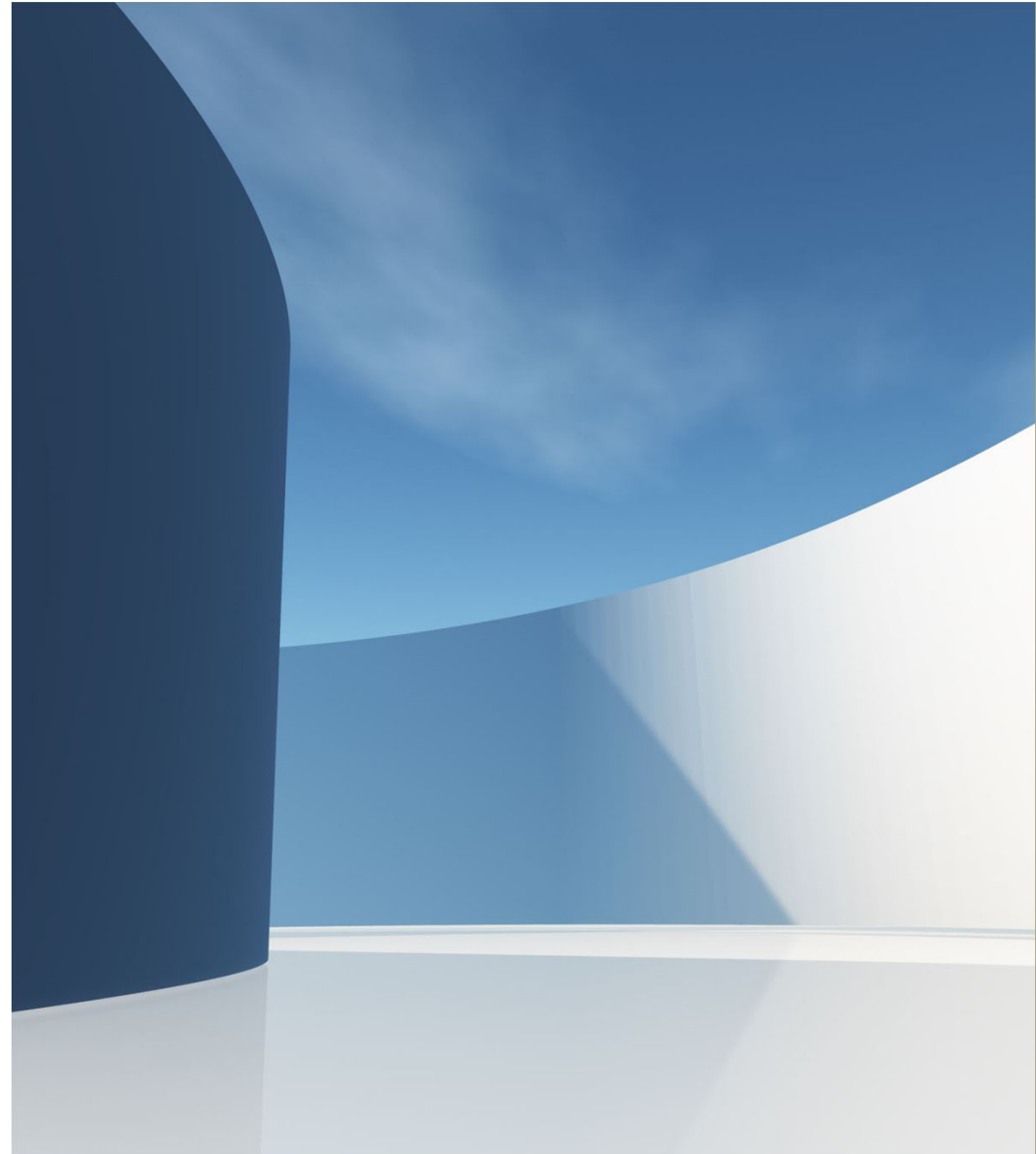


Tonarigumi (Japantown) Marker Project

By: Jane Chisaki

Date: August 29, 2024



Participants/Collaborators

- Buena Vista Methodist United Church
- Buddhist Temple of Alameda
- Rhythmix Cultural Works
- Alameda Marketplace
- City of Alameda (Library)

Alameda Japanese American Confinement Site Grant

- This grant from the National Park Service was a parallel project to the Alameda Japantown Historical Marker project.
- The project was to preserve photographs, articles, stories and histories from the Alameda Japanese American community.
- The wealth of information found for the digital history project provided the content for the Japantown Markers. Permissions from individuals and/or surviving families were secured for all material collected and used.



Overflowing with **Hope** The **Hidden** HISTORY of the **Japanese** in **Alameda**

ALAMEDA
Japanese
American
HISTORY PROJECT

Wednesday, May 17 • 4pm
Inaugural event and reception
at the Alameda Free Library •

Doors open at 3pm

alamedaJAhistory.wordpress.com

photo: "Patriotism on Roller Skates" by Takuritsu Morita

Project Purpose

- To build awareness of Alameda's hidden Japantown through the development of historic markers that share the rich immigrant history, disruption and removal during WWII, return and rebuilding of the Japanese American community, and to offer lessons for today to embrace diversity & advocate for civil liberties for all people.
- Create four historic markers that connect the extant Japanese American community sites and the former sites of Japantown businesses concentrated on Park and Oak Street from Buena Vista to Lincoln. The four locations will serve as anchors for walking tours of the historic Japanese community.
- With the loss of the first and second generations of Japanese Americans, much of the early Alameda Japantown history and first person stories have gone with them. This project was an opportunity to honor the history of the Japanese American community in Alameda, while adding to the rich diversity of our changing community.

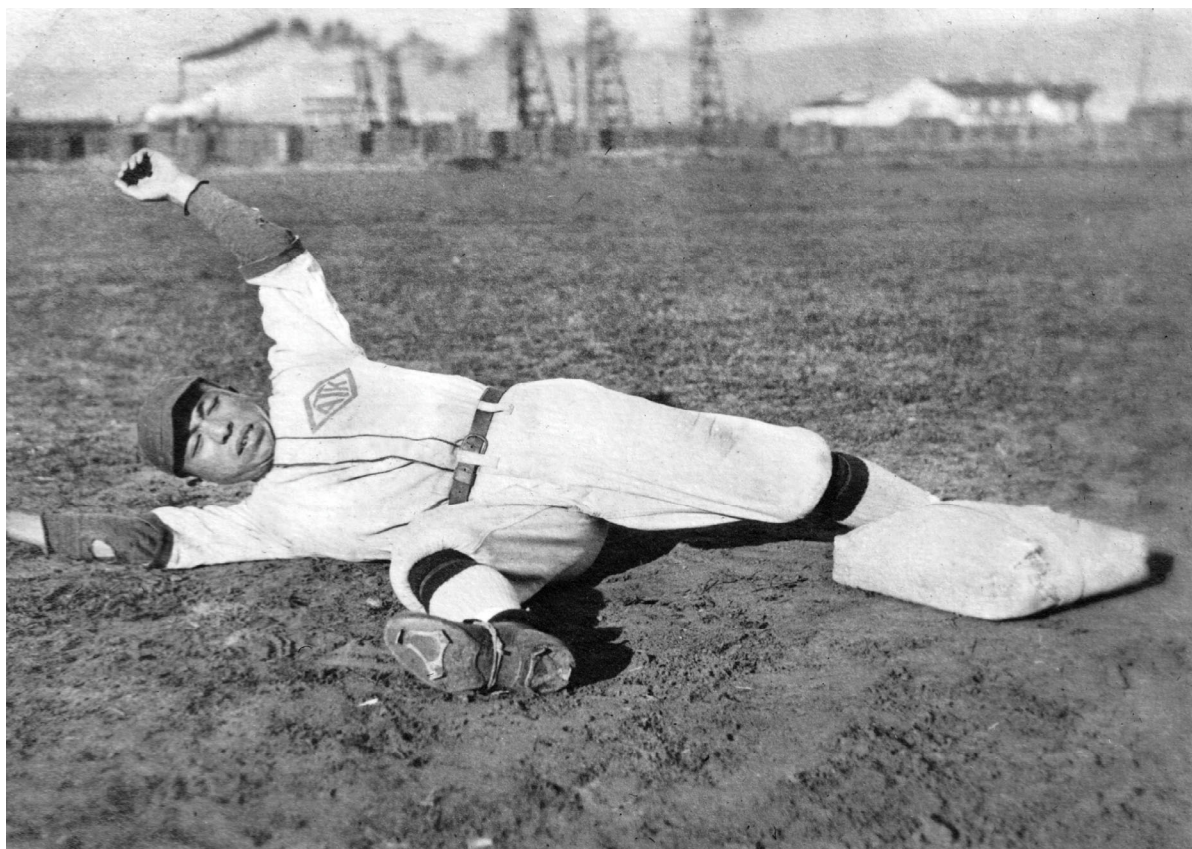


First names??

#20



Of the many self portraits he made, this is Mataichi Ozeki's most compelling, standing with the American and Japanese flags, detachable collar and flower in his lapel. He seems to have been comfortable with the new world he was living in, and with Caucasian people, as he photographed them professionally. circa 1907-1910.



Avoiding the Tag

**An Alameda Taiiku Kai player slides into base for this posed photograph.
McKinley Park, Alameda, CA. 1916 to 1920s.**

Tonarigumi Logo



Tonarigumi

Alameda's Historic Japantown Neighborhood

Alameda's Historic Japantown



Tonarigumi

Traces of Alameda Japantown

Opening up shops on Park Street



Shop sign in front of a shop in Alameda.

Traces of a small close-knit Japanese community remain, yet little is known of the Japantown that once thrived in Alameda.



Photo from around 1900 showing a person in a shop.



Photo from around 1900 showing a person in a shop.



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Alameda Japantown Map 1912

The Alameda Japantown map offers a glimpse of a thriving area in 1912 when Japanese immigrants set up shops and resided nearby for mutual support. Alameda's immigrants, or close-knit neighborhood, formed deep ties that endured despite the racial animosity, forced removal, and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.



Alameda's Historic Japantown



Tonarigumi

Becoming A Japantown

A neighborhood planted, a community flourished

With the growth of businesses, the neighborhood neighborhood began to take shape as Japanese immigrants settled in shophouses, cottages and Victorian mansions in the block area bounded by Broadway and Third Avenue between Park and Walnut Streets. Mutual support associations, some formed by newcomers who had come from the same town or prefecture in Japan. Within one block of each other, a Buddhist temple and an ancestral Mortuary Society planned events.

The Alameda Japantown community came together as one to stroll Japanese culture and language to celebrate and to play hard.

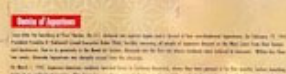
Ready for the Race Train

An Alameda resident in 1900, with a horse-drawn carriage, was ready for the race train. The train was the first to arrive in Alameda, and it was the first to leave. The train was the first to arrive in Alameda, and it was the first to leave. The train was the first to arrive in Alameda, and it was the first to leave.



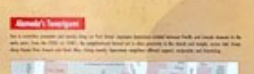
Leading Community

A group of Japanese immigrants in Alameda, 1912.



Celebrating Culture

A group of Japanese immigrants in Alameda, 1912.



Stories of Japanese

A group of Japanese immigrants in Alameda, 1912.



Alameda's Japantown

A group of Japanese immigrants in Alameda, 1912.



BUENA VISTA

Alameda's Historic Japantown
Tonarigumi

A Beacon of Light

Our doors open outward, welcoming those needing support, nurturing faith, and providing hope.

Since 1918, the Buddhist Temple of Alameda has been a beacon of light, providing support, nurturing faith, and providing hope. The temple has been a place of refuge for many, offering a place to practice their faith, to learn about their culture, and to connect with others. The temple has been a place of hope for many, offering a place to practice their faith, to learn about their culture, and to connect with others.

Our mission is to...
Our mission is to...
Our mission is to...



Alameda's Historic Japantown

Tonarigumi

Life That Connects Us All

We strive to practice gratitude and compassion and to understand the interdependence of life that connects us all.

Buddhist Temple of Alameda

In 1918, the Buddhist Temple of Alameda became an independent temple under the name A-ku Bukkyo-ai. It marked the official establishment of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda under the auspices of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ku. This storefront was rented and used for services.

In 1918, a Victorian mansion was purchased from a former mayor of Alameda with the addition of a social hall in 1926 and periodic remodeling since then, the original structure has served the members well over the many years.

Prior to World War II, the Japanese community was concentrated in the blocks around the Temple. During the war, the U.S. Navy took over the Temple to use as a training facility for employees and enlisted personnel. After the war, the Temple became a temporary home for the displaced families. In 2016, the Buddhist Temple of Alameda celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Our mission is to...
Our mission is to...
Our mission is to...



Bon Odori

A time of joy for locals, passed down the years and into generations before us.



Women's Association

The Alameda Buddhist Women's Association supports and participates in various activities for the Temple and the community.



Dharma School

Family values guided by Buddhist principles of gratitude and compassion are taught to our children.



Hinamatsuri

A festival from Japan celebrating the birth of the historical Buddha, marking our New Year.

In 1929, the Temple bell was installed. Embossed on the bell are the names of our first president, members and a poem written by Bishop Koyu Uchida, the 4th Socho of the Buddhist Churches of America. The bell is still in use at the Temple to this day.



Special Thanks

- Jill Shiraki
 - Education Coordinator for J-SEI, contributor to the California Japantowns and the Japantown Atlas Project, member of Buena Vista United Methodist Church
- Kazumo Julio Cesar Naganuma
 - NDD Creative. Provided creative direction and design for the Logo and Markers. He also oversaw the layout, fabrication and the installation of all four markers.