve Miller & Diane LaMountaine
 Fernando & Helen Cabiles
 Allen & Simona Cecil
 Josephine Pando
 Frank, Jr. & Elvamae Borghi
 Mrs. Angelo dela Cruz
 Marcos, Jr. & Tessie Gatan
 Joey and Vilma Golaw
 James Celcer
 Sarabjit Kaur Cheema
 Emily Duncan

BUSINESS MEMBER

**Tri-City Voice
 (What's Happening)
 William Marshak
 Publisher**

EDITORIAL BOARD

Myrla Raymundo
 Jo Ann Lew
 Ligfinio (Ray) Raymundo
 (Layout Artist/Production)

Myrla Raymundo, MBA
Editor
Union City Historical Museum
3841 Smith Street
Union City, California 94587