

THE HISTORY OF DECOTO

CHAPTER 07

NOVEMBER 1920 THRU 1929

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 * **DECOTO DEMOGRAPHICS** *

1920 DECOTO CENSUS						
US Born to US Parents		Foreign Born & Children of Foreign Born				
State	Pop.	Country	For. Born	US Born	Total	Pct.
Arizona	1	Austria	1	0	1	0.1%
California	94	Belgium	2	0	2	0.2%
Colorado	2	Canada	4	0	4	0.4%
Hawaii	3	China	7	1	8	0.9%
Idaho	2	Denmark	4	1	5	0.5%
Illinois	3	England	0	3	3	0.3%
Indiana	1	France	0	1	1	0.1%
Maine	2	Germany	5	7	12	1.3%
Michigan	1	Ireland	0	5	5	0.5%
Missouri	1	Italy	13	15	28	3.0%
New Hampshire	1	Japan	19	6	25	2.7%
New York	2	Mexico	0	2	2	0.2%
Ohio	3	Norway	0	1	1	0.1%
Pennsylvania	2	Porto Rico	9	13	22	2.4%
Rhode Island	1	Portugal	178	312	490	53.1%
Tennessee	2	Russia	1	0	1	0.1%
Virginia	1	Scotland	2	0	2	0.2%
Wisconsin	1	Spain	102	57	159	17.2%
		Sweden	2	9	11	1.2%
		Switzerland	10	7	17	1.8%
		U.S.	123		123	13.3%
Total:	123	Total:	482	440	922	100.0%
Does not include 153 persons from the Masonic Home						

The population of the town of Decoto grew by 265 persons in the past decade. The population, which had been 657 swelled to 922. The population of the Masonic Home is not used in my demographics. There were 153 persons at the Masonic Home, making the total Decoto population 1,075. The Portuguese population, which had been at 77% of the population fell to 53% in 1920. The difference in the Portuguese population between 1910 was 15 persons. There were 490 Portuguese in 1910 and that number grew to only 505 persons. The growth came from Spain with 17.2% of the population in 1920 from none in 1910. Porto Ricans (in 1920 it was Porto Rico then and not Puerto Rico) accounted for 2.4% of the population in 1920 from none in 1910. The Italians grew to 3% from less than 1% in 1910.

*** BIOS OF NOTABLE PERSONS ***

Auto Garages – Service Stations / Baker / Barber / Billiard Parlor and Poolrooms / Blacksmith / Bookkeeper / Carpenter / Clerks / Custodians / Dressmaker / Electrician / Engineer / Foreman / Hotel / Inspector / Managers and Superintendents / Mfg, Canneries, Const. Co.’s and Large Employers / Mechanic – Const. Co. / Merchants / Plumber and Pipe Fitters / Post Master / Railroads / Restaurant / School Teachers and Trustees / Shoemaker / Teamster

AUTO GARAGE – SERVICE STATIONS:

Raymond McNulty / Nathan Randall / Manuel Andrade / Edwin F. Kendall

Raymond McNulty:

Raymond McNulty was born in California in 1901 to John and Emma McNulty. Raymond was one of ten children who were living in Nevada City, California, in 1910. Emma was widowed and moved to Decoto where she and Raymond were living with Albert N. Benson, a Decoto schoolteacher.

Ray became an auto mechanic at a young age and he also became interested in civic affairs at an early age. In 1924 Ray joined with Peter Decoto, Harry Haines, Harry Searles, Herbert Harrold, John Olson, Antone Amaral, Manuel Caldeira, Henry May, Manuel Avilla and Enos Pimental to organize Decoto’s Boy Scout Troop. All of the persons above who joined with Ray were all to become prominent citizens in the development of the town of Decoto.

Ray was also a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce and in 1926 joined with Will Hurst, H.C. Searles, Henry May, J.L. Olson, Peter Decoto, O.B. Merrick, George A. Smith, Antone Amaral, Walter Walker, Roland Bendel, John C. Whipple, and John Meneze in bringing the town of Decoto into the Alameda County Charter conference to amalgamate all Chambers in Alameda County.

Also in 1926 Ray McNulty was a member of the Decoto Fire Commission, joining with Will Hurst and Antone Amaral in looking out for the welfare of the town of Decoto through the establishment of a first class volunteer fire department. McNulty, Amaral and Hurst strongly commended the efforts and performance of Fire Chief Walter Walker, Captain Roland Bendel and the personnel of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department who offered great service to the town of Decoto.

By 1930 Ray McNulty, his widowed mother Emma, and Decoto schoolteacher Albert N. Benson moved to Dutton Street in San Leandro. Ray would continue to commute to Decoto for over twenty years to look after his garage.

In 1930 Ray opened his new auto service garage at the corner of 10th Street and Decoto Road. The building stood on Decoto Road and was the first major building you saw in Decoto from entering the town on Decoto Road from the west.

During the Second World War Ray served the town of Decoto by working with J.R. Blacow of Centerville as a member of the Washington Township Tire Rationing Board. Ray was appointed as an alternate inspector. During the Second World War you could not buy a set of new tires without the authorization of the tire rationing board. Considerable office work was entailed by those making application for a new tire or tires, for only those persons engaged in public service or emergency work would be granted permits under the present government restrictions.

In February 1954 Ray leased his garage to William Box of Centerville who would feature Ferguson and Massey Harris tractor lines as well as car service. Ray had been at this present location at Decoto Road and 10th Street for 24 years and he would be resting up in his recently purchased home in Walnut Creek. Up to 1940 Ray McNulty never showed having been married.

Nathan Randall:

Nathan Randall was born in New York in 1887. His wife Viola was born in Ohio in 1888. They had six children. While in Decoto (circa 1920) Nathan operated a service station/garage. There were no articles about the Randall while in Decoto. In 1930 the Randall family was in Plymouth, Amador County, where Nathan worked on a stock farm as a laborer.

Manuel Andrade:

Decoto Garage:

Manuel Andrade was born in Decoto to John and Anna Andrade. Manuel was one of seven children having five brothers and two sisters. Several of his brothers farmed the family ranch in the 1920's and 1930's and were known collectively as the Andrade brothers. In 1933 the Andrade brothers farmed over 400 acres in the foothills above Decoto. Here they raised peas and in 1933 shipped over 40 carloads of peas back east from Decoto.

Manuel was working as a farm laborer for his uncle Joe Caldeira Lemas in Decoto in 1920. Manuel chose not to farm and went into the auto mechanic business in Decoto. Circa 1922 Manuel married Rosie Andrade and they had a son Albert born in 1927.

The 1929 R.G. Dunn Mercantile Book shows that Manuel Andrade owned an auto garage in Decoto. In 1935 Manuel was a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce and in 1944 Manuel backed Chester Stanley for the Board of Supervisors for Alameda County.

On July 8, 1954, Manuel Andrade, 60, collapsed and died on a Decoto street corner. He left his wife Mrs. Rose Andrade and a son Albert Andrade of

Hayward. He was the brother of Mrs. Mary Naia and Lenore Andrade, Decoto, Mrs. Rose Dutra, Centerville, Henry Andrade of Alvarado, and Bill and George Andrade of Centerville; all were natives of Decoto.

Edwin F. Kendall:

Edwin F. Kendall was born in Ohio in 1861. His wife Letitia Kendal was born in California in 1871. They had three children, Martha, Raymond and Earl. In 1910 Edwin was a fruit grower in Santa Clara County near Mt. View.

The 1929 R.G. Dunn Book of Merchants & Tradesmen shows that Edwin Kendall was in Decoto at this date and he was operating a service station. On April 17, 1937, Edwin Kendall died in Decoto. His wife Letitia had preceded him in death. Edwin's occupation was given as the operator of an auto camp near Decoto.

BAKER:

Alexander Ferrante:

Decoto Bakery:

Alexander Ferrante was born in Italy in 1881. He entered the U.S. in 1921. His wife Mary was born in Italy in 1893. She entered the U.S. in 1893. They had one son, John, who was born in California in 1922. The Ferrante's settled in Decoto and by the end of the 1920's, Alexander had opened a bakery shop in Decoto. In 1938 Alex expanded his business in Decoto to include the bakery and a grocery store.

— BIRTHDAY CAKES —
MADE TO ORDER
—HOT CROSS BUNS—
Decoto Bakery
AND GROCERY
A. FERRANTE, PROP.
—Phone—Decoto 2181—

The Ferrante's son John enlisted in the U.S. Naval Air Corps in October 1942. At the time he was a sophomore at San Jose State College. In November 1943 he graduated from the pre-flight training at Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo. In March 1945 John was commissioned as an ensign following his graduation from Cornell University and assigned to the Naval Base at Norfolk, VA.

Alex Ferrante, who had conducted the Decoto Bakery for 8 years, and who had lived in Decoto for 21 years, sold his pioneer bakery to Kenneth Garcia. Kenneth used to have a store near Mt. Eden and was well known in Washington Township. The French bread and pastries that Mr. Ferrante used to make was sold by delivery autos all over Southern Alameda County until the scarcity of rubber tires and gas curtailed delivery to some extent.

BARBER:

Clarence Nevis (Nieves):

Clarence Nevis was born in California in 1905 to Manuel and Minnie Nevis. In 1924 Clarence Nevis married Miss Margaret L. Mendonca of Sunol, age 21. Clarence, according to *The Hayward Review*, became a first-class barber in Decoto, who had been operating his own barbershop for a considerable time. In December 1926 Clarence became associated with the Ideal Barber Shop in the Oakes Building in Hayward. Nothing further was heard from Clarence after this time.

BILLIARD PARLOR AND POOLROOMS:

J.S. Jardin / Pinza & Smith, Poolroom / Philip "Felix" Pinza

J.S. Jardine:

There was no bio info on J.S. Jardine found, only a single newspaper article stating that Mr. Jardine, a poolroom proprietor in Decoto was slugged and robbed of \$180 by two men. During the holdup the revolver of the hold up man was accidentally discharged and the bullet entered the arm of the accomplice. However later it was determined that the wounded man was only an innocent bystander when he shot. There is no other information on Mr. Jardine

Pinza & Smith, Poolroom:

George Smith:

[See bio on Page 19 in this Chapter](#)

Philip "Felix" Pinza:

Felix Pinza was born in Italy in 1901 to Victor & Ambrosina Pinza. The family entered the U.S. together in 1907. After they arrived in the U.S. a son Joseph and a daughter Katherine was added.

Felix partnered in a poolroom and cigar stand with George Smith of Decoto. In April 1925 prohibition agents raided their business and the agents claimed to have found a quantity of brandy. After they were arrested they were turned over to town officials. Shortly thereafter George Smith started the M&S Tile Co. with John Meneze.

Felix continued to live with his parents at 910 12th Street in Decoto. Felix would later work at a box factory and raised show rabbits. In 1935 Felix was a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce. He was one of the trustees, which included Joe Pepitone, Al Cloudine, Al Fereira, William Amaral, Al Chamorro, Melvin Pepitone and Wilbert Goularte.

Felix would relocate to Mt. Eden where he worked as a weaver in a wire mill. His wife Mary was born in California in 1902. They had two children Harold and Shirley. Mrs. Ambrosina Pinza lived to be 80 years of age and spent more than 50 years of her life in Decoto.

BLACKSMITH:

Antone A. Amaral / John Cordeiro / Braidwood Higgins

Antone A. Amaral:

Antone Amaral was born in Portugal in 1880. He entered the U.S. in 1891. He was married to Emma Amaral who was born in California in 1887. They had no children from their marriage. Antone was Decoto's long time blacksmith.

There is an insightful tale spun by Eph Musick, longtime Washington Township teacher and Principal of the Decoto School from 1941 to 1945, of Mr. Amaral and how he came to California. Told in the May 14, 1950, issue of *The Oakland Tribune* it is reprinted here:

"After having spent the 20 years between 1850 and 1870 mining in and about Weaverville and Yreka, Antone B. Amaral, who had left his home in the Azores when he heard of the gold rush to California, decided that the gold "in them that hills" was too elusive.

Eph L. Musick writes of this pioneer and of his son. With no more money in his pockets than he possessed when he landed in San Francisco, he began to look for a more lucrative occupation. During the next five years he worked as a carpenter in Santa Cruz County where he assisted in building the Cowell Cement Company in Davenport and later the Sea Beach Hotel in Santa Cruz.

The savings of those five years induced him to return to his native land, though not by the Isthmus of Panama route that he has traveled 25 years before.

He was married soon after his arrival in the Azores, and within the year thereafter a daughter was born. However, the quarter-century he had passed in California had left its imprint, and in 1879 he returned to California, leaving his family in the Azores. Eight years would pass before he saw the son who was born soon after his second departure from his island home.

That son, now "The Village Blacksmith" of Decoto, arrived in Centerville in 1890 with his parents and sister. The senior Amaral took up the work where he had left off three years before, until his death in 1898. Many of the older buildings in Washington Township are wholly or partly the products of his workmanship. His life was typical of the lives of hundreds of sturdy Portuguese immigrants who assisted in the agricultural, industrial, and cultural growth of Alameda County.

Pioneer A.B. Amaral's only son, who happens to be Antonio (Antone) A. Amaral, "The Village Blacksmith" of Decoto and one of the few smithies left in Southern Alameda County, was 11 years old when he came to America. Most of his school days were passed in Alviso School where he had Nellie Cockefair as teacher, which probably accounts in the main for the good English he uses in his conversation.

His life, though spread over a much smaller sphere, has been almost adventurous as that of his pioneer father. His lifetime hobby has been fishing, and he is familiar with practically all fishing grounds and clam beds between Monterey and the Oregon border.

For years Thursday has been his fishing day, and no sooner would he take time off on that day to shoe a horse than he would to shoo flies. He is an interesting storyteller.”

Antone Amaral was one of the men that kept an old-time art alive that was the art of being a farrier. The art was part of the blacksmithing trade in Antone’s shop as he was both a farrier and a blacksmith.

As the automobile took hold the blacksmith began to fade. In rural towns about Washington Township the trade lingered longer than most areas. In Decoto it was Antone Amaral, in the Alviso District it was “Het” Machado of Machado’s Corners and in Alvarado it was M.A. Silva Jr.

But Antone Amaral was more than just the town blacksmith. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Decoto Fire Commission and the committee to form the Boy Scout Troop in Decoto in 1924.

Antone Amaral was on the Decoto Fire Commission for over 35 years, serving with the likes of William Hurst, Ray McNulty, Carl & Louis Zwissig, and Walter Walker. But in 1960 he resigned his post as a Fire Commissioner when the Union City City Council reduced the duties of the fire commissioners to an advisory council. Later they would abolish the commission.

At the beginning of 1931 Antone updated and remodeled his blacksmith shop by installing gasoline pumps, an air compressor and other machinery.

In April 1935 Antone was completing a 21-foot cabin cruiser to be operated by a 40-h.p. Motor. Its homeport would be the Port Chicago Yacht Harbor.

Mrs. Emma Amaral:

Mrs. Amaral was Antone’s equal in civic responsibility. Starting in 1926 Emma was an official at the Decoto voting precinct. The following year Emma would begin a long relationship as a Red Cross volunteer. In 1927 Mrs. Amaral collected \$51 for the Red Cross, a substantial gain over the previous year.

In 1932 Emma helped organize the Decoto Mother’s Club, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of education in the Decoto School District and to aid children in need. Mrs. Amaral was voted the president of the organization. And at the end of 1932 Mrs. Amaral led the annual Christmas Seal Drive for the Alameda County Tuberculosis & Health Org.

1940 saw Emma join with Manuel Seoane, Mary Janeiro and L.W. Musick to go into the community and solicit funds for the March of Dimes. During the war Mrs. Amaral led the Decoto Sewing Room to make garments, including dresses, sweaters and other clothing for the war effort.

Mrs. Amaral was also active with the local church helping the young people of Decoto organize a Christian Endeavor Society. The society planned to raise sufficient money to pay for wiring the Community Church and installing several large windows. Mrs. Amaral and Lucille Breiner acted as advisers.

In June 1943 Mrs. Emma Amaral, 65, of 908 10th St., Decoto, filed suit for divorce against Antone A. Amaral, 64, Decoto blacksmith owner. Mrs. Amaral charged her husband with cruelty and asked for a division of community property valued at approximately \$20,000 and \$115 per month alimony.

The Amaral's were married in San Francisco July 15, 1915, and separated March 15th of this year. They have no children. Mrs. Amaral also asked that Amaral be restrained from withdrawing money from various bank accounts or encumbering community property until after the divorce act is heard.

John Cordeiro:

John Cordeiro was born in Portugal in 1881. He entered the U.S. circa 1890. His wife Lenora was born in California in 1883. They do not show having any children. In 1910 John was employed at a general blacksmith shop in Centerville. He was however living in Decoto. In November 1907 he married Miss Lenora Brown of Decoto.

By 1920 John had become a blacksmith for the sugar mill at Alvarado. The 1940 census had John still employed by the mill as a blacksmith. Lenora passed away in July 1961 at Union City and John in April 1964, also at Union City.

Braidwood Higgins:

Braidwood Higgins was born in California in 1897 to Vernon G. and Orilla Higgins. In 1910 Braidwood was living with his parents in San Francisco. In 1912 Vernon Higgins bought the old Henry Slem place in Decoto and established a small chicken incubator manufacturing plant in Decoto. Braidwood's family moved back to San Francisco prior to 1920, but Braidwood stayed in Decoto. In 1920 he was employed as a carpenter in a blacksmith shop in Decoto. After this nothing was found in Decoto for Mr. Higgins.

BOOKKEEPER:

Clarence Silva / Marie Swanson

Clarence Silva:

Clarence Silva was born in 1897 in California to Albert and Annie Silva of Decoto. Albert Silva was a civic-minded Decoto resident who owned a saloon and opened a hall (appropriately named Silva's Hall) where various functions could be held in the town of Decoto.

Clarence became a bookkeeper for a meat company in 1920. He was married to Hortense P. Silva who was born in California in 1901. The couple had two children, Albert and Robert. Shortly thereafter it appears Clarence went to work for the Levy Zentner Produce Company of San Leandro and he went to live in Hayward for a few year. In 1926 he decided to return to Decoto but maintained his job at the produce company. By 1940 Clarence had left Decoto to work closer to his place of employment in a produce company in San Leandro.

Marie Swanson:

Marie Swanson was born in California in 1900 to Peter and Emma Swanson. In 1920 Marie Swanson was shown working as a bookkeeper for the Western Electric Company. Nothing else could be found for Marie Swanson other than she purchased lots 3, 4, 13 & 14 in block 95 from B.F. Rudenberg in March 1940.

CARPENTER:

Frank Cloudeane / Frank Swartz / Frank Swanson

Frank Cloudeane (also Cloudine):

Frank Cloudine was born in California (he also claims Massachusetts as his birthplace) in 1866 to Matthew and Anna Cloudeane. In 1880 Matthew Cloudeane was working in Decoto as a farm laborer. Frank Cloudeane married Miss Anna Duarte of Decoto on Thanksgiving Day in 1902. They had two daughters: Bertha and Evelyn, and two sons: Albert & Leroy.

Frank was working as a laborer in 1900, and in 1910 he was a farmer, but by 1920 had again switched his occupation to carpentering in a local cannery. 1930 found Frank working in the salt works and in 1940 he was retired.

The children all attended local schools. Al Cloudeane proved to be a very good baseball player and played several years for local Decoto hardball teams. Lee Cloudeane was a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce in 1935.

Anna Cloudeane passed away in 1926 and Frank Cloudeane in 1942. In 1940 daughter Bertha and sons Albert and Leroy were all living at home on 13th Street in Decoto. Albert worked at the salt works and Leroy at the stove foundry.

Frank Swartz:

Frank Swartz was born in Portugal in 1854. Frank entered the U.S. between 1873 and 1877. His wife Mary was born in Portugal in 1866. She entered the U.S. in either 1904 or 1905. They had three sons: Joe, Edward and Raymond. Frank was known to be in Decoto in the early 1900's (and possibly before). While in Decoto he was a carpenter on both residential and construction properties. In 1903 he was mentioned as one of the carpenters building an addition to the general store of Ralph & Olson. The last entry in Decoto for Frank was the 1920 census showing Frank as 66 years old.

Peter Swanson:

Peter Swanson was born in Sweden in 1869. He entered the U.S. in 1888. His wife Emma was born in Sweden in 1871 and entered the U.S. in 1888. The Swanson's had eight children, four boys: Gustave, Oscar, Hans and Fritz, and four daughters: Marie, Eva, Olga and Sophia.

Peter worked as a carpenter in Decoto, first for the railroad and then as a residential and construction carpenter. Peter bought two lots in Decoto in block 94 in 1911, and three years later built an eight-room house. Peter gained notoriety when he graded and paved his own street because of the difficulty he had getting in and out of the street during the winter.

Peter was still living in Decoto in 1940 with his wife Emma, but all of his children were out on their own.

CLERKS:

Linda Cunha / Joseph Cunha

Linda Cunha:

Linda Cunha was born in Portugal to Marcelino and Mary Cunha in 1895. She entered the U.S. with her mother & father and brother Joseph in 1904. Just after the family arrived in the U.S. Florence Cunha was born.

Linda worked as a clerk in a general store in Decoto in 1920, and was still in that occupation in 1930. Linda belonged to several Decoto social organizations including the Decoto Birthday Club, the Decoto Pinochle Club, and the Decoto Sewing Circle. Civically Linda served as a Decoto Voting Precinct Official and she also served on Decoto's Holy Rosary Guild.

Joseph Cunha:

Joseph Cunha was born in Portugal to Marcelino and Mary Cunha in 1891. He entered the U.S. with his mother & father and sister Linda in 1904. Just after the family arrived in the U.S. Florence Cunha was born.

Joe served in the First World War and returned to Decoto where he worked as a clerk in grocery store. On February 2, 1921, Joseph married Miss Rosida Cardoza of Centerville. The union produced a daughter June. In June 1924 Joseph moved into his new home on 11th Street in Decoto. In 1930 Joe continued his employment as a clerk in a grocery store, but by 1940 he was working in the stove foundry. Joseph was active in the Decoto Holy Ghost, a member of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department, and a member of the Decoto Junior Chamber of Commerce.

CUSTODIAN:

Mary Swartz:

Mary Swartz was born in Portugal in 1866. Her date of entry into the U.S. was either in 1904 or 1905. Her husband Frank Swartz was also born in Portugal in 1854. He entered the U.S. between 1873 and 1877. They had three children: Joseph, Edward and Raymond. Frank was employed as a carpenter. Mary's occupation is listed as a janitress at a school. Whether it was a Decoto school I could not verify. Nothing else was found for Mary Swartz.

DRESSMAKER:

Emma Amaral:

Emma Amaral was born in California in 1887. Her husband Antone Amaral was born in Portugal in 1880. He entered the U.S. in 1891. Antone and Emma were married in San Francisco on July 15, 1915. They had no children from their marriage. Antone was Decoto's long-time blacksmith. Early on in their marriage Emma earned extra money by making dresses for the local townspeople.

Antone was very active in Decoto civic affairs, devoting much time to the betterment of the town. But Emma Amaral was his equal in civic responsibility. Starting in 1926 Emma was an official at the Decoto voting precinct. The following year Emma would begin a long relationship as a Red Cross volunteer. In 1927 Mrs. Amaral collected \$51 for the Red Cross, a substantial gain over the previous year.

In 1932 Emma helped organize the Decoto Mother's Club, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of education in the Decoto School District and to aid children in need. Mrs. Amaral was voted the first president of the organization. And at the end of 1932 Mrs. Amaral led the annual Christmas Seal Drive for the Alameda County Tuberculosis & Health Org and would continue to do so for many years.

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In June 1943 Mrs. Emma Amaral, 65, of 908 10th St., Decoto, filed suit for divorce against Antone A. Amaral, 64, Decoto blacksmith owner. Mrs. Amaral charged her husband with cruelty and asked for a division of community property valued at approximately \$20,000 and \$115 per month alimony.

ELECTRICIAN: Manuel White:

Manuel White was born in the Azores circa 1896. He entered the U.S. in 1913. He married his first wife, Olive Duarte in November 1917. She was born in California on May 11, 1899. They had one daughter born in 1919. Olive White passed away on June 4, 1929. Later he would marry Anna Maderos (married name), who had two children by a previous marriage, Lester and Earl Maderos.

In 1930 Manuel was living with his in-laws Joseph & Annie Duarte in Decoto with his daughter Pearl. Manuel was employed as a machinist in a local brick works in 1920. But he would soon switch to working for the Leslie Salt Company near Alvarado where he was a machinist & electrician for the firm. He would stay with Leslie Salt for 37 years.

Manuel began his elected civic service for the town of Decoto in February 1941 when he was chosen for the Board of Directors of the Decoto Sanitary District along with Charles Brown, George Smith, Bernie Joseph and William Hurst. Shortly thereafter he was elected to the board of the Decoto Grammar School.

Manuel was also a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce working with that body on the installation of sewer hookups throughout the town. Manuel

also worked with the chamber in June 1951 as part of the body that included G. Paniagua, Bernie Joseph, James Fine and George Swift on the rezoning of all the land between the Southern Pacific and the West Pacific tracks to make way for light industry in Decoto. At that time the land had been zoned single family residential.

In 1955 Manuel, who had been a member of the school board for 14 years, with 8 years as clerk of the board, was made president of the Decoto School Board. He was also awarded a life membership in the Decoto School PTA.

A new elementary school was to be built on Whipple Road near Hillview Crest. The new school would be named the "Manuel White School" in March 1957 by the board of the Decoto School District, honoring his 16 years of service on the school board. The new school would be built west of Mission Blvd between Tamarack Drive and Whipple Road. Today the school is known as "Barnard-White Middle School."

Alameda County School Superintendent presented Manuel a service award for his 16 years of service in September 1957. At that time Manuel had resigned his seat on the board of the Decoto School for health reasons. Oscar Dowe, President of the Union City Chamber of Commerce was appointed to replace Manuel.

On September 8, 1969 Manuel passed away in Union City.

ENGINEER:

Roland Bendel:

Roland Bendel was born in California in 1887 to Herman and Cornelia Bendel. In 1910 Roland was living with his parents in the City of Oakland where Roland was a Mechanical Engineer working for a dredging company. Roland's wife, Winifred H. Bendel was born in California in 1890. The couple had two children, Winifred E. and Roland M. Bendel.

The Bendel's first appear in Decoto in 1924, at this time Roland is a civil engineer for a local brick plant. Roland continued in that capacity and was shown in that same position in the 1930 census. Roland Bendel and family were living in Decoto in 1930. In the early 30's Roland switched occupations and became an engineer for the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District.

March 30, 1930, saw the creation of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District. The board of trustees of the district included M.J. Madison of Hayward and Roland Bendel of Decoto.

Roland pointed out the improvements in mosquito abatement in Washington Township since the formation of the district. Residents of southern Alameda County were beginning to draw dividends upon taxes paid into the mosquito abatement district fund, according to Roland Bendel of Decoto, in charge of the abatement work in this area. After months of oiling ponds, draining areas of stagnant water and planting mosquito-eating fish in bodies of fresh water throughout the district, Bendel contends, there has been a noticeable decrease in the mosquitoes this summer.

In 1937 equipment of the local branch of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District was moved into its new corporate yard. The lot is 50 by 100 feet and was located on 10th Street between "F" & "G" Streets. A small shed on the lot was used to store oil, tools and other equipment used by the force of three, headed by Roland Bendel. Two extra men were added to the force temporarily to combat conditions caused by dredging near Newark. A number of the district's ditches were blocked by the dredges and about two miles of repair work has been necessary. An extra supply of mosquitoes in this district has resulted from the clogged drainage system but the trouble was rapidly eliminated.

Besides serving his community by the eradication of mosquitoes, Roland also participated in the betterment activities of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce. In 1929 Roland launches a battle to clear Decoto of run down shacks being imported from the City of Hayward as they were being driven out from their city. The buildings were so small that they could be transported to Decoto on trucks.

The action was taken by the commercial body to prevent shacks, which have been condemned as unfit for human occupancy by the health authorities in Hayward, from being moved into Decoto. Bendel pointed out that as many as eight of these shacks have been located on a single lot in Decoto. No provisions for sanitation were made and tap water supplies as many as a dozen families, he asserted.

As early as February 1926 Roland Bendel was mentioned as a member of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department. At this time Roland was the Captain of the Fire Department.

In an effort to improve the fire fighting capability of the Decoto Fire Dept. Roland Bendel addressed the Decoto Chamber of Commerce in view of obtaining larger water mains and more fire hydrants.

The efficiency of the Decoto Fire Department was recognized in 1932 by the fire underwriters that resulted in a general reduction of 5 percent in fire insurance rates and a reduction of 10 per cent on property within 750 feet of fire hydrants. During the past year the equipment of the fire department was completely modernized.

July 1938 saw the delivery of a new 400-gallon pump fire engine by the Decoto Fire Department. A celebration with visiting firemen was planned for the occasion.

The World War brought new challenges to Bendel and the Decoto Fire Department. Of course there were always the unexpected fires that occurred, but now new duties were heaped upon the fire fighters. In July 1941 there was a countywide drive to collect aluminum to aid America prepare for the defense of our shores. In Decoto the drive was spear headed by Robert Whipple and aided by L.W. Musick and Fire Chief Roland Bendel. The Boy Scouts and the fire department assisted in making collections.

In 1944 a new pumping apparatus, built specially for grass and range fires was delivered to the Decoto Fire Department. The new engine's approximate cost was \$3,500. The engine was delivered from Oakdale in November.

Roland Bendel was honored in April 1948 to be named co-chair of the building code committee by the executive board of the Alameda County Association of Fireman in a meeting held in Ashland.

July 1950 saw another step forward by the Decoto Fire Department when Fire Chief Bendel announced the purchase of a 60 X 100 lot near the Martin & Dias Plumbing Company. This is a few doors away from the original site and plans are for a new firehouse sometime next year. The property was purchased from Mrs. Florence Hardy and was located near the present fire hall. Two old buildings will be removed to make way for the new structure.

The Decoto Fire Commission disclosed plans for the new Decoto firehouse in February 1952. The architect was Larue Sorenson of Carmel. The new firehouse will be located at 220 10th Street; the new structure will adjoin the present fire station and will be approximately 60 X 60 feet in dimension, according to Fire Chief Roland Bendel. The fire department anticipates the day when four men may be required to 24-hour duty, Bendel said, though present needs can be met with two paid firemen taking the duty on alternate nights. The department is operating solely by volunteers during the day. Anticipated costs of the new structure are less than \$40,000 Bendel said.

One of saddest accidents to ever happen near the town of Decoto was the crash of UAL Flight No. 614, on August 24, 1951. The air crash took the lives of 50 people when the UAL flight plowed into Tolman Peak in the foothills above Decoto.

A letter from United Airlines addressed to Chief Bendel read as follows:

"I want to express my sincere thanks for the superb service rendered by your personnel in connection with our recent accident of Flight No. 614, August 24, 1951 near Decoto.

All of us know that your department is frequently called upon to conduct various activities in times of emergencies, but I wish that more your citizens could hear of the outstanding and helpful type of service rendered by you in the aftermath of our accident. I thought you would like to know that we are very appreciative of your help.

Volunteer firemen, whose help the airline's official also commended, were:

Chris Guerra, acting chief; Don Martin, Captain; Joe Martin, Lieut; Joe Ferrario, Engineer; Floyd Cambra, Joe Garcia, Manuel Garcia, Gonzales Paniagua, Alf Rodrigues, Louis Leimbart and Joe Seaone

The letter signed by W.A. Patterson"

Photos From Scene of Airliner Tragedy



Above—
A PRIEST ADMINISTERS last rites for victims of an air tragedy near Decoto this morning. The plane, a giant DC-6B, was only 10 minutes away from a

scheduled landing at Oakland airport when it plowed into a ridge just 25 feet below the summit. All were killed instantly.—Acme Telephoto

Below—
ALL THAT REMAINS of the United Ate liner DC-6B which carried 30 persons to their death near Decoto on the east bay this

morning are torn and twisted scraps of metal. This is the first air disaster in which a DC-6B has been involved.—Acme Telephoto



Fire Chief Roland Bendel announced in March 1953 that two full-time firemen would be hired by the Decoto Fire District before the first of April 1953. It is anticipated the men will be able to maintain a 24-hour fire call service from the station, Bendel added. At Present, volunteer firemen alternate night duty. The new \$32,000 fire house for the Decoto district was occupied by the department in December 1952, and includes an office, meeting room, kitchen, storage space, dormitory for four men, and an area to house a possible three fire trucks.

Midway through 1954 Decoto would be changed forever, for this is when the City of Hayward conspired with the Hillview Crest housing tract to bring that sub-division into the City of Hayward. As far as Fire Chief Roland Bendel was concerned this brought about a major problem for the fire dept. Roland had

been planning a new fire station for Hillview Crest and its existence was now in doubt.

In a Community Coordinating Council meeting at the end of August 1954 Chief Bendel warned; "Watch your industries, Hayward is not interested in us. What they want is our industries. Little by little they will creep up and get those industries, and then their taxes will go down and ours will go up." What residents feared in the discussion of annexation was that Decoto residents are taxing themselves for facilities in the school and fire districts, which may revert to Hayward should Washington Township (Decoto) land be annexed to Hayward.

Fire Chief Roland Bendel created a storm when he averred in September 1954 that his fire department would not go across fire district boundaries if the Rosseau (Fairway Park) and Treeview (Hillview Crest) tracts were annexed to Hayward. The powers that be in Decoto backed Chief Bendel when he said, "if they (the sub-dividers) annex to Hayward, its Hayward's baby...we won't go into Hayward."

Hayward Fire Chief Matt Jimenez tried to work with Bendel on the impasse and in July 1955 he called Decoto Fire Chief Bendel to work out a deal where the two departments could work together. Jimenez said he offered to notify the Decoto department when alarms are received at Hayward and to let the Decoto firemen help quell the blaze. He asked the same courtesy from Bendel Jimenez said. But the Bendel said his department would continue to serve the area until lawsuits challenging Hayward's annexation have been settled. He added that if the Decoto department gets any calls it will keep them to themselves. It must be remembered that at this time Hillview Crest had voted for annexation to Hayward but the issue was held up in the courts, so technically Hillview Crest was still in Decoto.

Finally on June 14, 1955, Alameda County Assistant District Attorney Douglas Dunning confirmed that the Hayward Fire Department, and not firemen from Alvarado, Decoto, or Tennyson fire districts would be responsible for fire protection in the four square mile Hillview Crest area recently annexed to the City of Hayward.

After a weeklong jurisdictional dispute with the Decoto Fire District, the Hayward Fire Department finally took over undisputed responsibility for the Treeview annex area, including Hillview Crest, on July 18, 1955. The agreement was reached when Decoto Fire Chief Roland Bendel said that the Decoto Fire Commissioners had received formal notification from Hayward that the city had taken over the responsibility of fire protection in the area.

Roland Bendel continued on as Fire Chief for Decoto and in February 1958 he was readying his 1958-1959 budget to submit to the Decoto Fire District Commissioners. The new budget asked for expenditures of \$30,000 and \$748 during the coming fiscal year. This is \$2,000 higher than the current budget. Bendel said the current 33 cents per \$100 assessed valuation tax rate would remain the same. He said commissioners would take a week to study the proposal and consider it for final adoption at a March 11th meeting.

Decoto Fire Chief Roland Bendel and wife, Winifred, boarded the SS Lurline in September 1958 for their vacation trip to Honolulu. Mrs. Winifred Bendel was a member of the Fremont City Council.

FOREMEN:

Ernest Sequeira / William Hurst

Ernest Sequeira:

Ernest Sequeira was born in 1890 in New Bedford, Mass. In November 1908 he married Miss Mary S. Souza of Decoto. Mary Souza was born in Portugal in 1890. Mary entered the U.S. in 1906. The Sequeira's had two daughters, Ida and Alice.

Ernest was employed as a foreman in the Alvarado sugar mill in the 1920's, but he switched his occupation to being a fireman (boiler tender) in the salt works. Ernest was active in the Decoto Catholic Church, helping with the annual Holy Ghost.

Ernest was also a volunteer fireman for the Decoto Fire Department, which led to his death on June 20, 1933. Ernest was the victim of an auto crash at 10th & "H" Streets in Decoto and died that night at Highland Hospital of a fractured skull. His car struck that of Leon Mendonca, 22, while both men, members of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department, were rushing to answer an alarm caused by a grass fire near Decoto. Mendonca was exonerated of blame in the accident. Ernest Sequeira and family lived at 607 Ninth Street, Decoto.

William Hurst:

William Hurst was born in Virginia in 1890. His wife Minnie was born in Illinois in 1890. They had a daughter Thelma and a son Jay. William worked as a foreman in the brick works, which was probably the California Brick Company.

William was very active in Decoto civic affairs, first becoming a voting precinct officer for the town of Decoto in the November 1922 national election. He was also very active in the Decoto Chamber of Commerce, becoming president of the organization in 1926. During his term in office William appointed to committees to bring 24-hour telephone service to Decoto, and also to have the road between Hayward and Niles paved for better travel between the two towns.

In 1926 Will took on the job as one of the three fire commissioners for the town of Decoto. In this position he worked with the other two fire commissioners, Raymond McNulty and Antone Amaral; and Fire Chief Walter Walker and Fire Captain Roland Bendel.

As if Will was indefatigable, the Chamber of Commerce appointed him chairman of the committee to create a sanitary district for the town of Decoto and rid the town of the cesspools that create a clear and present danger. Will joined with Walter Walker, George Smith, Jose Soito, John L. Olson, S.K. Anderson and Peter Decoto on the committee. It took over a decade to complete the job but it was done.

Sometimes you have to print an entire newspaper article to get the full flavor of the writing. So here from *The Oakland Tribune* of March 23, 1937, is the reelection of Will Hurst in Decoto for the position of Fire Commissioner:

"Decoto was scheduled to hold its annual election last Monday (April 7th). But it didn't, it forgot to.

The event was duly announced, advertised and prepared for. But when Election Day came it completely slipped everybody's mind. City commissioners forgot to establish a balloting place and if there was one voter in the community who didn't forget to vote, he registered no complaint when he was unable to find a polling place.

Today the ballots that had been prepared turned up in the drawer of someone's desk, all of them as clean of marks as the day they left the printing press. And now Decoto wants to know what it can do about it. Fire Chief Roland Bendel has written to District Attorney Earl Warren asking for advice.

Fire Commissioner William Hurst, who was to have been re-elected, finds himself in office without a vote having been cast. He doesn't know whether he's still fire commissioner or not. No one has ousted him. But, on the other, no one has voted him into another term.

Hurst's name was the only one on the ballot, and that, Bendel feels, was the reason why the election was marked by so little interest and so much forgetting. "The fire commissioner's election is not taken very seriously out here in the country," the fire chief explained in his letter. "There is seldom a contest, and it is asking a great deal for the poll watchers to sit around all day for about a half dozen voters."

Bendel suggested that Warren think up some legal way of consolidating hereafter the fire commissioner's election with the annual school election, which comes a week earlier, and asked what could be done about the present situation."

If you are wondering about Earl Warren, yes this is the same Earl Warren who became Chief Supreme Court Justice under President Eisenhower in the early 50's.

Also in March 1937, Will Hurst received his ten-year pin for service to the Decoto Boy Scouts along with Frank Ferry, 10 years; and Richard Silva, five years.

The directors for the Decoto Sanitary District in February 1941 were Charles Brown, George Smith, Bernie Joseph, Manuel White and William Hurst. Shortly after this Will Hurst resigned his post on the board. It seems that Will Hurst was not living in Decoto in 1940, for he showed his residence at that time as Richmond California where he was employed as a manager of a brick plant.

HOTEL:

J. Littlejohn:

There is very scant information on the Littlejohn's. On March 6, 1921, M. Littlejohn and Harold Littlejohn were reported to have smallpox. Harold recovered and was up and around by March 27, 1921. Then on April 10, 1921 it was reported that J. Littlejohn and family had closed their hotel in Decoto and had moved to Manteca. Nothing further was found for the Littlejohn's.

INSPECTOR:

Eva Swanson:

Eva Swanson was born in 1902 in Texas to Peter and Emma Swanson. Eva was one of eight children.

Eva graduated from the Decoto Grammar School in 1916 with classmates: Helen Fostene, Louise Hanley, Aurora Maciel, Felix Plaza, Mabel Ponte, Joe Swartz and Ed Swartz.

In 1920 Eva was employed by the Western Electric Company as an inspector. Her sister Marie also worked for Western Electric as a bookkeeper. This is the final entry I could find for Eva Swanson.

MANAGERS/SUPERINTENDENTS:

George Smith, M&S Tile / Lester Duffy, California Brick Co.

George Smith, M & S Tile:

George L. Smith was born in California in 1896. His wife Geneva was born in California in 1897. In 1930 they show they had two children: George and Leonard.

George made his presence known in Decoto when he spearheaded a drive in December 1925 to mandate 24-hour a day telephone service for the town of Decoto. At that time there was no night or Sunday afternoon telephone service in the town of Decoto. A petition was presented to the telephone company's local agent, John L. Olson.

Realizing the imperative need of continuous telephone service for Decoto, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company commenced work of installing a telephone booth in the waiting room of the Decoto Southern Pacific depot on April 17, 1926. This would afford local residents all-night service. The improvement was the result of a request fathered by the Decoto Chamber of Commerce at a meeting at which George Smith was appointed chairman of a committee to confer with the telephone company officials relative to the need of twenty-four-hour service.

Meanwhile George was busy with his business partner, John Meneze, in a venture called the M&S Tile Company. In May 1926 the new company was on the brink of beginning business when a burner was installed in a new kiln at the plant. This is electrifying the production of the concern with installation of power lines. The electrification was started the following week by employees of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

The M&S Tile Company manufactured specialty and decorative tile for homes and businesses. The business received a shot in the arm when they supplied tile for new homes in Oakland at the intersection of Mountain Road and Mountain Boulevard. Dubbed "a lane in Spain" by the builders, the Flagg Co., 36 homes were to be built here. Given plenty of press by the *Oakland Tribune* the article boasted:

"The arched entrance gives access to an attractive living room, which is featured with a beam ceiling, a red brick fireplace and a tiled floor. This tile, manufactured by the M&S Tile Company of Decoto Calif., is red in color and hexagonal in pattern. Though sometimes seen in large and expensive homes, it is declared by the builders to be an innovation in homes of this size."

Fire of disputed origin on March 12, 1935 inflicted about \$5,000 damage to the plant of the M&S Tile Company was located on the Niles Road in Decoto. Work of the Decoto Fire Department averted possible loss of the entire plant, with a value estimated at more than \$20,000 and several nearby homes. The blaze was discovered in the plant office about 11 o'clock. It spread to machinery and equipment in the mixing room and the blacksmith shop, destroying them. Records in the office were also destroyed. The plant was owned by George Smith, Joseph Bettencourt and Mrs. Joseph Rose. The fire department was aided by neighbors in confining the blaze to a limited area.

Within several months the tile plant was rebuilt and M&S Tile was back in business. M & S Tile continued with making high end and specialty tile and in July 1952 they were actively promoting their specialty tile.

Lester Duffy, California Brick Co.:

Lester J. Duffy was born in California in 1889. His wife Gladys was born in California in 1893. They had one daughter Patricia born in 1917.

In 1910 Lester was single and living in Sacramento in a large lodging house (with approximately fifty other men) of various fields of employment. At this time Lester was working as an electrician.

In 1920 Lester was living in Decoto and was working as an electrician for the California Brick Plant in Decoto. By 1926 he was made the superintendent of California Brick Co. in Decoto.

By 1933 Lester was a member of the Niles Chamber of Commerce and was assigned the task by the Niles Chamber to represent them at a meeting at the Decoto Firehouse on April 28, 1933, to support an action to attempt to save the Decoto Southern Pacific train station from being abandoned.

In 1936 Lester was the superintendent of the W.S. Dickey Clay Products plants at Niles and Livermore as by this time the Decoto plant was shutting down. By 1940 Lester was working for as a foreman for Kraftile in Niles. He had also moved to Nursery Road (today's Alvarado Niles Road) sometime in the 1930's.

MFG, CANNERS, AND LARGE EMPLOYERS:

Decoto Sand and Gravel / P.C. Hansen Lumber Co. / K. Hovden Cannery Co. / Kings County Packing Co. / M&S Tile Co. / Tracy Waldron Fruit Packing Co. / Salz Cannery / Better Pack Canning Co. / Federal Army Depot / Willits Const. Co

Decoto Sand & Gravel:

On July 20, 1925, the Decoto Sand & Gravel Co. opened its doors to the public. They claimed to have the best in sand and gravel available in the East Bay region. Mr. Joseph Costello, owner of the San Leandro quarry was the head of the Decoto Sand & Gravel Co. After this entry no other information was found for the gravel company. The 1929 R.G. Dunn Mercantile Business Report does not list the Decoto Sand & Gravel Co. as doing business in Decoto.

P.C. Hansen Lumber Co.:

The P.C. Hansen Lumber Co. was a branch of the Centerville headquartered lumber company that operated yards in Niles, Centerville, Irvington, Decoto and Alvarado. They featured building materials, fuels, feed, paints & hardware.

K. Hovden Canning Company:

The sale of the Decoto Cannery to the K. Hovden Co. of Monterey, California, was announced in October 1921. It appears the cannery continued to operate under the name the Decoto Cannery for a period of about five years. Then in mid-June 1926 the plant is referred to as the K. Hovden Cannery.

The K. Hovden Canning Company, a branch of the K. Hovden sardine processing plant of Monterey, re-opened in mid June 1926 in Decoto after a lay-off of three months with the largest crew employed during the past year. The Decoto plant had previously been operated by the King Packing Company, however I could not determine exactly when the Decoto plant switched ownership.

The superintendent of the Decoto operation was Mr. Keuhne. The plant had just finished their run in peaches in September 1926 and was going to start the packing the canning of tomatoes. Practically the entire crop of Washington Township tomatoes was used in the work.

At this time the Hovden Canning Co. was proposing an enlargement of the Decoto cannery and this was one of the reasons advanced for the installation of a sewer system in Decoto. Local businessmen believed that \$50,000 would easily cover the cost of the system, inasmuch as it would not be necessary to install a disposal tank as in the case of other Washington Township communities. It was planned to pipe the refuse into the Bay.

The R.G. Dunn Mercantile Business Report shows the company still doing business in 1929 and an in August 1930 cites "Decoto has a large cannery devoted to the exclusive production of tomato sauce used in the canning of sardines. Its annual output is about 20,000 cases." As the Hovden Company owns a large sardine canning plant in Monterey it is safe to assume that the article above refers to the K. Hovden Cannery in Decoto. The final article I could find in Decoto for the K. Hovden Company was 1932.

Kings County Packing Co., Cannery:

The Kings County Packing Company, canners of fruits and vegetables, were reported to have a plant in Decoto in 1925 identified as Kings County Packing Plant No. 4.

From *The Oakland Tribune* of June 20, 1926:

"Opening of the K. Hovden Canning Company was effected after a lay-off of three months, with the largest crew employed during the past year. The company is working on apricots and will continue for five months, probably into November, according to Manager Keuhne. The plant, which was formerly occupied by the Kings County Packing Company, has been remodeled."

Nothing further was found for the Kings County Packing Company in Decoto. This is the only information I could find for the King Packing Co. in northern California. There was a King Packing Company in southern California.

M & S Tile Co., Roof Tiles:

The M&S Tile Co. was started in May 1926 by George L. Smith and John Meneze. See George's bio under "Managers/Superintendents" in this chapter. By the beginning of June 1926 they were manufacturing roof tiles and other terra cotta items in their plant in Decoto.

The advertisement reproduced below is from *The Oakland Tribune* of May 27, 1928:

~~~~~  
HAND MADE ROOF TILES  
For the California Columbarium  
*Furnished by*

**M & S TILE CO**  
DECOTO CAL.

~~~~~

The following year (Sept. 1929) M&S Tile was featured in the newly built A.J. & J.S. Flagg homes at Mountain Boulevard and Redwood Road (Oakland Highlands), which used a large amount of Spanish tile in the construction of these homes. The Spanish motif was strongly emphasized in these attractive homes and the tract was designated as "A Lane in Spain." The floor tiling in the living rooms was manufactured by the M & S Tile Company of Decoto, Calif., and is particularly striking, and is laid in a hexagonal pattern, reminiscent of the typically Spanish home of old.

In 1930 Decoto had three plants specializing in the production of roofing tile. One of these, M & S Tile, produced hand-made tiles, which simulates the age of the old mission roofs and was used in the construction of palatial homes in all sections of the state. This plant also produced hand-made Mexican pottery, which was sold throughout the country.

The M&S Tile Company was awarded a contract in June 1933 for furnishing the entire roofing tile to be used on the buildings being constructed by the

government at the Marin County bombing base. This contract, together with other existing orders would keep the local plant operating full time for at least another year. This was the second large contract from the bombing base to be awarded to a Decoto concern. The W.S. Dickey Clay Products Company (California Brick Co. Decoto) was producing the brick and building tile used in constructing the buildings on the reservation.

A fire of disputed origin on March 12, 1935, inflicted about \$5,000 damage to the M & S Tile Co. The work of the Decoto Fire Department averted possible loss of the entire plant, with a value estimated at more than \$20,000, and several nearby homes. The blaze was discovered in the plant office about 11 o'clock. It spread to machinery and equipment in the mixing room and the blacksmith shop, destroying them. Records in the office were also destroyed. George Smith, Joseph Bettencourt and Mrs. Joseph Rose owned the plant at this time.

The final entry I could find for the M& S Tile Co. was an ad placed in *The Oakland Tribune* in 1952:

Genuine Spanish Mission
★ **DRAIN TILE**
★ **PATIO TILE**
California's Only Manufacturer of Genuine
Hand-made Spanish Mission Tile
•
WE FURNISHED ALL OF THE SPANISH MISSION
TILE USED IN THE RESTORATION OF THE SAN
CARLOS MISSION, SAN ANTONIO MISSION,
SAN RAFAEL MISSION, AND MANY OTHERS.
•
"Roof The California Way"
M & S TILE CO.
DECOTO, CALIF. Phone 2-7456

Tracy Waldron Fruit Packing:

Tracy Waldron is first mentioned in a November 1925 article in *The Oakland Tribune* stating that the Tracy Waldron Fruit Packing Company in Decoto was one of the ten largest employers in Decoto in 1925.

Tracy Waldron was a San Francisco based company whose influence extended from northern California to Fresno and included both fruits and vegetables.

In January 1926, Joseph Mendonca, superintendent of the packinghouse stated that due to the cold weather the area had experienced farmers had ceased their production of cauliflower. Several carloads of produce were then ready for shipment to points on the Atlantic seaboard, but the cars were being held until the cold spell subsides. Cauliflower shipments would reach their peak mark sometime toward the latter part of February or early March if the cold spell would break.

A large loss was suffered by the local farmers in their cauliflower crop in December 1926 according to Joseph Mendonca the local superintendent of the

Tracy-Waldron packinghouse. At the first of the season it was estimated that 500 carloads would be shipped from this Decoto. But due to recent storms the cauliflower in the fields has been ruined. Mendonca would only ship 50 cars of local cauliflower this year.

Apparently Tracy Waldron had enough of bad experiences in Washington Township and there was no mention of the company after December 1926.

Salz Canning Co.:

In February 1920 the Better Pack Canning Co. broke ground at Decoto preparatory to the construction of buildings made necessary by the purchase of holdings of the Salz Canning Company.

Better Pack Canning Co.:

The Pleasanton firm of Charles Bruce & Sons moved their equipment to Decoto where ground was broken preparatory to the construction of a new set of buildings for the Better Pack Canning Company of Decoto. The Better Pack Canning Company, which some week's prior had taken over the interests of the Salz Canning Company. The new company was composed of Frank Garatti and Ambrose Revolti of Pleasanton and Charles Ferrario of Livermore. The new owners were all well-known residents in Murray Township and were formerly connected with the wine industry there on an extensive scale. When the death knell was sounded and their interests closed, they immediately decided to embark in the canning business in Decoto.

On February 14, 1920 a newspaper article saw the Better Pack Canning Co. sign a building contract with C.A. Bruce, for an addition to plant to cost \$8,800. Also it was stated that the company had bought lots 1 to 12 inclusive and 25 to 36 inclusive, in Block C in the town of Decoto.

On February 28, 1920 ground was broken at the Better Pack Canning Co. in Decoto for additions to be made to the former property of the Salz Canning Co. of Decoto, now owned by the Better Pack Canning Co. The first unit will be finished by the opening of the canning season.

The new cannery would open for business when cherry season started, and would remain open all through the summer to can both fruits and vegetables. The latest machinery for cooking fruits, etc., and the most efficient methods of handling deliveries and shipments were installed. When the machinery has been placed it will be on of the best-equipped canneries in the county.

In July 1920 the Better Pack Canning Company started its fall season and prepared for a long run. The apricot run was started in July and the cannery was equipped to use 100 cutters, in addition to other help. This was the final entry I could find for Better Pack Cannery in Decoto.

Federal Army Depot:

The new government shops and warehouses at Decoto for the storage and repair of Army trucks were being erected rapidly in July 1920. By this date there were already 300 trucks on the grounds. The various buildings will cover about six acres and will be a storage plant for trucks from all Army camps of the United States. In October 1920 the T & D News Weekly feature

at the T & D Theater included an update on the construction work on the government's new \$5,000,000 motor transportation equipment depot at Decoto.

Willits Const. Co.:

Formerly the Willets-Burr Construction Co.
See Chapter 06 page 12 for more about this company

MECHANIC, CONST CO.:

Oscar Swanson:

Oscar Swanson was born in 1905 in California to Peter A. & Emma Swanson. In 1920, at the age of 15 years, Oscar was working as a construction mechanic while he was living in Decoto with his parents. In 1930 he relocated to San Francisco where he was living as a lodger and was still engaged as a construction mechanic.

MERCHANTS:

Tony and Mary Ramos / Frank J. Thomas, Cactus Garden / Manuel Mello, Nursery Owner

Tony & Mary Ramos:

Tony Ramos was born in Spain circa 1889. He entered the U.S. in 1911. His wife Mary was born in Spain circa 1893. She also entered the U.S. in 1911. They had four natural children and one adopted son. They had four daughters: Annie was born in 1914 in Hawaii; Jessie was born in 1917 in California; Mary was born in 1920 in California; Josephine was born in 1923 in California; and adopted a son Tony who was born in 1932 in California.

Tony Ramos was first shown in Decoto in January 1927 when he underwent an operation in Hayward General Hospital.

On May 6, 1931 Tony suffered a serious incident that impacted the rest of his life. His poolroom in Decoto was raided and Sheriff's Deputies found 51 barrels of assorted wines on the premises. The authorities came down hard on Tony handing him a \$1,000 fine, which was increased by another \$1,924.30 for internal revenue tax he had avoided paying. In addition Judge Jacob Harder of Hayward fined him \$250.

The total of \$2,924.30 claimed by the government stood as a lien against the property until Ramos pays, according to the sheriff. This is the first known time in the county that the federal government has stepped in to collect internal revenue taxes after raids disclosed large liquor holdings.

Despondent and ill, Tony Ramos, 45, proprietor of the 4th Street General Store and poolroom in Decoto, locked himself in his room and took his own life in July 1934. Ramos was survived by his widow and five children.

Undaunted, Mary Ramos carried on the business at the general store on Fourth Street. Annie and then Mary helped Mrs. Ramos keep the store open and the keep family together. But Mrs. Ramos was destined to suffer more hurdles in her life when in September 1935 a fire of undetermined origin swept through the Ramos block taking with it a garage, a sedan, three barns,

a barbershop, poolroom and damaged her grocery and general merchandise store. Efforts of the Decoto, Niles, Centerville and Newark fire department saved the Ramos cottage next to the garage, a main store room, and two adjoining apartments and a number of frame residences surrounding. The property was owned by Mrs. Mary Ramos and was operated by herself, her son-in-law, Joe Boliba, and three daughters. The loss was partially covered by insurance. The Ramos property was just a block from the M&S Tile plant, which suffered a \$5,000 loss by fire several months ago.

Just two days later another fire, this of a very suspicious origin, imperiled the entire family of Mr. & Mrs. A. Bolivia while their family were asleep in their home at 7th and "F" Streets. The fire broke out in the basement. Simultaneously, another blaze started in the garage burning one car.

Fire Chief Roland Bendel of Decoto who made an investigation of the premises following the fire discovered oil soaked rags in the basement of the Bolivia home. Similar evidence was found in the garage. Damage to the house negligible. Bolivia, aroused by smoke, turned in the alarm. The Bolivia's are related to the late Tony Ramos whose property was burned in a \$10,000 blaze on Thursday. Fire Department officials and police indicated a "grudge arson" plot might be the cause of the blazes.

As the children grew they married. Annie, the oldest daughter, married Joe Boliba, who lived next to Mrs. Ramos and helped run the store. Later Joe would operate the Niles Garden Basket grocery store. Jessie married John Del Crew, who for several years ran Mrs. Ramos' 4th Street Market before moving to Modesto to start his own business. Mary married Ken Garcia who would buy the Decoto Bakery and Grocery from Alex Ferrante. Ken would become very involved in the incorporation of Alvarado and Decoto and he would become Union City's first Fire Chief. Josephine "Babe" Ramos married Frank Robiejo of Ashland. Tony married Miss Virginia Mottershaw from Niles after having served in the U.S. Navy.

Mrs. Mary Ramos, 63, who for forty years operated a Decoto grocery store, died August 13, 1957, at a Hayward hospital. Since retiring, Mrs. Ramos, who lived most of her life in Decoto and Hayward, had been residing with a daughter, Mrs. Josephine Robiejo in Hayward. A native of Spain, she was the widow of the late Tony Ramos, and mother of Mrs. Josephine Robiejo, Mrs. Annie Boliba, and Mrs. Jessie Del Crew of Niles, Mrs. Mary Garcia and Tony Ramos of Decoto. She was the sister of Mrs. Antoinette Leiva, Mrs. Jenny Seoane, all of Decoto, and Bernard Lopez of Hayward.

Cactus Garden, Frank J. Thomas:

Frank J. Thomas was born in California in 1890. His wife Odyssa (Rose) Thomas was born in California in 1891. They had one daughter, Isabel. Frank Thomas' main occupation seemed to be that of a manufacturer and installer of roof tile. The 1929 R.G. Dunn Mercantile Report reported that he was also in the tile business as well as operating a service station in Decoto.

The 1930 census showed that Frank Thomas was a manufacturer of roof tile and his wife Rose was the operator of a service station, for which she received no pay; meaning that it was a family business.

Frank and Rose were ardent fans of cacti and succulent plants, having a small farm in Decoto where they apparently propagated a growing number of these plants. In January 1931 Rose Thomas was surprised by a letter from Japan, with a Japanese Money Order inside, for purchase of some of her cacti. Mrs. Thomas was at a loss to know how her name as a grower of cactus plants reached far-off Japan.

The Alameda County Fair in July 1931 honored the Thomas' by asking them to handle the cactus display at the fair. Mr. Thomas had become a noted grower of cacti and succulents in Washington Township. He had been very successful in propagating several new varieties on his Decoto farm.

As the years passed the Thomas' fame continued to grow in the small community of Decoto. In September 1933 Mrs. Thomas showed one of her rarest specimens to visitors, the *Cereus Triangularis*, or the night blossoming cereus. This cactus is especially rare in northern districts and her night blossoming cactus was the particular pride of Mrs. Thomas. One plant in her Decoto cacti gardens has 200 blossoms on it. The blossoms are from 10 to 12 inches in width, a starred circle of soft white fingers stretching from a golden center of spun fiber that has the appearance of silk yarn.

The blossoms are exceedingly delicate and short-lived. Subjected to light, they will wilt immediately, and the life of the blossoms is, at best, six hours. Confronted with these complications, Mrs. Thomas attempted to devise a means of exhibiting these rare blossoms with her display of cacti and succulents at the ninth annual California Flower Festival, which had its premiere in the Durant-De Vaux Building on the evening of Thursday, September 14, 1933. But she said, even though it is impossible to show the night blossoming cereus, her display will include more than a score of other blossoming cacti, with their vivid desert colors and their strangely fine texture.

The Thomas Cactus Gardens of Decoto were awarded three ribbons at the Spring Garden Show in Oakland held in April 1935. A blue ribbon was awarded to the Thomas' for the best cactus, and two second ribbons for a garden display and a collection of succulents. The following week their cacti were shown at the flower show in Sacramento.



The night-blooming *Cereus* is legendary for its huge white blossoms that unfurl at night. A local artist gives parties when her plant is ready to bloom. Painters and photographers come just to witness the fragrant 10" flowers open and perfume the night air.

As their fame grew so did the visitors to the Thomas Cactus Gardens in Decoto. Hundreds of tourists visit the gardens to see the varied assortment of rare cacti plants and Mexican pottery on display there.

The Thomas Cactus Gardens were located on the main highway in Decoto and known to thousands of rock-garden enthusiasts. Blue ribbons and medals from State fairs and Metropolitan Oakland flower shows have been won by the Thomas Cactus Gardens, bringing publicity to this community.



The Thomas's achieved another coup when they showed the rare "Puya," of the Bromeliads family (found in the mountains of Chile) in the Hall of Flowers at Treasure Island in June 1939. Mr. Thomas searched all California for one of these blooms, only to find it within twenty miles of the Exposition in the East Bay. The flower spike has myriads of flowers two inches across, greenish blue in color, and attains a height of five feet. Mr. Thomas also showed 12 rare Epiphyllums in the Hall of Flowers.

The Thomas' were more than just about cacti and succulents. They were also stalwart proponents of progress for the town of Decoto and of preserving our national security.

Frank Thomas served our country during World War I, having gone overseas to fight against the Austria-Germany Empire. Here he was wounded and received the Purple Heart.

In 1932 Frank and Rose Thomas were both members of the Hayward VFW. In 1935 Frank Thomas was elected as president of the Decoto Junior Chamber of Commerce. The first two goals set by Thomas was the replacement of the Bell Ranch Bridge on Decoto Road, which was in a dangerous condition. The Junior Chamber also took on the Pacific Telephone Company and their toll charge fees. The Chamber wanted PT&T to end their 5¢ toll charge for calls between Niles, Centerville, Decoto and Alvarado.

In the summer of 1935 Frank spearheaded a drive to clean up the town of Decoto (trash wise). A campaign of "clean-up, Paint-up, Fix-up" that was established by the Junior Chamber of Commerce was a definite success. Two trucks lent for the effort by Charles Janeiro and Ray Soares, also a county truck with driver was provided by Joseph Gomez, who was the Roadmaster for Decoto. All were kept busy hauling away cans, rubbish and other material placed in available spots by residents.

Also in the summer of 1935 Frank Thomas joined with Peter Decoto (presidents of the Jr. & Sr. Chambers respectively) in starting petitions in circulation to determine the wish of this community regarding a sewerage system. The campaign for signatures for petitions to create a sanitary sewer

district for Decoto was going ahead. In charge of the petitions are Walter Walker, Peter Decoto, Joseph Calderia and Frank Thomas.

A carnival to benefit the Boy Scout Troop of Decoto was held in Decoto on May 5th to 10th (1936) under the auspices of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and Frank Thomas. The Carnival featured eight different rides and a number of concessions. It was located at the corner of the Decoto and the Niles-Hayward Road. A percentage of the profits were used for Boy Scout work. Assisting Thomas with arrangements were Ray Soares and J.P. Kelly.

Frank Thomas still had an occupation, and that was roofing. In August 1940 Frank returned to his Decoto home after an extensive stay at Oxnard Calif. Mr. Thomas, an expert on tile work, was the superintendent of roofing construction on a unit of the new women's state hospital at Camarillo. There was a four-year building program under way there, with four more units to be built at the hospital.

On January 6, 1946, the following ad appeared in *The Oakland Tribune* Classified Ads:

COUNTRY LAND:
Highway Business Property
250 feet by 90 feet in Decoto on Niles Road
Two houses, Cactus Nursery, tile kiln with moulds
Phone **H**Ighgate 7700, Oakland

Frank Thomas had put up his cactus gardens and tile operation for sale. By May 1946 the business was sold to Mr. McHenry and the business would have a new name, "Cactus Macs."

On June 9, 1952, Frank Thomas died suddenly at Somerset California (near gold country). Frank had been past Commander of Post 1882 Hayward VFW, Hayward Post 68 of the American Legion, Red Jacket Tribe No. 26 of Redmen Sacramento, the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 59, and Mother Lode Lions Club of Diamond Springs.

Manuel Mello, Nursery Owner:

Manuel Mello was born in November 1887 in California to Joseph and Emma Mello. Manuel never married. In 1920 and 1930 he showed that he was the owner of a nursery. I was not able to find the location or the name of the nursery. In 1940 he was farming in Centerville when he passed on January 10, 1945

PLUMBER/PIPE FITTER:

John (Jack) Duarte:

John was born in California in 1888 to Joseph and Mary Duarte. John had a brother Nicholas and a sister Anna both whom, like their parents, were born in Portugal. Only John was born in the U.S.

John married Miss Minnie Mello from Decoto. Minnie was born in California in 1891. John & Minnie were married in the Catholic Church in Centerville near

the end of December 1908. Both had lived and attended the public school in Decoto. They had a daughter Lurline born in 1911.

John was employed by the Alvarado sugar mill as a laborer, but by 1920 he was working as a plumber at the mill. Sometime before 1930 John switched occupations and went to work at the salt works as a pipe fitter.

John's wife Minnie worked in the cannery for many years and in 1938 she was elected as a trustee of the AFL Cannery Worker's Union of Southern California.

John (Jack) Duarte, 61, a native of Decoto (who has spent the last ten years in Hayward) died on August 24, 1949, at his home. He was the husband of Mrs. Minnie Duarte and father of Mrs. Lurline Mendoza of Niles.

POSTMASTER:

John L. Olson:

See bio in Chapter 05 page 5

RAILROADS:

Orlando B. Merrick / Lyman C. Page / Douglas H. Roberts / Charles Butts / Western Pacific Railroad

Orlando B. Merrick, SP Station Agent:

O.B. Merrick was born in California in 1890. His wife Mary C. Merrick was born in California in 1898. They had one daughter, Ida L., who was born in California in 1913.

The Southern Pacific Railroad employed Orlando B. Merrick in 1920 where he served as the station agent in Vina, Tehama County, California. In July 1925 he was transferred to Decoto as station agent. Orlando was only in Decoto for about 14 months, but during that time he managed to make his mark on the town.

By November 1926 Mr. Merrick had been elected as Secretary of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce. Orlando worked on the committee tasked to request the California Automobile Association to place guide signs on the highway leading to Decoto to identify the town and make Decoto a visiting place along the highway.

Mr. Merrick also served on the Chamber when obtaining street signs for the town was being pushed. Mrs. Merrick was a voting precinct official for election while they were in Decoto.

D.H. Roberts of Sunol was appointed Decoto agent of the Southern Pacific in October 1926 to succeed O.B. Merrick, who recently was promoted to the position of traveling freight agent with offices in Oakland. Roberts has been employed at Sunol for the railroad company during the past five years.

Orlando Merrick was living in Oakland in 1920 but he had changed his occupation to that of a salesman in a feed company.

Lyman C. Page, SP Station Agent:

Lyman Page was born in 1878 in Ohio. His wife Sophie was born in 1881 in Minnesota. They had two sons, Logan and Kenneth and a daughter Bernice. In 1915 Lyman purchased a lot from Henry Slem and built his home. In 1920 Lyman gave his occupation as station agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad in Decoto.

In June 1923 Lyman placed the following ad in *The Oakland Tribune*:

"COUNTRY PROPERTY:

A modern 5-room bungalow; 4 large lots, 65 fruit trees, on main street, Decoto, 20 miles from Oakland, beautiful view of Masonic Home. Price: \$4,500, terms.

Owner: L.C. Page, Box 133, Decoto, California."

In 1929 Mrs. L.C. Page of Oakland came back to Decoto to visit friends.

Douglas H. Roberts, SP Station Agent:

Douglas Roberts was born in Missouri in 1888. His wife Julia was born in Utah in 1891. They had a daughter Louise born in 1911. In 1910 Douglas was a telegraph operator in Berkeley California. Douglas came to Decoto in October 1926 to replace O.B. Merrick. Douglas was a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce in December 1926. But after this nothing further was found in Decoto for Mr. Roberts. I did locate him in Oakland in 1930 where he was working for the SP as a telegrapher.

Charles Butts, WP Station Agent:

Charles Butts was born in New York in 1858. The 1920 census shows Mr. Butts living in a rented home in Decoto. He was single and showed his employment as station agent for the Western Pacific Railroad. Nothing could be found for Mr. Butts after this.

Western Pacific Railroad:

Construction crews made up of more than 200 men started to work on the San Jose branch of the Western Pacific Railroad in November 1920. The line will branch from the Oakland-Niles main line at Decoto and run directly to San Jose through the easterly suburbs and then circle the southern part of that city to a station in the western suburbs. A station will also be located in East San Jose on Alum Rock Avenue. It is known that the plans of the company call for a continuation of the line to Los Gatos, ten miles beyond San Jose.

In July 1927 the State Railroad Commission denied an application by the Western Pacific railroad for permission to remove a spur track located near the station of Decoto, Alameda County. The commission announced that it would entertain a new application for the removal of the spur at the end of one year if business does not justify maintaining the track.

Failure of the Western Pacific to pave its crossing on the newly opened Decoto-Centerville Road has caused the Decoto Chamber of Commerce to forward a resolution to company headquarters in September 1927, asking for the immediate improvement of this danger spot, according to R. Bendel,

Secretary of the chamber. This gap in the pavement, Bendel explained, is not noticed by motorists who have taken their eyes off of the road to look for approaching trains. Unless the crossing is completed in the near future it may be the cause of a serious accident, he asserted. In October 1927 the Western Pacific the Western Pacific paved the railroad crossing on the Decoto-Centerville Road.

RESTAURANT:

Mrs. Helen Blanchard:

Mr. Blanchard of Niles canyon opened a lunch and soft drink parlor in Decoto on April 25, 1925. This is the only article on Mr. Blanchard but the R.G. Dunn Mercantile Report of 1929 lists Mrs. Helen A. Blanchard as the owner of a restaurant in Decoto. Nothing could be found locally other than the above about the Blanchard's.

SCHOOL TEACHERS & TRUSTEES:

Albert N. Benson / E.G. Wood / Allison P. Peacock / Henry May / John Sandholdt / Henry C. Searles / John Whipple / Miss Viola George / Miss Emma Young / Miss Gertrude May / Miss L. Alvord / Miss Tillie Goold / Miss Carrie Entriksen / Miss Beulah Meyers / Mrs. Ruby L. Rogers / Mrs. Emma Miller / Mrs. Grace Hawley Erickson

Albert N. Benson, Principal:

Albert Benson was born in California in 1888. Albert was single and never married. He was teaching in the Decoto Grammar School in 1920. He was renting a home in Decoto and sharing it with Mrs. Emma McNulty and her son Raymond McNulty.

Peter Decoto was appointed Scoutmaster of the Decoto Troop with Harry Haines is his assistant in May 1924. On the Boy Scout Committee were: Harry Searles (chairman), Herbert Harrold, A.N. Benson, J.L. Olson, Antone Amaral, Manuel Caldeira, Henry May, Raymond McNulty, M.L. Avilla and Enos Pimentel.

E.G. Wood of Byron, a former student of the Washington High School, accepted the position of principal the Decoto Grammar School to succeed Albert N. Benson, who would assume principalship of an Oakland school.

Albert then moved to San Leandro where he shared a rented home with Mrs. Emma McNulty and son Raymond McNulty. As of the 1940 census the three were still sharing the home on Dutton Avenue in San Leandro.

E.G. Wood, Principal:

E.G. Wood of Byron, a former student of the Washington High School, was announced at the new principal of the Decoto Grammar School to succeed Albert N. Benson, who will assume principalship of an Oakland school.

I could not find any bio information about Mr. Wood, even though he was a former student of Washington High School. Mr. Wood was old enough to have a son in the Navy in 1926. But by end of the semester in 1926 Mr. Wood and family moved to Armona (west of Visalia) to pursue business interests.

Allison P. Peacock, Principal:

Allison P. Peacock was born in England circa 1897 to Allison A. & Elsie Peacock. The family entered the U.S. in 1897 and almost immediately settled in Mayfield Township (near Palo Alto, Santa Clara County), where the senior Allison was a carpenter. Later the senior Allison would become a farmer and dealer of hay and grain the Santa Clara County.

Allison P. Peacock was referred to as Prescott in the 1900 census, after that he was always referred to as Allison P. Peacock. Allison started his career in the Mayfield School District of Santa Clara County, which was located in the southern section of Palo Alto. In August 1926 Allison Peacock was elected principal of the Decoto Grammar School to replace E.G. Wood who had left for Fresno County.

Allison Peacock was married circa 1924 to Mrs. Gladys Peacock, who was born in the State of Washington in 1901. The Peacock's did not have any children according to the 1930 census. Mrs. Peacock was a housewife although there reports that she filled in as a substitute teacher in the Decoto Grammar School when needed.

The staff at the Decoto School when Allison Peacock took the reins as principal was: Miss Tillie Logan (daughter of James Logan and future wife of J.V. "Pop" Goold, Superintendent of Washington Hi), Miss Carrie Entriksen, Miss Beulah Meyers, Mrs. Ruby L. Rogers, Mrs. Emma Miller and Mrs. Grace Hawley Erickson.

Mr. Peacock was immediately challenged with an increase in the population of students at the Decoto School. Mr. Peacock recommended the building of a second wing to the recently completed main building. In March 1927 there were 317 children on the rolls of the school. In 1926 there were only 220 and indications are that the classrooms would be overcrowded when the term opens next fall.

Mr. Peacock created some ingenious methods to interest his students in class work. In 1930, under the direction of Miss Marion Pender, the art teacher, they would not have to leave their desks to consult the wall maps, unless they want the name of some obscure tributary of an unimportant stream. This was because the pupils made maps of sufficient size to permit inspection from any part of the classroom. When completed they showed the location of cities, rivers, mountains, etc., but also the principal products of each section would be shown by pictures.

The boys and girls competed for the map-making honors of the school. When their work was completed the best maps would be selected for hanging in the classroom. Various kinds of maps were made. While they are not so spectacular, some of the most interesting are those being made of modeling clay. The various continents are being modeled in relief to show the proportionate height of the mountain ranges and plateaus. A.P. Peacock, the principal, was so well pleased with the work being done by the pupils that he made the maps the principal part of the school's exhibit during education week.

Mr. Peacock was also a very interesting citizen of Decoto. Mr. Peacock was a breeder of fine birds. He had a coop of pigeons in his backyard and received top dollar from the sale of squabs (squabs are young pigeons bred for the dinner table) to the locals.

Mr. Peacock also invested heavily in real property around Decoto. He had his own home on Whipple Road, but he also had several lots he bought and commenced to build rental units.

Allison Peacock started to demonstrate a few years ago that it is possible for a man to realize a comfortable income from one acre of land. His income today is almost equal to his salary and the products of his acre are now famous throughout the State. Peacock specializes in rare birds and unusual breeds of poultry. At the State Fair in 1933 he was awarded seven first prizes and four-second honors for Buff Cochin and Dark Cornish chickens he exhibited. He furnished the canaries and lovebirds, which were used to add color to the Alameda County exhibit at the fair.

Allison Peacock announced his resignation of the local school effective July 1, 1935. Mr. Peacock had served as principal of the school for the last nine years. He accepted a position with a school supply house.

Mr. Peacock left Decoto in a blaze of glory in September 1935 when he garnered the lion's share of prize money and awards at the California State Fair. He counted a total of 46 prizes, 26 of them first awards for his Buff and Barred Rocks. Then Peacock exhibited at the San Joaquin County Poultry Show, bringing back 13 first prizes, nine seconds and three thirds, bringing his total of awards for the two shows to 71.

Henry May, Trustee:

See bio in Chapter 05 page 18

John Sandholdt, Trustee:

See bio in Chapter 06 page 18

Harry C. Searles, Trustee:

See bio in Chapter 06 page 14

John C. Whipple (II), Trustee:

John C. Whipple was born in Decoto in November 1880 to Rufus and Rosa Whipple. John C. Whipple was named after his uncle who first arrived in the Bay Area in 1853 and settled in Decoto in the early 1860's.

John's wife Edith Whipple was born in California in 1887. They were married circa 1925 and had four sons, John, Robert, Thomas and Keith. John was a farmer taking over his father's farm in Decoto.

John was the local head of the Decoto Farm Bureau and a member of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce. John was a trustee on the board of the Decoto Grammar School, and in 1929 he was elected trustee of the Washington Union High School in Centerville.

On October 17, 1931 *The Oakland Tribune* carried this dreadful article:

"James Logan, 65 Alvarado, accompanied by John Cleveland Whipple, 51, prominent Decoto farmer, drove a light coupe into a gravel truck. Mr. Whipple is believed to have been killed instantly, while Mr. Logan died at the Hayward Hospital about 6 o'clock, three hours after the accident. They had been returning from a fishing trip.

Logan is believed to have dozed at the wheel of his car. It shot across the four-lane highway striking the truck and pushing a front wheel axle back against its body. The coupe was telescoped in fearful fashion, both men being caught in the seat, crushed and deeply cut by the wreckage.

Mr. Whipple was a school trustee and a native of California. He is survived by his wife Edith, and three sons, John C. Jr., Thomas and Keith. He was a member of the Centerville Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Logan, newly elected trustee of Washington Union High School at Centerville, is survived by his wife, Rebecca, six sons and five daughters and two sisters."

Miss Viola George:

Miss Viola George was born in California in 1890 to Joseph and Marie George, Portuguese immigrants who settled in Decoto. Besides Viola the Joseph's had a son Urban George.

Viola attended San Jose Normal School (today's San Jose State University) where she became certified as a teacher. In 1908 Viola was attending the San Jose Normal School along with Miss Gertrude Peterson and Miss Dorris Whipple.

In 1910 it was noted that Miss Viola George was teaching in the Vista School District. Today the Vista School District is located in the northern section of San Diego County.

In 1911 Miss Viola George was elected to the Alviso School district of Washington Township. In 1933 Miss George was teaching in the Alameda School District, and living with her widowed mother.

In September 1942 Miss Viola George was mentioned as being elected to the Decoto Sanitary District as assessor.

Miss Viola George, 61, of Decoto died at her home in Decoto on June 8, 1951 of a heart attack. She was to have retired the week of her death after teaching forty years at the Lincoln School in Alameda. She was a native of Decoto and lived her whole life here. She left no close relatives.

Miss Emma Young:

Miss Emma Young was born in California in 1896. In 1920 Miss Young shows that she was a school teacher and residing in Decoto at the Patrick & Ettie

Dolan Boarding House. In March 1921 Emma attended a house party and dinner held at the home of Harry Searles for the trustees of the Decoto Grammar School. Besides the Decoto School Trustees others at the party appear to be Decoto School Teachers Albert N. Benson, Miss K. Alvord, and Mr. & Mrs. Richard (Gertrude May) Kennedy. This is the last article about Miss Young of Decoto.

Miss Gertrude May:

Miss Gertrude May was born in California in 1893 to Henry & Clara May of Decoto. Gertrude graduated from Decoto Grammar School in 1908 and Washington Union High School in 1912. She then attended the San Jose Normal School where she received her teaching certificate. The Washington High School Graduation list shows that Gertrude became a teacher in the Decoto Grammar School.

Gertrude announced that she would marry Richard Kennedy of San Lorenzo in December of 1920. They would reside in Hayward where Mr. Kennedy would become a prominent farmer in the Hayward-Decoto-Alvarado area.

Miss L. (or K.) Alvord:

Miss L. Alvord, teacher in the Decoto School the past term will leave shortly for Tacoma Washington. From an article in *The Oakland Tribune* dated July 2, 1921. No other info could be found for Miss Alvord.

Miss Matilda "Tillie" Logan:

Matilda Gilmore Logan was born in Alvarado in 1902 to James and Rebecca Logan. After graduating from Washing Union High School in Centerville in 1922, she attended the San Jose Normal School where she obtained her teaching certificate. She then started teaching in the Decoto School System.

Miss Logan first appears in the Decoto School in August 1926 as part of the staff of the new Principal Allison Peacock. Tillie would marry a Washington Union High School Teacher named J. Vernon Goold, who would go by the name J.V. Goold. J.V. & Tillie would have one son, James Ross Goold.

J.V. Goold would earn the name "Pop" Goold from his students in the 40's and 50's. He would become Superintendent of Schools for Washington Township and would lead the opening of the township's second high school, James Logan High in Decoto.

Tillie Logan Goold was still teaching at Decoto Elementary School in 1957, but I could find nothing after that date.

Miss Carrie Enriksen:

Miss Carrie Enriksen was a teacher in the Decoto School System in 1926 teaching under the leadership of Allison Peacock, Principal. This is all the information found for Miss Enriksen.

Miss Beulah Meyers:

Miss Beulah Meyers was a teacher in the Decoto School System in 1926 teaching under the leadership of Allison Peacock, Principal. This is all the information found for Miss Meyers.

Mrs. Ruby L. Rogers:

Mrs. Ruby Rogers was a teacher in the Decoto School System in 1926 teaching under the leadership of Allison Peacock, Principal. I was able to locate a Mrs. Ruby Rogers living on Thornton Avenue in Centerville in 1930 who was married to Walter Rogers from England. Mrs. Rogers gave her employment as a schoolteacher. She had a five-year old daughter Jean.

Mrs. Emma Miller:

Mrs. Emma Miller was a teacher in the Decoto School System in 1926 teaching under the leadership of Allison Peacock, Principal. This is all the information found for Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Grace Hawley Erickson:

Mrs. Grace Erickson was a teacher in the Decoto School System in 1926 teaching under the leadership of Allison Peacock, Principal. This is all the information found for Mrs. Erickson.

SHOEMAKER:

Ricardo Iriarte:

Ricardo Iriarte was born in Colombia in 1887. It is not known exactly when Ricardo came to Decoto, however, by 1930 he was in the Decoto census and gave his occupation as a shoemaker. In 1936 Ricardo and John M. Goularte were keeping chicken and rabbit pens on the Niles Road north of Decoto when a drunk appeared around their livestock. Both men were armed and shot Jose Flavela in the legs after he refused to leave the property.

In 1940 Ricardo did not show an occupation and was living on 7th Street in Decoto. After this nothing further was found.

TEAMSTER:

Franzo Borghi:

Franzo Borghi was born in California in 1897 to Enrico (Henry) and Louise Borghi; both had emigrated from Italy before the turn of the century. Enrico first located in Murray Township where he was in partnership with Domnico Trombetta in a dairying operation there. Henry Borghi relocated to Decoto after the turn of the century and started his own dairy in Washington Township.

The Borghi's had three children, Daisy, Elsie and Franzo. Elsie passed away in May 1912. In 1914 Henry and Franzo Borghi departed on a three months' trip to Italy where they visited Mr. Borghi's former home and also the leading places of interest.

On March 13, 1918 Enrico Borghi passed away, leaving a widow Louisa, a daughter Bessie and a son Franzo. It was at this time that Franzo Borghi became a teamster, driving truck for milling firm.

*** DECOTO GRAMMAR SCHOOL ***

The New School / Decoto School Staff / School Trustees / Decoto School Graduation / Decoto School Events / Township Schools

The New School:

As this decade wore on Decoto faced the same problem as many other rural Alameda County schools. They were outgrowing their quarters. In the year 1924 Alameda County was to spend \$1,288,000 for new schools. The towns slated for new schools and the cost of those new schools were: San Leandro, \$350,000; Mt. Eden, \$60,000; Alvarado, \$60,000; Centerville; \$210,000, Hayward; \$280,000; Irvington, \$50,000; Castro Valley, \$48,000; Livermore, \$125,000; Amador Valley High School at Pleasanton, \$105,000.

Decoto remained as last community that still retained its pioneer school, but that was not to last as the knock of progress would soon announce a plan for a new school. By 1924 Decoto's school had grown from a school of 115 pupils to one of 286, an unexcelled growth in a short time.

The construction work on Decoto's new \$57,000 school building started in June 1925 with lumber and other materials delivered at the beginning of the month. Progress went quickly on the new school and it was slated to open by the first week of September 1926 with five classrooms ready for use by that time.



A photo of the new Decoto Grammar School taken some 25 years after the dedication.

The dedication of the grammar school building was combined with a commencement day program for the 1926 school graduates in the school auditorium on June 8th. Ezra Decoto Jr., State Railroad Commissioner and a native of Decoto, delivered the principal address, while J.L. Bunker of Niles, District Supervisor of Schools presented the diplomas to eleven graduates.

Decoto School Staff:

During this decade I was able to locate three Decoto School Principals. The first was A.N. Benson who was replaced by E.G Wood in August 1925. In August 1926 E.G Wood was replaced by Allison Peacock.

The teaching staff expanded greatly in the 1920's. In 1928 the teaching staff was expanded to 12 instructors. Here are the names of some of the teachers I was able to locate for the 1920's:

Mrs. Grace Erickson	Miss Beulah Meyers	Miss Carrie Entriksen
Mrs. Ralph Rogers	Miss L. Alvord	Miss Mary Jenkins

Mr. Edward L. Owen was the township instrumental music teacher.

Mrs. Charlotte Foster was the township vocal music teacher.

Besides those mentioned above was Miss Tillie Logan, daughter of James Logan and future wife of James V. Goold a teacher at Washington Union High School, who would go on to become the beloved Principal and District Superintendent of Washington High who was lovingly called J.V. "Pop" Goold.

School Trustees:

School district trustees mentioned in this decade were:

Henry May	H. C. Searles	J. C. Whipple	John Sandholdt.
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Decoto School Graduations:

June 1921:

The graduates of the Decoto Grammar School received their diplomas on Wednesday, June 29, 1921. The graduates were:

Bertha Claudine	Everett Duarte	Frank Neves	Helen Perry
Manuel Perry	Mildred Hoff	Raymond Soares	Matilda Vargas

June 1923:

Eleven students graduated from the Decoto Grammar School at exercises held June 22, 1923. Members of the class were:

Annie Andrade	Lawrence Delgado	William Duarte	Thelma Hurst
Stella Mendonca	Joseph Fortune	La Verne Mendonca	Henry Minorna
Ernest Pimentel	Frank J. Ponte	Mary Silva	

June 1926:

Ezra Decoto, State Railroad Commissioner and former District attorney of Alameda County, delivered the commencement address at the Decoto Grammar School Wednesday evening, June 16, 1925. Eleven students graduated, six with the honor of exemption from final examinations. District Supervisor of Schools will give diplomas to:

Ruby Bowers	Lizzie Bowers	Vernon Carey	Lurline Duarte
Lena Dutra	Louis Garcia	Mary Janeiro	Virginia Ponte
John Masters	Joseph Perry	Rosa Silva	

June 1929:

Early California history was woven into a play. "El Toroso," was presented as a feature of the graduation exercises at the Decoto Grammar School. The Spanish dons, fiestas and roving bandits all have their parts in this production. The play is to be followed by commencement exercises at which David E. Martin, County Superintendent of Schools, will present diplomas to the 17 graduates.

Decoto School Events:

A sufficient number of names on petitions having been obtained, the Board of Supervisors will be called upon to decide on Monday, February 2, 1920, regarding the proposed changing of two county school boundaries. Floods during the rainy

season have prevented pupils in the low country (Alvarado, Tennyson) from attending the school in the district to which they belong, many pupils have been going to another district so their educational course would not be interrupted, according to petitioners. This condition has resulted in one district receiving the combined state and county apportionment of approximately \$26 a pupil while another district supplied the education. One petition proposes changing the boundary so that the Alvarado School District will receive the benefit for fifteen pupils who have been attending that school, although living in the Decoto School District. The other petition proposes changing boundaries so the Valle Vista School District will receive the apportionment for twelve pupils who now belong to Eureka (Mt. Eden & Tennyson) and Alvarado Districts.

The hearing on the petition of George Enos and others asking for changes in the boundaries of Alvarado and Decoto School Districts, Mr. J.M. Scribner and others addressed the Board, thereupon a resolution was introduced granting the prayer of said petitioners and ordering the changes as requested therein. John Sandholdt stated that he, as well as Henry May and H. C. Searles, the other members of the Board of Trustees of the Decoto School District wished to go on record as objecting to the action of the Board of Supervisors in changing the boundaries of Alvarado and Decoto School Districts.

The Decoto school trustees, principal and parents met to take steps toward organizing a troop of Boy Scouts in Decoto in April 1924. A scoutmaster would be selected who would proceed to organize the troop. The boys are enthusiastic and no doubt will form a very lively troop. Later steps would be taken to organize a camp of Camp Fire Girls as the girls do not wish to be outdone by the boys of the school.

The first treatment of toxin-anti-toxin was given in the Decoto Grammar School in May 1924 in the Washington Township Health Center's; it is an effort to eradicate diphtheria. Dr. John Adams administered treatments to 100 school children. He was assisted by Mrs. Fred Dusterberry, Mrs. John Olson and Miss Ada Jessen, school nurse.

Seventeen grammar schools united in a May Day celebration in 1925 on the campus of Washington Union High School in Centerville. In addition to the schools of Washington Township were the Hayward Grammar School with their band, and the Sunol School of Murray Township. The Hayward High School is also spending the afternoon here. In the morning, in addition to the May Pole exercises and sporting events, there is a baseball game between two teams, the one composed of Niles and Newark students against the Hayward Grammar schools. The Niles teachers would play a baseball game against the combined teachers of Alvarado, Decoto and Alviso.

Mrs. Garrett Norris, chairman of the Better Gardens Contest, which is being fostered by the Country Club of Washington Township met with great success when introduced in May 1926. The children of the various towns are interested in the work and the following have registered from the Decoto Grammar School:

Teresa Santa	Mildred Nevis	Theresa Caloma	Isabelle Montes
Frank Janeiro	Milton Castro	Albert Faletti	Joe Rodriguez
Thelma Nevis	James Beverage	Edith Martin	Clyde Rivera
Elvera Perry	John Whipple	Helen Vegas	Manuel Sevani
Louis Duarte	Eleanor Harrold	Herbert Harrold	Anthony Goularte
Cipriano Pacheco	Wendell Blose	Mathilda Silva	Alphonse Rodrigues

Louis Rodrigues	Jose Cavalla	Joseph Martin	Pearl Pomague
Charles Nunes	Clarence Perry	Fred Nunes	Peter Paniagua
Mike Gentiles	Wilbert Goularte.		

Decoto led the township in the number of grammar school students in the Better Homes Garden contest, according to Mrs. Mila Norris, chairman for the Country Club of Washington Township, sponsors of the drive in this section of the county. Centerville was second with 31 students entered, while Decoto's total was 37.

Louis Duarte of Decoto took second place in the township Better Gardens contest put on by the Country Club. Louis received \$4 for his prize. Others awarded prizes in Decoto included Herbert Harrold, \$2; and Peter Paniagua, \$1.

When school reopened in September 1926, Mary and her little lamb stepped out of nursery rhymes to strut in reality, only you'll have to change her name to Eloise. Eloise Silva, 11, a pupil in the Decoto Grammar School, had a tiny lamb, which she is caring for with the view to making it the school mascot. Whether Eloise would be permitted to take the lamb within the schoolrooms was a question only the teachers could answer when school reopens. Decoto is the headquarters for a large sheep raising area. Great bands of sheep famed for their wool browse on the nearby hills. Little Eloise had become interested in the great flocks of sheep that pour in a ceaseless stream through the shipping yards. The foreman heard her desire for a lamb to play with, and recently she received the tiny pet, which had become an orphan through an accident to its mother.

With the 1927 championship of the Washington Township League practically won through nine straight victories, the Decoto Grammar School baseball team is looking for other worlds to and has its eye on the county championship. The team is comprised of:

Domingo Perry	Catino Santiago	Manuel Soares	Alfred Fereira
Albert Claudine	Louis Brazil	Frank Gutierrez	Leroy Claudine
Phil Ruiz	Peter Perry	Alfred Faletti	

A.P. Peacock, Principal of the Decoto School is an authority on baseball and his players gave him much credit for their success. While teaching in Santa Clara County last year he piloted his team to the county championship. He is confident that the Decoto team can make it interesting for any grammar school in Alameda County.

With several records tucked safely under their belt, the Decoto Grammar School is going after another distinction. A.P. Peacock, the principal, issued a challenge in February 1928 to any school in the state with a total enrollment of not more than 360 pupils to exhibit more than four sets of twins from its classrooms.

The discovery that Decoto has added twins to its list of products was made by Peacock recently when he noticed two little girls in a class that looked so much alike that he could not tell them apart. The girls furnished the information that there were three other sets of twins in the school, although they did not look so much alike. A fifth set of twins was attending the school until recently, when one of them died.

Since having had the twins brought to his attention, Peacock has made a careful study of their records and has observed them from several angles. He found that the twins are among the brightest pupils of the school and that there is but the slightest variation in their mental development.

Township Schools:

The election for high school and all grammar school trustees will be held in all school districts of Washington Township in March 1920. The two members of Washington Union High School board are up for re-election are A.T. Biddle of Newark and Henry May of Decoto, both of whom are candidates to succeed themselves.

As a result of the principal's meeting in September 1922 called by Deputy Superintendent J.L. Bunker, the principals of the Alvarado, Decoto, Niles, Centerville, Newark and Irvington schools met at Centerville and organized the Washington Township Grammar School Athletic Association. The season will open on September 29th, when the six school teams will meet in three games. The series will last until every team in the organization has met all the other nines. During the winter month's basketball and volley series will be played, both boys and girls to take part in the games.

In January 1926 it was noted that Decoto had 30 residents enrolled in night school classes at the Washington Union High School. Total night school attendance for the township is about 250 pupils. Among the courses offered the pupils, whose ages range from 14 to 70 years, are typing, bookkeeping, citizenship, business English, art, electricity, mechanical drawing, sewing, millinery, elementary English, auto mechanics, interior decorating, cooking, Spanish, shop work, current problems in history and literature, business arithmetic and Esperanto. Probably the most popular course is English.

The appointment of four committees by Mrs. W.S. Robie of Alvarado in, President of the newly organized Parent-Teacher Association of Washington Township, was launched on its course of civic improvement at a meeting in the auditorium of the township high school here in October 1926. Those participating in committees from Decoto are: Mrs. H. C. Searles and Miss Tillie Logan.

Souvenir cards bearing a picture of Larry Bettencourt of Decoto, Captain and All-American center of the St. Mary's football team are being sold throughout Washington Township in an effort to raise funds for the purchase of a present for the star, who is to be given a reception at Washington Union High School on December 22, 1927.

F. V. Jones of Niles and H. C. Searles of Decoto, whose terms as trustees of Washington Union High School expire this spring, will have opposition if they decide to seek reelection. John C. Whipple of Decoto and M. V. Perry of Irvington have announced themselves as candidates. The election is to be held March 29, 1929. John C. Whipple of Decoto was elected as a trustee of Washington Union High School. Unseated was H. C. Searles of Decoto.

* **FARMING** *

Peas / Potatoes / Cucumbers / Tomatoes / Celery / Cauliflower

Decoto had made great strides in attracting industry to the town, thanks mainly to having two rail lines coming through the center of the town. Both the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific had depots in the town. Roads were improved during this decade, as were the trucks the farmers used to carry their loads to market. Near the end of the decade the Dumbarton Bridge would be erected across the Bay, giving the farmers a direct route across the Bay and on to San Francisco. So here are some articles on Decoto farmlands during this decade.

Peas:

The cold snap of April 1921 did much damage to the pea crop in the Decoto area.

The foothills of Decoto were great grounds for peas. Farmers like Joe Perry, Frank Goularte, and Antone Vargas were all raising peas for the local market. Antone Vargas raised peas on his farm on the Niles-Decoto Road. In March 1924 he was one of the first farmers to have fresh peas ready for the market and his produce fetched 20¢ a pound in San Francisco.

Shipment of peas (via railroad cars) leaving the Hayward area totaled 300 carloads in 1928. Cauliflower was next with 110 carloads through Hayward, but this must not be taken as the total of this product grown in this county as Alvarado and Decoto shipped annually many hundred of carloads to market direct from their own freight platforms.

Potatoes:

The first shipment of potatoes of the 1923 season came from the foothills of Decoto. That first shipment consisted of 500 pounds. Potato growers believed that within 10 to 12 days (near the end of February 1923) the season would be in full swing. It was estimated that the yield in lower Alameda County for the coming year would be approximately 150,000 boxes.

Cucumbers:

Friendly controversy revolving around ability of southern Alameda County communities to produce a cucumber of the most imposing proportions, took a new turn today, when the Decoto Chamber of Commerce placed on display what officials claim was a genuine Sicilian cucumber. Measuring three feet in length, the cucumber is the largest every seen hereabouts. In appearance the Sicilian cucumber resembles the guinea bean, although the surface of the former is corrugated while the exterior of the latter is smooth. The product was presented to the Hayward chamber by the Decoto chamber. The cucumber is declared to be far tastier than the popular English variety.

Tomatoes:

J.R. Kennedy of Decoto produced twelve tons of tomatoes to the acre this year.

Celery:

The first carloads of Decoto super white bleached celery was shipped from Decoto in January 1926. The local celery also is expected to reach the east before the first consignment from the Sanford-Orlando district of Florida, which has been barred from several southern states because of quarantine restrictions.

Cauliflower:

For the year 1926 the Hayward, Alvarado, Centerville, Estudillo and Decoto sections produced a finer quality of cauliflower than any section in the State of California, according to the U.S. Department Shipping Point Inspection Service.

By early December 1926 an average of one car per day of early cauliflower was being shipped from Decoto, according to D.H. Roberts of the local chamber of commerce. The entire local crop is going east says Roberts. Things looked rosy for the Decoto farmer until storms pummeled the area in December, decimating the crop. What had first been a crop estimated at 500 carloads was reduced to only 50 carloads for the December 1926 season.

In September 1928 cauliflower planting was almost concluded in the Decoto section and it claimed to be one of the heaviest growers of the earliest cauliflower shipped from California, according to Joseph Mendonca, the cauliflower "king" of Tracy Waldron Produce. He claimed that the planting will be increased by many hundreds of acres this year, and that in some sections the cauliflower is already up and breaking ground.

Cauliflower shipments to the east and the mid-west from the Decoto and Alvarado points principally, were well under way for the season by the end of December 1929. The first shipment left the depots at just about Christmas time. The crop is about average, despite the long, dry spell that caused some harm to production, but will bring no aggregate loss. Had a normal season resulted there is little doubt but that the yield would have been above par. The county cauliflower acreage this year is about the same as last, a check by the agricultural inspector's office here shows. The broccoli crop, which is showing a rapid increase, is satisfactory this season, with shipments already under way.

*** SOCIAL, CIVIC, & RELIGIOUS ORGS ***

Boy Scouts / Bridge Club / Catholic Church / Christmas Seals / Congregational Church / Country Club of Washing Township / Chamber of Commerce / Decoto Girl's Club / Fire Department / Library / Mother's Club / Post Office / Red Cross / Road Department / U.P.E.C. / Voting Precinct / Washington Township Men's Club / Young Ladies Institute

Boy Scouts:

A Boy Scout Troop was organized in Decoto in May 1924. Peter Decoto was appointed Scout Master of the Decoto unit and Harry Haines was his assistant. Persons on the Boy Scout Committee included: Harry Searles (chairman), Herbert Harrold, A.N. Benson, J.L. Olson, Antone Amaral, Manuel Caldeira, Henry May, Raymond McNulty, M.L. Avilla and Enos Pimentel. With the organization of the Decoto troop this left only Alvarado, Mission San Jose and Warm Springs as the only towns without a Boy Scout troop.

In May 1926 the Decoto Boy Scout troop appears to have been re-organized with eight boys enrolled. They were: James Beverage, Walter Beverage, Louis Duarte, Albert Faletti, Manuel Fostene, Wilbert Goularte, John Masters and Joaquin Peixotto. Additional members were expected to be enrolled as the organization continues, with a membership of twenty or more expected by the end of June 1926. The Scout

Master was Peter L. Decoto, local farmer and long time Decoto resident. Walter J. Walker was chosen chairman of the troop committee.

Peter Decoto, Scoutmaster, set out to keep the boys busy and enlarge their horizons. In 1927 they assisted Santa Claus by distributing baskets of food among the needy families of Decoto on Christmas. Peter saw that the boys got an opportunity to go to summer camp aided by the funds provided by the Decoto Chamber of Commerce and the Fire Department.

The boys worked hard and earned their merit badges, and they were rewarded by Peter Decoto on weekend hikes and camping to places like Sonora. When funds were short Peter Decoto would finance the boy's trips out of his own pocket.

Bridge Club:

Mrs. Irene Leonard organized a Decoto Bridge Club in February 1929. In July 1929 Mrs. Leonard was the hostess of a bridge party at her Decoto home. Gladioli and sweet pea adorned the living room. Mrs. C.E. Godkin and Mrs. Lydia Silver assisted in the arranging the party.

Catholic Church:

In May 1925 preparations were being made for the largest Holy Ghost celebration yet held in Decoto. They secured a 40-piece band to play at the affair. Miss Catherine Silva, one the many pretty girls in Decoto, was chosen as queen, and would hold sway over the festivities in royal-like fashion. Louise Silva, Louise Garcia, Ruth Bettencourt and May Whitmeyer were her court.

The committees are as follows:

President: Joe Abrao

Dance: C. Freitas

Raffling: Ernest Sequeira and Frank Pimentel

Raffling Stand: F.J. Caldeira, M.I. Caldeira, M.L. Avilla and Joseph B. Cunha

Ice Cream and Soda: Chas. Janeiro, John Cordeiro, N. Carter and Manuel Silva

On Saturday evening, May 16th, the celebration was formally opened with a big dance in the town hall of Decoto. On Sunday morning the procession headed by the famous League of the Cross Cadets band of forty pieces was followed by the children and by the various societies and by the Queen and her retinue. They will march from the hall to the Parish Church.

A high Mass was sung at 11 o'clock and a special augmented choir from Niles answered the responses. Father Alfred Sousa, pastor of Centerville for many years and a resident of Washington Township was well known among his people as a powerful and fluent orator preached the sermon.

Other activities from the Holy Rosary Church during this decade included whist parties, benefit card parties and dances.

Christmas Seals:

The Christmas Seal chairperson the year 1925 for the town of Decoto was Mrs. John L. Olson.

Congregational Church:

News from the Congregational Church at Decoto was quiet for the first part of the 20's, but it picked up in July 1927 when Miss Lucile Breiner of Kansas obtained the use of the old Congregational Church in Decoto and conducted a daily vacation Bible school for the children of the community. Miss Breiner was a missionary in South America for a number of years but was forced to return to this country on account of her health.

Within a week of Miss Breiner's arrival at Decoto a number young people organized a Christian Endeavor Society with a membership of 20. The society made plans to raise sufficient money to pay for wiring the Community Church and installing several large windows. The officers elected at the meeting were:

Orville Blose, President
Della Dennis, Vice-President
Mary Beverage, Secretary
Richard Hotchkiss, Treasurer
Lucile Breiner and Mrs. A. Amaral, advisers

In August 1927 Miss Elizabeth Bowers succeeded Miss Dennis as teacher of the primary department of the Sunday school. Miss Elizabeth Bowers was also elected Vice-President of the Christian Endeavor. John Masters assumed his duties as song leader as did Charles Dana, chairman of the social committee.

About 35 members of the Christian Endeavor Society held a Halloween frolic in the church parlors in October 1927. This was the first social gathering to be held in the church since the electric wiring was installed. Pumpkin pie, hot chocolate and apples were served and stunts in keeping with the season enjoyed.

The Decoto Christian Endeavor Society was awarded a banner for 100 percent attendance at a convention held in March 1929.

At a special meeting held in August 1929 the Decoto Christian Endeavor Society mapped out a program for the coming year, making out a budget, appointing committees, etc. Miss Sophie Swanson, President was in charge.

Country Club of Washington Township:

Decoto participants in the Country Club during this period were:
Mrs. Henry May, co-hostess of the meeting held in October 1925.
Mrs. J.L. Olson, co-hostess of the meeting held in October 1926.
Mrs. Roland Bendel, President of the Country Club in 1927.

Chamber of Commerce:

July 1926:

President of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce in Decoto in 1925 was Will Hurst. In July 1926 Peter Decoto was unanimously voted in as the new president. From 1925 to 1929 the Decoto Chamber tackled some big problems with the aim of greatly improving the quality of life for the residents of Decoto. Here are some of the accomplishments of the Chamber during this period:

April 1925:

The Chamber of Commerce asked the county to provide a number of additional street lights, as it is deemed necessary to have these lights in localities recently built up and in others that have always been insufficiently lighted.

January 1926:

Two areas of improvement for Decoto were addressed in January. One was a highway paving program and the other was a petition for 24-hour telephone service. At this time the Chamber officers were:

President:	Will Hurst
Vice President:	Peter Decoto
Secretary:	O. B. Merrick
Treasurer:	J. L. Olson

March 1926:

The Chamber discussed ways to advertise the advantages of Decoto as a "city of homes," coupled with the location here of the Masonic Home. The intent of the Chamber is to see the town progress

April 1926:

In an effort to curb the number of accidents at the crossing on the Oakland-San Jose Highway leading into Decoto, the Decoto Chamber of Commerce has requested the California Automobile Association to erect a "Go Slow" sign. The hazard is particularly great on Sundays when a continuous stream of machines flow by Decoto. Motorists, who come from Centerville and other communities of the lower by way of Machado's Corners (Machado's Corners is where the Alvarado Centerville Road and Decoto Road intersect), find much difficulty in turning onto the Niles artery because of the traffic. The warning signs were conceived as a means of decreasing the speed of motorists at the crossroad.



Realizing the imperative need of continuous telephone service for Decoto, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company yesterday commenced the work of installing a telephone booth in the waiting room of the Decoto Southern Pacific Depot, which will afford local residents all-night service. The improvement was the result of a request furthered by the Decoto Chamber of Commerce several weeks ago at a meeting, and at which George Smith was appointed chairman of a committee to confer with the telephone company officials relative to the need of twenty-four-hour service. The chamber was gratified over the cooperation received from the company, according to Secretary O.B. Merrick.

May 1926:

Twenty-two communities in the unincorporated territory of Alameda County, in addition to the incorporated cities and towns in the county, are actively working with a committee representing the San Leandro Chamber of Commerce in a drive to eradicate the mosquito. The local communities are: Sunol, Alvarado, Centerville, Niles, Decoto, Irvington, Mission San Jose, Newark, Warm Springs and Hayward.

August 1926:

For the first time in years the streets of Decoto are being called by name as the result of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce's action in providing a number of street guide signs, which have been placed at various intersections. Persons residing in this

community for years have learned the identity of the streets they live on for the first time through the civic organization's decision to erect the signs.

September 1926:

Due to the proposed enlargement of the K. Hovden Packing Company's Decoto cannery is one of the chief reasons advanced for the installation of a sewer system. Local businessmen believe that \$50,000 would easily cover the cost of the system, inasmuch as it would not be necessary to install a disposal tank as in the case of other Washington Township communities. It is planned to pipe the refuse *directly* into the Bay.

Convinced that the organization of a sanitary district is imperative to the needs of the community, the Decoto Chamber of commerce has appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of such an addition.

Peter Decoto, Jose Soito, S.K. Anderson, J.L. Olson and Will Hurst have been appointed to delve into the matter and report back to the Chamber of Commerce at the next meeting of the organization. If it is found advisable to install such a system, a special committee will be chosen to confer with the county Board of Supervisors regarding the calling of a bond issue to finance the cost of construction.

October 1926:

The Chamber of Commerce submitted a report favorable to the establishment of a sanitary district in Decoto. The committee, which was appointed to investigate the matter, recommended that steps be taken to place the issue before the people at an early date. Will Hurst, chairman of the committee will give the final report at the next meeting. Other members of the committee are Walter Walker, George Smith, Jose Soito, J.L. Olson, S.K. Anderson and Peter L. Decoto.

August 1927:

Plans for a banquet to be given to celebrate the completion of the pavement of the Decoto-Centerville Road (today's Decoto Road) will be completed at a meeting of the Decoto Chamber of Commerce to be held September 6th, according to Roland Bendel, the Secretary. The pavement has been completed and the road will be opened to traffic as soon as the concrete has been allowed to set for the required length of time.

January 1929:

Incensed by the further removal from Hayward to Decoto of shacks that were condemned by the building inspector as unfit for human habitation, the Decoto Chamber of Commerce renewed its fight to have the State housing inspector given jurisdiction over unincorporated towns in Alameda County. A petition requesting this protection from the Board of Supervisors was presented to and approved by the commercial bodies in Nilas, Centerville and Alvarado last fall. The Washington Township post of the American Legion also signed the petition. It is to be brought to the attention of every commercial body and civic club in southern Alameda County. The buildings are so small that they can be transported to Decoto on trucks.

February 1929:

At a meeting held by the Federated Improvement Club held in Hayward, the directors decided to indorse a petition presented by Peter Decoto and Roland Bendel of Decoto, seeking to have a sanitation district created in the closely settled districts of the southern end of the county. Residents of Mexican, Porto Rican and Filipino

origins in Niles, Centerville, Decoto and Alvarado, who habitually live in crowded and unsanitary dwellings have become a menace to the health of others in the communities. The petition asks that the county Board of Supervisors pass an ordinance creating a housing zone, under which undesirable and unsanitary residences may be condemned or their owners obliged to install modern sanitary apparatus.

March 1929:

No cooking in the bedroom, bath or shower; and no sleeping in the kitchen, cellar, hallway, bath or shower compartment. These are some of the rules set forth in a new housing ordinance submitted to the Board of Supervisor by Peter L. Decoto and Henry May, both of Decoto, and turned over to Assistant District Attorney Frank M. Ogden for his opinion. According to its sponsors, the ordinance is designed to establish better living conditions among certain foreign elements in the southern part of the county. The ordinance would apply to such portions of the county as are closely built up and of a nature to require regulation for the common welfare. Zones would be created after public hearings on the subject. The ordinance covers type and method of construction, ventilation, air capacities, sewage disposal, and limits the number of persons who may live in specific dwelling areas.

September 1929:

The Decoto Chamber of Commerce will petition the County Supervisors to have street signs being placed at every intersection. According to the officials maps filed with the county recorder, Decoto has a larger area than any community in Washington Township and without signs it is difficult to direct strangers about town.

Persons who were active in the Chamber during this decade were:

Peter Decoto	O. B. Merrick	H. C. Searles
Henry May	J. L. Olson	George A. Smith
A. A. Amaral	Walter L. Walker	J. C. Whipple
Raymond McNulty	John Meneze	Charles Janeiro
Charles Brown	Joe Cunha	Frank Margarido
Jose Soito	S. K. Anderson	
Roland Bendel		

Decoto Girl's Club:

The Decoto Girl's Club enjoyed an overnight camping trip to Niles Canyon in June 1928.

Decoto Fire Department:

Decoto Fire Department / Washington Township Fire Depts. / Fire Dept. Issues / Decoto Fires

The citizens of Decoto voted in a \$1,500 bond issue for fire-fighting equipment in January 1925. This was followed up by the purchase of a new fire truck in June 1925 at a cost of \$4,000. The truck was ordered directly from the manufacturer and built to order.

The Decoto Volunteer Fire Department would be made up of Fire Commissioners:

A. A. Amaral	Will Hurst	Raymond McNulty
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Later Albert Benson would become a member of the commission.

Walter Walker was the Fire Chief.
Roland Bendel was the Captain.

In 1926 the Chamber of Commerce discussed ways to secure a general fire siren to be installed atop the old Decoto Fire House. It was planned to use the siren as a time whistle as well as for alarm purposes. A committee was appointed by the chamber to take the matter up with A.A. Amaral, Will Hurst and Raymond McNulty, Fire Commissioners and Fire Chief Walter Walker. As the result of the response from all Washington Township communities, sufficient funds were taken in from a benefit dance in the grammar school auditorium to insure the purchase of a siren for the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department. Arrangements for the social were made by the Fire Commissioners and Fire Chief Walter Walker.

In September 1927 the new firehouse was in the planning stages. The Decoto volunteers and the Chamber of Commerce proposed a series of dances to raise funds for the construction of the new firehouse.

Washington Township Fire Depts.:

In order to promote a more efficient fire fighting team the formation of a union fire prevention bureau in Washington Township was effected at a special meeting of Fire Marshals and Commissioner from Decoto, Newark, Niles, and Centerville on March 25, 1926, in the fire hall at Centerville. The purpose of the session was to unite fire-fighting forces of the township in a cooperative plan, whereby each department would be subject to the call of the others in emergency cases. Under the new arrangement, the fire department nearest to a community endangered by fire will automatically respond to the call of its neighbor. Though Alvarado refused to heed the invitation of the committee to send representatives and join the union fire bureau, it is hoped some plan will be worked out whereby Alvarado will become a member of the system.

Roland Bendel, Captain of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department, and one of the originators of the union bureau, was chairman of the evening. The conference was attended by:

Decoto:	Walter L. Walker, Fire Chief		
Centerville:	Fred Rogers, Fire Chief	M. P. Mathiessen	Fred Madruga
Newark:	Louis Ruschin, Fire Chief		
Niles:	H. B. Rathbun, Fire Chief		

Fire Department Issues:

Spring Valley Water Company Taxes: Funding an efficient fire fighting system is always a problem for any city or town. The funding for a fire department is based upon the property value of the area it serves and payment of taxes based on the cost of operating the department. Therefore when the Spring Valley Water Company (which supplied water to the City of San Francisco) stated that it should not be taxed for water rights in the Alameda County Water District, the Niles Fire District nor the Decoto Fire District the districts involved would suffer a great loss of funding. In December 1925 the Spring Valley Water Company filed for a writ of mandate to compel Alameda County Tax Collector Edward T. Planer to accept payment of taxes exclusive of the district taxes.

The lawsuit by which the Spring Valley Water Company seeks to be relieved of paying taxes on water diversion rights in all districts on Niles (Alameda) Creek below

the Sunol Dam began on February 15, 1926, before Superior Judge H.D. Preston of Mendocino County, sitting here in special session. The legal questions involved in the action were intricate and would include a history of the company's activities in Alameda County. In the suit the company seeks to evade the payment of taxes in the Niles Fire District, the Decoto Fire District, and the Alameda County Water District, all of which lie below the dam. It is the contention of the company that inasmuch as the only diversion of water from the creek is at the dam or above it, districts, which lie below the dam, cannot access taxes against it because the company cannot benefit in any way by the activities of the districts.

The county claimed however that the company holds deeds to lands along the creek below the dam and his diversion rights there, which rights are taxable in favor of the district in which they lie. Two Suits are being heard, as consolidated. In one the company seeks the return of \$7,529.19 in taxes said to have been illegally paid, and in the other a writ of mandate in full of all company taxes, in the sum of \$11,259. This amount eliminates the assessments in the district in question and was refused when tendered.

The Decoto Chamber of Commerce and the Decoto Fire Department sought additional water mains in sections of the community of Decoto in July 1929, which now depend upon wells. It contended that additional water is necessary for sanitary purposes as well as for fire protection. E.H. Glassbrook, district manager for the Citizens Water Company is making a study of local conditions and has promised relief at an early date.

The Chamber of Commerce reviewed the local water situation in view of obtaining larger mains and more fire hydrants than is presently available in the town of Decoto. Some buildings were totally destroyed by fire because of a lack of available water to fight the fires.

Decoto Fires:

Children playing with matches started a fire on August 8, 1925, which nearly destroyed a closely built Japanese settlement near Decoto. Only the prompt response of Fire Chief Walter Walker and his crew of volunteer fire fighters saved the village from total destruction.

Beaten back by flames, William Duncan and his wife were compelled to stand in agony and watch their two young son's burn to death in a September 1925 fire, which consumed the Duncan cottage at Decoto.

The parents themselves suffered severed burns of the hands and face through their attempts to enter the burning house to rescue William Duncan Jr., aged 4, and his brother Thomas, aged 2, who were asleep in their room.

The fire originated from the explosion of a gasoline stove as Mrs. Duncan was preparing breakfast. Near her were her husband and Robert Haynes and his wife, all living in the same cottage. The explosion ignited the clothes of Mrs. Duncan and he carried her outside and smothered the flames. The Haynes couple escaped.

Then they thought of the sleeping children and attempted to reach them. But the fire had spread so rapidly through the frame cottage that it was impossible to save them.

Within ten minutes the house was a ruin and the parents recovered the charred remains of their boys.

Damage amounting of nearly \$1,500 was caused early on the morning of July 29, 1926, by a fire of undetermined origin, which destroyed the residence of Frank Castro at Eleventh and "E" Streets. The house was burned to the ground. Fire Lieutenant Joe Cunha and members of the Decoto Volunteer Fire Department succeeded in confining the flames to the one building, saving adjoining structures. The fire was the first here in six months.

Flames in the sky from the direction of Decoto, visible about 10 o'clock Friday night, April 12, 1929, alarmed many residents of the Tennyson, Valle Vista and South Hayward neighborhoods. Inquiry revealed that the blaze destroyed one of the homes of a crew of Japanese strawberry workers employed on the Whipple ranch near Decoto, with a loss of between \$600 and \$700. The Decoto Fire Department, called out to fight the fire, was unable to halt the flames and the place was burned to the ground.

A fire broke out about 8 o'clock Sunday night, April 21, 1929, destroyed two large wooden warehouses of the Salz Company on Railroad Avenue, at Decoto, the blaze being visible for many miles in each direction and being observed in Hayward. Both warehouses were about a third filled with baled hay and grain and a considerable loss resulted. No financial estimate of the loss has been made, but it is believed to have been covered with insurance.

Handicapped by lack of a water supply, five fire companies, including one at Decoto, two from Centerville and one each from Newark and Niles, a total of about 50 firemen, battled the flames as best they could by surrounding the buildings and preventing the spread of the fire to nearby homes. Several roof fires were started on these houses, but these were extinguished quickly with chemicals. A strong wind was blowing at the time, making the work of firefighting increasingly difficult.

The origin of the blaze has not been determined, but it is believed it may have been caused by tramps. The hay had been stored there about a year, thus any theory that the blaze started by spontaneous combustion is discounted.

The buildings were a mass of flames by the time the fire companies arrived. A general alarm was sounded at 8:10 o'clock; the five companies worked desperately to confine the blaze to the warehouses, but under the circumstances were able to do little to save the two wooden structures and their contents.

After he had once been rescued from his blazing home here on May 1, 1929, Samuel Hernandez, 4, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. Hernandez, was burned to death in a fire, which destroyed the Hernandez ranch house. The family, consisting of the child, his parents, and another son, Philip Hernandez, 25, was awakened by the sound of crackling flames.

They leaped from their beds to find the entire rear portion of the building in flames. The three adults dashed from the building in their night attire. Then they discovered that little Samuel was missing. Philip, risking the flames ran back into the house, found his brother still sleeping, and carried to him to safety. He set the boy on the ground and directed his attention to fighting the flames.

Then Samuel was missed again. For the second time Philip dashed back into the house, entirely ablaze by that time. He searched for the youngster but was driven back by the flames, which burned his clothing and seared the flesh of his arms. The mother and father stood by while the house burned to the ground. Then they searched the still smoking embers and found the child's body.

The Decoto Fire Department answered fifteen alarms during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1929, and kept the fire loss for the community down to \$10,000, according to a report just completed by Roland Bendel, the chief. The heaviest loss of the year was two warehouses filled with hay. The fire had gained such headway in these buildings before it was discovered that it was impossible to save them. In answering the fifteen alarms, the department covered forty-nine miles, used thirteen tanks of chemicals, and stretched 1,500 feet of hose, according to the report.

Library:

The Decoto Branch Library is located in the justice courtroom. It was reported that the circulation of the Decoto Library has increased from 262 books in November 1927 to 293 books in December 1927.

Mother's Club:

A Mother's Club was organized in Decoto in November 1927. The Mother's Club is a forerunner to PTA with the emphasis being placed on the improvement of the school environment for the children. Their first project was to prepare costumes for the children in preparation for the Christmas operetta to be presented by the pupils of the Decoto Grammar School.

In February 1928 Mrs. A. Amaral, President of the Decoto Mother's Club announced plans for a carnival. The club is presently cleaning and repairing some old clothes donated by the residents of Decoto, which will be placed on sale at the carnival.

Mother's Club Hostesses:

March 1929:	Mrs. G.S. Bowers	Mrs. C.A. Walker
April 1929:	Mrs. Charles Blose	
May 1929:	Mrs. G.F. Bowers	

Post Office:

The steady growth of Decoto was reflected by the recent installation of 258 new boxes in the post office in December 1927. Postmaster J. L. Olson explained that he thought that the new boxes would be sufficient to meet the demand but they were rented so quickly that he is considering the installation of more. At this time there was no home delivery of mail in Decoto.

Red Cross:

Mrs. A. Amaral collected \$51 for the Red Cross in Decoto during the month of November 1927. This was a substantial gain over last year.

Road Masters:

The Decoto Road Masters for this decade were F.W. Meyer and Joe Gomes.

During this decade roads in and about Decoto had not progressed much beyond being graveled and graded. But as automobiles became more prevalent in the town, and through the town, the road system in Decoto had to be improved. What had been satisfactory for travel by horse and buggy was not satisfactory for travel by the automobile. What we see in the 1920's is a gradual upgrading of the road system in Decoto.

In February 1921 an enterprising group of Decoto citizens turned out with picks and shovels and extended the North Side Road* straight out to the highway thus eliminating the necessity of zigzagging across fields from the Alvarado Road to reach this important artery into the northwestern residence section of Decoto.

*The North Side Road can only be guessed at here.

In October 1925 a petition to the Board of Supervisors to pave the road from Decoto Junction to Machado's Corners* was circulated throughout Washington Township.

*Machado's Corners (also known as Four Corners) was located on today's Fremont Boulevard at Decoto Road. The Decoto Junction would be located at today's Mission Boulevard and Decoto Road.

Petitions were circulated through the district to be presented to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors asking for the paving of the Decoto Road from its beginning at today's Mission Boulevard to Fremont Blvd. between Alvarado and Centerville. With the building of this highway link, and the opening of the Dumbarton highway bridge in the spring of 1926, a direct outlet to the San Francisco markets would be established and with the influx of tourist travel over this route a new wave of prosperity was predicted for Decoto and its residents.

In February 1926 roads leading to Decoto were repaired by a crew of men under order of the state highway department. Approximately fifteen miles of dirt road between Decoto and Niles, Decoto and Alvarado, and Newark and Alvarado were improved during this period. Graders leveled the lateral roads and eliminated so many of the ruts that traffic increased nearly two-fold. Due to the improvements, much of the congestion on the highways was relieved. However it is important to note here that these were still dirt roads that were graveled.

Supervisor Ralph Richmond asked the county Board of Supervisors to set out road paving bids for the Decoto Road in March 1927, which would connect Centerville-Alvarado Highway at Machado's Corners, east to the Hayward-Niles Highway. This also coincided with the paving of a stretch of highway between Irvington and Mission San Jose (today's Washington Boulevard).

Pete Swanson, a local carpenter, set a new example for the residents of Decoto by paving his own street in May 1927. He had trouble getting out of his place last winter. He then started grading Thirteenth Street and would macadamize it for a distance of two blocks.

Under the direction of Roadmaster Joe Gomes, and a crew of county workmen, the gravelling of "D" & "E" Streets from First to Twelfth Streets in Decoto were done in November 1927. These streets are in the heart of the residential section of Decoto and were being improved to eliminate mud during the winter.

In January 1929 a crew of engineers from the State Highway Department was busy surveying the road between Hayward and Warm Springs so that plans and

specifications for widening and resurfacing it may be completed this coming spring. The surveyors were also working on the concrete bridge over Dry Creek, which will either be replaced with a new span or widened.

A 10-foot concrete shoulder is being added to the State highway between Niles and Hayward (Mission Boulevard). As of November 1929 it had been laid from Niles to a point beyond Valle Vista and was expected to reach the city limits of Hayward by the beginning of December. The shoulder was opened to northbound traffic from Niles to Decoto. Resurfacing of the present highway will begin as soon as the construction of the shoulder is completed. Northbound traffic used the shoulder while a graveled detour on the opposite side of the road was used by the southbound vehicles. The job is expected to be completed by April 1930.

U.P.E.C.:

The Decoto Council, No. 61, U.P.E.C., will give a dance at Silva's Hall on July 17, 1920. Members of the U.P.E.C. lodge of Decoto were visited by the supreme grand lodge in January 1926.

Voting Officials:

January 1922:

Polling Place: Silva's Hall
Inspector: Joe Smith
Judge: Joe Maciel
Clerks: Mrs. Harriet Olson and Frank Caldeira

October 1922:

Polling Place: Silva's Hall
Inspector: John McEwen
Judges: Manuel Maciel and William Hurst
Clerks: William L. Searles, Mrs. May J. Pimentel, Mrs. Harriet J. Olson

March 1926:

Polling Place: Silva's Hall
Inspector: J.H. Smith
Judge: F.J. Calderia
Clerks: M.B. Maciel, H.C. Searles

July 1926:

Polling Place: Silva's Hall
Inspector: Peter Decoto
Judges: Emma Amaral and Mary C. Merrick
Clerks: Lillian Searles, Mary J. Pimentel and Mary C. Smith

Washington Township Men's Club:

Decoto residents who participated in events of this club during this period were: H. C. Searles, President of the Club, who acted as the Toastmaster at a meeting held at the Niles Congregational Church in February 1926.

Young Ladies Institute:

The Y.L.I. held a dance in Decoto in October 1926. One of the prominent young matrons, Mrs. Irene Goularte Leonard of Decoto, was a member of the arrangements committee.

* **MEMORABLE EVENTS** *

July 1920:

Peerless Stage Co.:

In July 1920 the Peerless Stage Association, which operated a bus passenger service between Oakland and San Jose, asked the Railroad Commission for authority to change the routing between the two cities, claiming that the recent completion of a new roadway has made better time and better service possible. The more direct route, it said was via San Lorenzo, Alvarado, Centerville, Irvington, Warm Springs and Milpitas. The company's stages are now routed from Oakland to San Jose via San Leandro, Hayward, Decoto, Niles, Centerville, Warm Springs and Milpitas. It is proposed to send hourly stages over the new route in addition to maintaining the present half hourly service over the old route. The service was designed to meet through traffic needs.

August 1920:

Marriage License: Louis Zwissig & Marion Leitch:

License to marry: Louis P. Zwissig, 27, Decoto & Marion E. Leitch, 23, Pleasanton,

September 1920:

Marriage License: Richard Kennedy & Gertrude May

License to Marry: Richard Kennedy, San Lorenzo & Miss Gertrude May, Decoto,

December 1920:

Surprise Party for Gertrude May:

A large number of Decoto people, friends and relatives of Mrs. Gertrude Kennedy of Hayward, were members of a surprise party tendered her in December 1920. The members were attired in costumes representing olden times. Mrs. Kennedy was, before her marriage, Miss Gertrude May of Decoto. The Decoto guests were:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Mr. and Mrs. H.C. Searles and son Alwin | Miss C. Anderson |
| Miss Katie Graesslin | Mr. and Mrs. Joe Williams, son Clarence |
| Mr. and Mrs. Henry May Jr. | Mrs. S. C. L. Anderson |
| Miss Marjorie May | Mrs. Ezra Decoto |
| Peter Decoto | Mr. and Mrs. John Sandholdt |
| Miss Victoria Palmer | Mr. and Mrs. J. Olson |
| Mr. and Mrs. E. McNulty | Sam Anderson |
| Raymond McNulty | Mrs. E. Burns |
| Miss C. Young | A. N. Benson |

March 1921:

Smallpox in Decoto:

J. Janeiro, A. Cambra and M. Littlejohn are reported sick with smallpox in March 1921. There is a movement afoot to have all school children vaccinated.



Decoto School Trustees Feted:

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Searles entertained the trustees of the Decoto Grammar School at a house party and dinner last Saturday evening. The guests were:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry May Sr.	Mr. and Mrs. John Sandholdt
Mrs. J. E. McNulty	Mrs. E. Burns
Miss Emma Young	Miss K. Alvord
A. N. Benson	Sam Andrews
Raymond J. McNulty	Mr. and Mrs. Henry May Jr. of Oakland
Mr. and Mrs. R. Kennedy of Hayward	

May 1921:

F. Swartz III with Typhoid Fever:

F. Swartz of Decoto is very low with typhoid fever in May 1921.



M. Garcia Injured:

M. A. Garcia, of Decoto, was injured slightly when his team ran away with a mowing machine, while he was cutting grass on the roadside near his home, the mower passed over him. He was not seriously injured however.



Colds and Smallpox Spread this Month:

Many citizens of Decoto have suffered from colds and smallpox during the past month. A number of cases of Spanish Influenza were also reported.

July 5, 1921:

Mrs. Janet Lowrie Decoto taken by Death:

Mrs. Janet Decoto, who was 80 years old, submitted to an operation a week ago. Her death occurred, July 5, 1921. She was survived by her husband, Ezra Decoto, three sons and three daughters. They are: Peter L., Louis A., Ezra W. Jr., Mrs. Henry Crosby, Mrs. August May and Mrs. Edward Palmer.

Born in Scotland, Mrs. Decoto was a child of three when her parents came to the United States, establishing their home in Thompsonville, Conn. An older sister married Adolphus Decoto. While accompanying the couple to the west, the romance of the younger sister and Ezra Decoto culminated in their marriage. The family located in Washington Township, where they are numbered with the earliest settlers. "Lowrie's landing" was called after Mrs. Decoto. She had lived sixty years in this county.

July 26, 1921:

Mrs. Harriet Hibbard Passes:

Funeral services for Mrs. Harriet Hibbard, widow of David Hibbard, pioneer hotel man of Decoto. Mrs. She died suddenly on July 26, 1921.

Mrs. Hibbard came to California in a prairie schooner with her parents, Judge and Mrs. Fayette Mallard. The family settled near Stockton, where Mallard was prominent in the early history. Mrs. Hibbard was born in Iowa. She was 69 years old.

July 16, 1921:

Frank Goularte Called by Death:

Frank Goularte of Decoto died at his home on July 16, 1921, after a long illness. He was an old-time citizen of the town and in years past was well known in racing circles

September 1921:

Marriage License: Henry Andrade and Carrie Goularte:

License to marry: Henry Andrade, 24, Decoto & Carrie R. Goularte, 20, Alvarado,

October 30, 1921:

Rufus Whipple Passes:

Rufus Whipple passed away in Decoto on October 30, 1921. He was the loving father of John Whipple and Inez E. Harrold, loving brother of Eleanor, Edwin, Gardner and J.D. Whipple, a native of New York, aged 86 years.

November 30, 1921:

Adolphus Decoto Passes Away:

Adolphus Decoto passed away November 30, 1921 in Centerville. He was 96 years old and was one of California's pioneers having come to this state in 1857.

On Coming to California he lived near Emeryville and later, for a time, at the town of Decoto with two brothers, John and Ezra Sr. Decoto. Afterwards he moved to Centerville to engage in farming. He remained there up to the time of his death. He is survived by daughters Mrs. Sarah Horner, Mrs. Lena Blacow, Mrs. Samuel B. Vandervoort, W. L. Decoto, and John Decoto, sons. Two other children, Mary Decoto Riser and Adolphus Decoto Jr. are deceased, as is Elizabeth Lowrie Decoto, his wife.

January 8, 1922:

Mrs. Margaret Silveira King Passes Away:

Mrs. Margaret King passed away in Oakland on January 8, 1922. She was a native of Decoto. Friends were respectfully invited to attend the funeral Tuesday from the home of Mrs. Joe Coit of Decoto.

Officers are searching for the thieves who entered the store of J. L. Olson, local postmaster, and took a number of watches and razors in March 1922. Entrance was gained by forcing a door and the thieves took advantage of a heavy rain, which was falling Friday night, which shielded their movements.

An announcement that an endowment fund had been created to pay the expenses of the upkeep of Cypress Lawn Cemetery in Decoto was made following the meeting of the cemetery association in May 1922. Officers of association were:

W. D. Patterson, President
Mrs. J.E. Thane, Vice-President
F. C. Hartman, Secretary-Treasurer.

June 13, 1922:

Death Takes Robert F. Lowrie:

Funeral services for Robert F. Lowrie, one of California's pioneers and an uncle of District Attorney Ezra W. Decoto, who died suddenly at Decoto on June 13, 1922. Lowrie was 74 years old.

July 1922:

Decoto Rancher Buys his Freedom:

Thomas Garcia, Decoto rancher, was liberated in July 1922 from the Alameda County Jail where, for 14 days, he had been trying to make up his mind to pay his divorced wife \$5 as partial settlement of her claim for back alimony. Garcia appeared before Judge W.T. Harris to show why he should not be jailed for failure to pay. He told Judge Harris he could not pay because he did not have any money.

"How much change have you in your pocket now?" asked Judge Harris?

"Five dollars," replied Garcia.

"Then give your wife that amount," ordered Judge Harris.

Garcia remonstrated. He said he needed it go get back to Decoto, and flatly refused to obey the court order. He was sent to the county jail for contempt.

Today Garcia's attorney came into court and said his client was willing to pay over the \$5. Judge Harris admonished him to make haste in paying up all of the claim and liberated him.



Young Decoto Cyclists Victims of Hit and Run Driver:

Joe Perry and Frank Silva, both of Decoto and both 14 years of age, were riding their bicycles east on the highway between Nilas and Hayward in September 1922, when they were struck down by a machine coming from the opposite direction. The boys were picked up by passing motorists and taken to the Masonic Home near Decoto. They probably will die, physicians say.

Immediately following the accident, Sheriff Barnet was notified and a posse scoured the roads for some trace of the joy riders, which were said to have been speeding. According to one of the boys, who regained consciousness for a few moments today, a number of men and women were riding in the machine, and leaned over the side of the car and shouted and waved their hands as they sped away.

November 1922:

Olson General Store Robbed:

Thieves forced their way into the Post Office and general store of J. L. Olson in November 1922, and made an unsuccessful attempt to open the safe containing currency. When Olson opened the store this morning, he found the rear door opened, tools scattered over the floor near the safe, and a badly damaged safe door. Although Olson could not open the safe himself this morning because of the damage done to it, he says he does not believe the burglars could have opened it and closed it. The night visitors apparently left in a hurry, taking with them only several pairs of shoes and number of articles of cutlery.

December 1922:

Heavy Rains:

Heavy rains in December 1922 were responsible for the slowing down of work in the locality, according to R.L. Crowder, Southern Pacific Agent, and J.M. Mendoza, grower of this district. Figures compiled in Decoto show that eleven and one half inches of rain had fallen already this season, against three and a half inches average. These rains have, Mendoza said, placed the ground in excellent condition for crops of the season, especially cauliflower.

January 1923:

Meyer Farm Sold:

In January 1923 an announcement was made of the purchase of an eighty-acre ranch at Decoto known as the Meyer Farm, by George Brown of San Lorenzo and Albert Gonsalves of San Leandro. They will engage in raising strawberries.

January 21, 1923:

Emma Sandholdt Passes:

Mrs. Emma Sandholdt Sorenson, formerly of Decoto passed away in Hayward on January 21, 1923. She was the daughter of Johannes and Christina Sandholdt of Decoto. She was 41 years of age.

May 11, 1923:

Death Calls Manuel J. Duarte:

In Alameda, Manuel J. Duarte, beloved son of Rosa M. Duarte, brother of Joaquin J. Duarte, Mrs. Mary Peixotto and Mrs. Mary Duarte of Decoto died in Alameda on May 11, 1923. He was 48 years old.

August 2, 1923:

Ezra Decoto Sr. Passes Away:

Funeral services were held for Ezra Decoto Sr., father of District Attorney Ezra Decoto, who died August 2, 1923, at his ranch at Decoto at the age of 93 years.

Decoto is survived by three daughters and three sons: Mrs. Henry Crosby, Mrs. August May, Mrs. Edward Palmer; and sons Peter, Ezra Jr. and Louis Decoto. Because of his extreme age, the old pioneer had been more or less of an invalid for the last few years. His wife died about three years ago.

The elder Decoto was a native of Canada. He went to New England as a young man and then joined in the gold rush to California. He arrived in San Francisco in 1852 after completing the trip by way of Panama. He farmed a while in Alameda and Elmhurst and built the old bridge that used to span the creek near the powerhouse in East Oakland.

April 1924:

Three New Homes in Decoto:

Three new homes and a business building are in the process of construction at Decoto in April 1924, and will be ready for occupation soon. Joseph Cunha will move into his new home while Edward Caminada expects to occupy his new five-room bungalow early next week. Alexander Savio is building a new business building, which will be used for a bakery and grocery store. He is also building himself an apartment and expects make Decoto his future home.

April 8, 1924:

Death Calls Anna G. Vargas:

Funeral services were held here for Mrs. Anna G. Vargas, whose death occurred April 8, 1924 at her home on the Niles Road. She had been in ill health for several years. She is survived by her husband, a son, Manuel, and a daughter, Dorothy.

Henry Torres, aged 25, was accidentally shot in the chest by a pistol being cleaned by Manuel De Rose in April 1924. Mr. Torres was taken to the county hospital where his condition is reported as not serious. The accident happened at Decoto, where both men live.

June 29, 1924:

C.E. Burrlling Drowns:

A man who was subsequently identified as C.E. Burrlling was found on June 29, 1924 drowned in the Bay off Pier 8. The body had been in the water a considerable time. The name on a letter found in a pocket was deciphered as C.E. Burrlling, Decoto Calif., but whether that is the name of the dead man was not determined.

July 1924:

Decoto Pugilist:

Eddie Kilrane of Decoto is attracting the attention of the four round fans by his good work in the ring. L.A. Moore of Centerville is handling him and in his last four starts he has kayoed his opponents in the first round. Billy Ryan, San Francisco welterweight was his latest victim, being added to the list last Tuesday night at San Jose.

March 1925:

Decoto and Niles not to Receive Natural Gas:

Niles and Decoto will not receive gas via the P.G. & E. in the very near future. Such is the report of the committee appointed by the Niles Chamber of Commerce to get data from the PG&E in March 1925. It is estimated that the cost of bringing the service from near the western limits of Hayward would be about \$123,000 and that the revenue could not possibly warrant the expenditure at this time. The service would have to be brought from west of Hayward because the mains through that town are not of sufficient size to carry the extra load. However, it has not been decided to entirely give up hopes at this time. Nevertheless, it does appear that we will get the service soon.

May 1925:

Miss Peggy Santos Druid Queen:

Miss Peggy Santos, pretty Decoto girl, has been chosen to represent the Centerville Grove of the Druids as queen at the Druids Festival held in San Jose on May 23 and 24, 1925. Besides being the queen she will also receive the gift of a \$400 diamond ring.

May 31, 1925

New Masonic Home Addition:

On May 31, 1925, the new \$250,000 addition to the Masonic Home was formally opened. It was stated that at that time the home accommodated 200 residents with forty patients in the hospital.

September 26, 1925:

Poolroom Robber Arraigned:

A.F. Lang, 25, was arraigned this afternoon by Judge Joseph A. Silva of Niles in the holdup of J.S. Jardine, poolroom proprietor, near his home in Decoto on September 26, 1925. Jardine was slugged and robbed of \$180 by two men. During the holdup the revolver of the accomplice was accidentally discharged, the bullet entering Lang's right arm, the wound assisting in his apprehension.

December 1925:

Four Men Dead in Railroad Crash:

Four members of a section gang were killed and two others injured, one perhaps fatally, when a westbound switch engine crashed into a motorcar this morning at

Pabrico (Pabrico is in the area of the Pacific States Steel Railroad Yard near Decoto) in December 1925.

The dead:

Delsino Flores, Decoto
Theodora Guerra, Decoto
Joseph Avilla, Decoto
Jesus Gutiérrez, Decoto.

The injured were E. Perez of Decoto who suffered a possible fractured skull, cuts, bruises and internal injuries, and Joseph Abrao of Decoto who received lacerations to the face.

The accident occurred shortly before 8 a.m. as the men were proceeding to work from Decoto to a section east of Niles. So far as the men knew, according to Abrao, the least seriously hurt of the crew; no train was due along the main track line before No. 79, the Stockton flyer.

As they were passing Pabrico, according to Abrao, who was sitting on the front of the small car, he suddenly saw a westbound switch engine loom out of the fog. Shouting to his companions, Abrao leapt from the car.

The next instant, before any of his companions could save themselves, the engine struck the car, scattering members of the crew along the right of way. Flores, Guerra, and Avilla were killed instantly.

January 1926:

Blame Laid for Deaths of Four Men:

In January 1926 the blame for the crash between the freight engine and a gasoline power car near Decoto on December 30th, was laid to Jesus Gutiérrez, foreman, by a coroner's jury in Hayward this morning. Testimony by Joseph Abrao, 51, one of the injured men, showed that Gutiérrez ordered the workers onto the gasoline car despite a heavy fog and without determining whether the track was clear at the Decoto station. Abrao averred also that the foreman failed to station men with warning flags in front and in the rear of the car as required during fog. H.A. Wisler, engineer, and John McCarthy, fireman of the freight engine, were absolved of all blame for the tragedy. They testified that they believed the track clear at the time.

February 1926:

Decoto Stores Robbed Again:

For the second time within the week, prowlers gained entrance to Decoto stores in February 1926 and failed to secure loot worth their effort. Cigars valued at about \$2.50 and ten bottles of soda water comprised the articles stolen from the pool hall operated by Tony Costa. A key believed to have been taken from a lock in the Southern Pacific station was used to enter the pool hall. Apparently frightened by a passing train, the burglars fled after forcing a lock to the general merchandise store of J. L. Olson. Entrance was gained to the store several weeks ago and a small quantity of merchandise was taken.

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Housing Shortage in Decoto:

Due to the campaign being waged by the Decoto Chamber of Commerce to overcome the acute scarcity of housing accommodations in Decoto and nearby towns, Mrs. Rose Goularte has announced her intention of erecting two cottages on her property, opposite the Southern Pacific depot, according to O.B. Merrick, Secretary of the chamber. The work of tearing down a barn, which occupies the tract was started in February 1926. The commercial organization expects soon to report the decisions of several other persons who will erect new homes here, Merrick declared.



Calif. Brick Co. Cites Civic Minded Employees:

In February 1926, responsive to the recent urge of local citizens for the display of great civic pride, the California Brick Company lays claim to personnel that is more actively engaged in furthering community affairs than any single organization in Washington Township. Located between Nilas and Decoto, the company boasts the following boosters:

- J. L. Duffey, President of the Nilas Chamber of Commerce
- W. H. Hurst, President on the Decoto C of C and Decoto Fire Commissioner
- Roland Bendel, Commander American Legion and Capt of the Decoto Fire Dept.
- M. C. Wilder, treasurer of the Men's Club of Washington Township.

March 1926:

Reception for Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Goularte:

Nearly 50 friends and relatives were present at the reception for Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Goularte in March 1926. Among those who attended from Decoto are:

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Silva | Mr. and Mrs. Jack Duarte |
| Mrs. Anne Claudine | Miss Evelyn Claudine |
| Mr. and Mrs. Joe Perry | Joe Neves |
| Charles Janeiro | Felix Pinza |
| Miss Dolores Marshall | Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mello |
| Mr. and Mrs. John Mello | Miss Catherine Pinza |
| Jerry Margaredo | Ernest Pimentel |
| Mrs. and Mrs. A.D. Goularte | |



Ed Salz Leaves for tour of Europe:

Ed Salz and a party of friends will leave here on a tour of Europe. They will sail from San Francisco to New York via the Panama Canal.



Robberies in Decoto Continue:

Operating on an exacting schedule, with employees and property of railroad companies their chief victims; the "Wednesday Night" bandits are continuing their reign in Southern Alameda County. Since December 31, 1925, three months ago, when they made their "debut" in Washington Township by wounding two employees of the Western Pacific yard at Nilas, the bandit pair has been linked to 24 "jobs," including robbery of five trainmen and the ransacking of railroad stations at Decoto, Centerville, Irvington and Nilas.

Robberies in Decoto attributed to this pair include:

December 27th: J. L. Olson Gen'l Merch store entered. Goods valued at \$50 stolen.
January 27th: Southern Pacific station entered.
February 5th: Tony Costa's pool hall; article valued at \$30 stolen.
February 5th: J. L. Olson general store entered.
February 5th: Southern Pacific station entered.
March 13th: Coat valued at \$75 taken from Sycamore dance hall.

March 1926:

Mrs. Anna Bettencourt Passes Away:

Mrs. Anna Bettencourt died at her home in Decoto. She was a native of the Azores Islands and was 63 years old. She is survived by her husband, Manuel A. Bettencourt, the following children: Mrs. Mary Caldeira, Antone, George, and Manuel Bettencourt. From an obituary dated March 19, 1926

April 1926:

Rainfall Year to Date 11.8 Inches:

Rainfall for Washington Township to date reached 11.80-inch mark at the beginning of April 1926. The heaviest rainfall over recorded in the township, affecting Centerville, Decoto, Irvington, Niles Newark, Alvarado, Warm Springs and Mission San Jose, was in 1890 when 46.33 inches fell. The minimum rainfall was 7.08 inches in 1896.

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**Decoto to have Team in Summer League Baseball:**

Gratifying progress was being made on assembling a summer baseball team in April 1926 to represent the Decoto Chamber of Commerce in the Washington Township League this year, according to Jerry Margaredo and George Smith, managers. Work is now under way on the Decoto ballpark, the grounds of which have been donated by Decoto citizens. The Southern Alameda County Baseball League in the process of organizing. So far four teams have committed: Alvarado, Decoto, Irvington and Newark. Representing Decoto are George Smith and Jerry Margaredo.

**Burglars Ransack Olson General Store:**

Burglars who ransacked the John L. Olson general merchandise store of goods valued at \$150 in April 1926, were unintentionally aided in escaping by a private detective. This was the opinion expressed by the sheriff's office when it was learned that a member of the J. F. Goldner Night Patrol Agency, making its scheduled rounds, arrived at the store shortly after the burglary had occurred. Noticing two men seated in a machine outside the store, and unaware of what had occurred, the patrolman questioned the men as to what they were doing. When told that their machine had stalled, according to reports of the sheriff's office, the patrolman turned mechanic and helped fix the "trouble." After bidding farewell to the men he had helped, the patrolman inspected the store and found a door had been jimmied and the building ransacked.

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MSJ Holy Ghost:

Among the Decoto people to visit the Holy Ghost celebration at Mission San Jose in April 1926 were:

Mr. and Mrs. Manuel White

Mrs. Manuel Perry

Clarence Freitas
Charles Janeiro
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mendonca and family

Jerry Margaredo
Mr. and Mrs. Ed Goularte

June 1926:

Alvarado vs. Decoto Baseball Game:

Enthusied over the baseball game in June 1926 at the Alvarado ballpark, in which Decoto and Alvarado played to decide the championship for the first half of the season of the Washington Township League, the Decoto Chamber of Commerce postponed its regular business to talk baseball. It was voted to turn out en masse and root for Decoto. Decoto was officially awarded the championship for the first half of the Washington Township Baseball League schedule at a meeting in Centerville.

June 9, 1926:

Large Elusive Snake:

A number of years ago a circus stopped at Hayward leaving behind rumors of an escaped baby boa constrictor some four feet long. Every year someone within a ten-mile radius of Hayward has seen that rumored snake, usually on Saturday night or Sunday morning, and every time it was seen it had grown a foot. This morning, June 9, 1926, it was seen again with 10 feet of tail stretching behind its head and a baleful look in its eye. As a result, the entire town of Decoto is out snake hunting on the Henry May ranch one-half mile outside of the city limits, for the man who reported it is an undisputed teetotaler.

John Costa, who discovered it, is a gardener on the May estate. He swears he stumbled over the reptile and that it was big enough to be a tree, only it moved. About 9 o'clock he came running into town completely exhausted asking for help to capture or kill the giant snake. He stated that while he cleaning brush in the bed of Dry Creek, a gully which forms a center for a picnic ground maintained by the May family, he heard a rustling noise and right before him a black, green and yellow snake fully eight inches in diameter slid across his path and disappeared. Mrs. May, left on the ranch telephones to Chief Walter Walker of the volunteer fire department to come out at once, and he organized a snake hunting party armed with lassos, shotguns and monkey wrenches and departed for the snake's alleged hiding place. Approximately every foot of the May ranch was threshed over but not a snake could be found, not even one of the garden variety.

July 1926:

Horseshoes:

Unable to arrange for a horseshoe-pitching tournament with Niles or Irvington to definitely decide the championship of Washington Township, the Decoto team is considering a challenge hurled by the Berkeley Fire Department to meet in a series of three contests, according to Secretary O.B. Merrick of the local club. The Alameda Horseshoe Club, which boasts a membership in excess of 200, has challenged the Decotoans to a game in July 1926.

August 1926:

Alvarado Takes Baseball Second Half Title:

The Decoto and Alvarado baseball teams, winners in the split season race of the Washington Township League, will meet in August 1926 determine the championship of the league. The team winning two out of three games will meet the winner of the Richmond or Concord championship series.

Alvarado took the first game of a three game series with Decoto by the score of 4 to 2. The next game in the best of three series will be played at Alvarado.

The lineup for Decoto:

Perry, Short Stop
Pimentel, Right Field
Dutra, Second Base
Lyons, Third Base
Brown, First Base
Lemos, Left Field
Powers, Center Field
F. Smith, Catcher
Brollier, Pitcher

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**Alvarado Takes Township Title with win over Decoto:**

In a game marred by loose playing on the part of the Decoto infield, Alvarado defeated Decoto for the Championship of the Washington Township League by a score of 14 to 8. A banner crowd witnessed the game that gave Alvarado the right to play Concord, the Three "C" League Champions for the semi-pro title of Northern California.

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The May's Return from trip to Alaska:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry May returned home in August 1926 following a two months' trip to Alaska. They stopped at Juneau, the capital, Skagway, Fairbanks and a number of other Alaskan cities. Mr. and Mrs. Henry May Jr. of Oakland, who have been occupying the May residence during their absence, will return to the East bay soon.

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**Mrs. Mary Cunha Dies:**

Mrs. Mary Cunha, a long-time resident of Decoto died recently. From an obituary dated August 6, 1926.

**August 28, 1926:**

**Manuel A. Bettencourt Passes Away:**

The passing of one of Decoto's oldest and best known pioneers occurred on August 28, 1926, when Manuel A. Bettencourt, 68, a native of the Azores Islands who made his home in this section some years ago, died at his home in Decoto at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. He was the husband of the late Annie Bettencourt. He is mourned by Manuel, George and Antone, his sons, and Mrs. Mary Caldeira, a daughter.

**November 1926:**

**Decoto Residents attend NSGW & MDGW Whist in Centerville:**

A large number of Decoto residents attended the Native Daughters and Sons Whist Party in November 1926 at Centerville recently for the benefit of homeless children.

Among those from Decoto were:

Mr. and Mrs. Anthony A. Amaral  
Willie Enos

Mrs. Joseph Andrade  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph P. Silva

Mr. and Mrs. M. Vargas

**February 1927:**  
**County Cracks down on Rowdy Road Houses:**

Accompanied by a report declaring that drinking, gambling, fighting and other evils are rampant in county roadhouses, frequented in many instances by boys and girls from the East bay cities, a new ordinance designed in February 1927 to curb the activity of such reports was presented by the Board of Supervisors today by District Attorney Earl Warren. Ten places are named in District Attorney Warren's report as having been under investigation by his office. These include the Sycamore Dance Hall near Decoto, where one man was arrested for possession of liquor "who had a seventeen year old girl from San Jose." At the "Tavern," another place named in the report, "I have seen girls drunk on the dance floor and "a crap shooting game is run in this place."

"Against the Alta Vista Inn, originally opened by real estate men as community center hall, there have been complaints and I am informed that parties are trying to lease the same to run as a nickel dance."

The "Newark" is charged with running all night dances which, residents complain, result in fights and drunkenness, then trouble being "caused by people from Oakland and Emeryville coming to this hall after the Oakland dances are closed." Buck Joseph's and Crossley's at Alvarado; Palace of Fine Arts, Newark; Mrs. Mathews, Sunol; Twin Oaks, Livermore; and the Hathaway Ranch, San Lorenzo, are described as "private houses rented for dancing and selling liquor.

**February 12, 1927:**  
**Perry's given Surprise Party:**

An enjoyable surprise party was given to Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Perry of Decoto Saturday evening, February 12, 1927. The evening was spent in dancing, singing and games, enjoyed by everyone. Refreshments were served. Hawaiian music was furnished by the Jolly Six String Orchestra of Vallejo. Among those present were:

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Perry     | Mr. and Mrs. Manuel E. Perry      |
| Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Perry Sr. | Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith          |
| Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Goularte   | Mr. and Mrs. Louis King           |
| Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Vargas    | Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Coit and son |
| Miss Delores Marshall         | Miss Peggy Mast                   |
| Keith Rogers                  | Frank Goularte                    |
| Jimmie Kearny                 | Lawrence Pimentel                 |
| Harry Brazil                  | Manuel Perry                      |
| Joseph Perry Jr.              | Vernon Perry                      |

**August 1927:**  
**Carvalho Hurt in Auto Accident:**

John Carvalho, 22, of Decoto was badly cut on the head and face in August 1927, when the auto driven by his brother, Manuel Carvalho, also of Decoto, was struck by another vehicle on Brokaw Road in San Jose.

**September 1927:**  
**Truck Overload nets Arrest:**

Al Brown of Decoto was arrested and cited in Turlock in September 1927 for operating a truck, which weighed 25,840 pounds in a truck rated for the maximum



weight of 22,000 pounds. The load consisted of grapes that Brown was transporting to Oakland.

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PG&E Seeks Franchise for Decoto:

The application of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company for a franchise to distribute gas to Niles, Decoto, Centerville, Alvarado, Newark, Irvington and adjacent communities was filed in September 1927 with the Board of Supervisors.

November 1927:

Japanese National Sought for 525 Gallons of Sake Found:

The San Francisco Japanese section is being searched today for T. Minamini in November 1927 following a raid on a ranch near Decoto last night, where 525 gallons of sake, a Japanese drink, and a complete manufacturing plant were seized by federal and county agents. The search for the Japanese is being directed by his son, H. Minamini, who was arrested. The son said that his father operated the place and agreed to aid the agents in finding him in San Francisco.

March 1928:

Decoto Infant has Bead Stuck in her Ear:

Sophie Martinez, 4-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Candelario Martinez of Decoto returned from the Highland Hospital In March 1928 after undergoing an operation for the removal of a bead from her ear. The child was wearing a string of beads when she was placed in bed by her mother. The string broke during the night one of the beads found its way into her ear.

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**PGE Granted Franchise in Township for Natural Gas:**

Although granted the franchise to serve gas to five communities in southern Alameda County, the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. was criticized by the State Railroad Commission for its failure to extend service to adjoining territory unless forced to do so by its competitors. The franchise was granted yesterday after commission had considered both the PG&E application and that of the Alameda Gas Co., filed by W.J. Rigney. The latter organization secured the transfer as assignee of the Tracy Gas Co., now operating in that city and adjoining territory. The right to serve gas to Irvington, Mt. Eden, Mission San Jose, Decoto and Warm Springs granted by the franchise was given by the commission only because of a lower rate offered than its competitor. Having been granted a certificate of public necessity and convenience, the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. will start to extend gas mains from the end of the present gas system south of Hayward to serve Decoto, Niles, Centerville, Newark and Alvarado.

**April 1928:**

**Bad Gin Costs Ton Costa \$100 Fine:**

The little brown jug that held liquor for Tony Costa of Decoto is going to be a sick little jug if it keeps on holding such liquor. That was brought out today when Costa was given a hearing and fined \$100 by Justice Joseph Silva at Decoto in April 1928. According to Oscar Jahnsen, head of the district attorney's "dry squad" that seized Costa and his jug, the liquor was terrible. So terrible that it had eaten through the top of the little brown jug. The jug contained gin of a particularly horrible character,



dry agents said. Jahnsen brought back the jug, which spoke for itself of its frequent use when it appeared in the Decoto court.

**May 1928:**  
**Gravel Pit Injury:**

Enos Delgado, 26, of Decoto, was confined to the Hayward General Hospital in May 1928, where he is suffering from cuts, bruises and abrasions caused when he was thrown under the truck of a locomotive crane operated at the Associated Gravel Plant in Niles. Mr. Delgado has been employed at the plant for two years, and was until the time of the accident working on the night shift.

**June 1928:**  
**PG&E Natural Gas Lines in Decoto:**

Progressing at a rate of approximately 800 feet per day, the PG&E Co. expects to complete its gas feeder line to Decoto and Niles by the early part of June 1928 and expects to start work on its distribution system not later than July 1<sup>st</sup>. The crew is now nearing Valle Vista.

Distribution mains were being laid in Decoto in June 1928 and residents of Decoto will be using gas within 10 days, according to George Donovan, district agent for the PG&E. The feeder main is being extended along the highway to Niles and will terminate about 1,600 feet east of the Centerville Road.



**Larry Bettencourt:**

From Decoto to the Big Leagues in one jump, is the meteoric path of St. Mary's College's greatest athletic hero of recent years, Larry Bettencourt. Since Larry Bettencourt, former St. Mary's College baseball and football star joined the St. Louis Browns, that club has been climbing right up the American League ladder, and if the New York Yankees did not have a lead of thirteen and a half games over them, fans would probably be paying more attention to what the Brownies were doing. They are in third place and only 3 and a half games behind the Philadelphia Athletics. Bettencourt is probably one of the biggest finds of the season in the American League in June 1928, and if he keeps up the heavy stick work it may not be long before we will hear of him being the leading hitter in the American League.

In their last eight games he clouted out 10 hits in 23 times at bat for an average of .435 and to bring his season batting average up to .344. In all he has made 61 trips to the plate and connected for 21 hits. Quite a record for a young fellow just breaking in.

(NOTE: The St. Louis Browns would degenerate into one of the worst teams performing teams of all times and in the 50's they became the Baltimore Orioles)

**September 1928:**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD STORES, INC.**

The largest California Grocery Organization of its kind is ready to serve you, 800 members, of which 150 are in the East Bay territory, with a potential membership of over 1000 throughout the West. NEIGHBORHOOD STORES, INC., offer to you every day in the week the lowest prices consistent with the highest of quality, with many extra specials for Fridays and Saturdays. It will pay you to visit the nearest store and

see for yourself the new savings offered by these, you own neighborhood grocers, with whom you have been trading for years. Visit the store in your neighborhood.

Washington Township Stores in September 1928:

G. Cosso, Alvarado  
A. A. Lee, Alvarado  
M. B. Reynolds, Newark  
J. L. Olson, Decoto  
L. J. Trincherro, Niles

#### **October 1928:**

##### **Larry Bettencourt:**

Larry Bettencourt, All-American football center and St. Louis Browns' third baseman, has returned to his parent's home in Decoto in October 1928. Decotoans state they are proud to own such a son as he, but Newark has really first claim on Larry, as he was born and raised in Newark until he attended Washington Union High. Larry rode home in his new Ford, making the trip in less than a week. He was too late for the St. Mary's - California game, but he is planning on attending the U.S.C. game.

#### **January 1929:**

##### **Manuel Caldeira Joins Niles Bank:**

Manuel L. Calderia joined the Niles Branch of the Bank of Alameda County in January 1929. Mr. Calderia has been for many years a trusted employee of the J. L. Olson general store in Decoto and enters the service of the bank highly recommended.

#### **January 13, 1929:**

##### **J. H. Peterson Passes:**

Funeral services were held for John Hansen Peterson here on January 13, 1929, attended by a large number of old-time friends, acquaintances and relatives. John was the Husband of Clara T., and father of George A. and William E. Peterson, Mrs. O.F. Trask and Mrs. H.F. Lyle. Amid an impressive setting of flowers, the Rev. F.V. Jones of Niles delivered an eloquent and touching sermon. Pallbearers were Henry C. Searles, John L. Olson, Robert Haines, Harry Haines, Peter Decoto and John Whipple. Mr. Peterson was 83 years old and a native of Denmark.

#### **February 1929:**

##### **Vanessa:**

"Vanessa," who comes to the Orpheum Theater as headliner in February 1929 is, in private life, Miss Vanessa Gardiner, a former Decoto girl, who got her start about six years ago as a dancer for Fanchon and Marco.

#### **February 18, 1929:**

##### **Death Takes Edward Machado:**

Friends and relatives of Edward Machado, 33-year-old veteran of the World War, who died February 18, 1929, in an Oakland Hospital following an operation, paid their last tribute to his memory in funeral services held for him. Mr. Machado was born in Decoto and leaves a wife Helen Machado and a 5-month-old daughter Gertrude Machado. A brother, Tony Machado lives in Mission San Jose.

#### **April 1929:**

##### **Decoto Man loses Harmonica Championship:**

Joe Silva of Hayward is the undisputed harmonica champion of southern Alameda County when he scored a victory over the Decoto harmonica champion, Charles Jones in April 1929.

**May 1929:**

**Jack Whipple Builds One of Four Tennis Courts in Township:**

With four championship courts in May 1929, tennis enthusiasts of Washington Township are contemplating the formation of a league with teams representing the principal towns. An asphalt court of championship size has been completed on the J. C. Shinn Estate. Jack Whipple has constructed a similar court on his ranch at Decoto. Another court is available at the home of H. F. Chadbourne at Centerville. The fourth court is on the Patterson Estate near Newark. Whipple and Judge Allen G. Norris of Centerville are advocates of the league.

**May 3, 1929:**

**Robert Lowrie Passes:**

Apparently committing suicide by the unusual method of lying under a train and waiting for it to start and run over him, Robert Lowrie, 60, for many years a resident of Decoto, was killed Friday afternoon. He had been out of work and in ill health and despondency arising from these causes is presumed by his friends to have motivated his act. Just after an east-bound Southern Pacific passenger train pulled out of the Decoto station, employees at the station noticed what they thought was a mail sack lying across the rails a short distance from the station. They were astonished to discover the man's body, cut in half when the train started up. As far as is known, no one actually saw the occurrence. Mr. Lowrie was unmarried but has many relatives in this section and was well known.

**June 3, 1929:**

**Mrs. Mary Anna Soares Passes Away:**

Many paid their tributes of tears and flowers to the memory of the late Mrs. Mary Anna Soares, wife of the late John F. Soares, in funeral services held at the Holy Ghost Church Catholic Church in Centerville Wednesday. Pallbearers were: M.F. George, J. Goulardt, M. Rocha, George Enos, M. Maciel and Domingos Dias. Mrs. Soares died at her home on the Creek Road near Decoto Monday, June 3, 1929. She was 55 years old and a native of the Azores Islands. She was survived by two sons, Manuel and Joseph Soares, and three daughters, Miss Mary Soares, Mrs. Helen Machado and Mrs. Lillian Flores. She was the mother also of the late Antone and John Soares.

**June 5, 1929:**

**Death Calls Edwin Whipple:**

In Decoto, June 5, 1929, Edwin Whipple, husband of Emily C. Whipple, father of Edwin Jr., Isabel, Arthur, Theodore and Homer Whipple, Mrs. H.C. Johnson, Mrs. M.E. Coulter, Mrs. C. P. Harvey, a native of Pennsylvania, aged 87 years.

**June 6, 1929:**

**Masao Ishihara Passes:**

Funeral services will be held one June 6<sup>th</sup> for Masao Ishihara, 28, Japanese of Decoto, employed by the Alvarado Salt Works, who was killed instantly when his machine was struck by a Southern Pacific passenger train on the Mr. Eden crossing late Monday night, June 5, 1929.

**July 9, 1929:**

### **Mrs. Wm. Graesslin Called by Death:**

The funeral of Mrs. Kunundah Graesslin was held Tuesday, July 9, 1929; at 3 o'clock p.m. Mrs. Graesslin had been an esteemed resident of Decoto 55 years, and in that time had become well known and greatly beloved. Her life continued from 1849 to 1929, through 80 years. She was the wife of the late William Graesslin and mother two daughters, a son and a grandson. They are: Kate Graesslin, Mrs. H.C. Searles, Frederick Graesslin, and Alwin Searles. Her husband passed away five years ago. The Pallbearers at the funeral were: J.B. Wendt, J.M. Overacker, James Logan, H. May, J.S. Olson, and Peter Decoto.

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Steering Wheel Leads to Accident:

Eight persons, including five children, two of them infants, were injured in a strange accident, which occurred in Niles Canyon, about four miles east of Niles Wednesday afternoon. Almost by a miracle was death to one or more of those in the automobile averted. The driver, Gaspar Perry, of Decoto, his wife and their three children, his brother and sister-in-law and her 19-day-old daughter were riding in a light delivery truck, which left the road in Niles Canyon, plunged down a 40-foot bank, when the steering wheel of the car came off. The car alighted on the railway below, right side up, all the occupants falling out except Mr. and Mrs. Perry.

The victims and their injuries are:

Gaspar Perry, 23, broken ribs and sprained back.

Mrs. Annie Perry, 22, his wife, possible internal injuries.

Charles E. Perry, their son, 15 months old, six-inch gash on his forehead.

Mercy Perry, their daughter, 4, four-inch gash on the cheek.

Frances Perry, 6, shaken and bruised.

Mrs. Julia Perry, sister-in-law of Gaspar, Pleasanton, broken leg.

Henrietta Perry, 19, Mrs. Julia Perry's daughter, shaken and bruised.

Philip Perry, brother of Gaspar, shaken and bruised.

Gaspar Perry and his wife and three children had recently moved to Decoto from Pleasanton, and were making the trip through the canyon to obtain some remaining household effects. The others in the car were Decoto relatives.

August 1929:

Jack Carey Injured:

Jack Carey of Decoto was injured when the car in which he was driving in August 1929 along the highway north of Decoto ran into a horse. A finger was nearly severed from his left hand. He treated at the Grau Emergency Hospital.

September 1929:

Decoto gets ready to Convert Appliances to Gas:

Conversion of appliances to gas in the homes of the Decoto vicinity were being prepared in September 1929 for the service of natural gas, which is slated to begin soon. It was reported that the areas of Decoto, Niles and Newark would undergo that preparation soon.

September 4, 1929:

Itsuko Moritomo Taken by Death:

The body of Itsuko Moritomo, 8-months-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Y. Moritomo of Decoto, was laid to rest in the Odd Fellow's Cemetery at Decoto. The little girl died Wednesday morning, September 4, 1929, at her parent's home.

December 1929:

Tony Ramos Found Not Guilty:

Tony Ramos, Decoto merchant, was found not guilty by a jury in the local justice court in December 1929, when he was tried on a charge of battery brought by Jose Valentine, also of Decoto. Valentine, who brought a law-suit in the superior court for damages totaling \$20,000, claimed to have been seriously injured in a fight with Ramos over Valentine's failure to pay a bill of several hundred dollars. Judge Allen G. Norris represented Ramos in the damage suit, Judge J. A. Silva of Niles presided. The case was the first one in many months to be continued into the night.