The Pioneer Press
West Side Pioneer Association
Tracy Historical Museum
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Tracy, CA 95378-0117

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Upcoming Events

Date	Time	Event	Location/Presenter
March 15, 2015 Sunday	2:00 PM	***Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner Fundraiser***	Tracy Community Center
		TBD	
		TBD	
		TBD	
		TBD	

Please Note: Programs are subject to change.
Call the Museum, to confirm schedule

THE PIONEER PRESS

West Side Pioneer Association/Tracy Historical Museum
1141 Adam Street, Tracy, California 95376
Phone: (209) 832-7278
E-Mail: tracymuseum@sbcglobal.net
Web: www.tracymuseum.org

Vol. 26-2 *March-April 2015*

WSPA President's Message

Larry W. Gamino - President

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."
William Faulkner

The State of the Museum Address

The Mission of the Tracy Historical Museum is to serve Tracy area citizens and its diverse communities through an interdisplinary approach based on principles of preservation, restoration and protection of historical artifacts and documents. This approach prepares students and communities to critically examine intergenerational traditions and contemporary cultural trends resulting from the intersections of race, ethnicity, class and gender. The overall goal of the Tracy Historical Museum is to develop critical thinking skills and an appreciation and understanding of comparative analysis between cross cultural communities.

The vision of the current West Side Pioneer Association expands upon the social history of Tracy at the Museum and embraces two core elements of Tracy's heritage—RAILROADS and AGRICULTURAL. These needed future museums in downtown Tracy will weave Tracy's past while accumulating the City's cultural knowledge for future generations. This bold vision of establishing a true Historical District is predicated on the return of Tracy's symbolic identity-the Southern Pacific Steam Locomotive 1293, the reintroduction of the 1876 Lammersville Pioneer School and the embellishment of landmarks, plaques and historic statues will resuscitate the downtown heartbeat.

Finally, the immediate goal of this Association and Museum is to expose people of Tracy to its rich heritage and diverse communities to develop a global citizen for today and tomorrow. This President and Board of Directors take a long view of the past and the future and firmly conclude that the creation of three core museums of railroad, agricultural and social history are the pillars that Tracy deserves.

Get your IRISH on!

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Join us for our annual

Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner Fundraiser

Sunday, March 15, 2015, 2:00 p.m.

Tracy Community Center, 950 East St., Tracy

Reservations Required – RSVP by Monday, March 9, 2015

Tickets - $20/plate, includes door prize ticket; Take-out available

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Cut along this line and mail reservation form with your check to Museum.

March 15, 2015 Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner – RSVP by March 9, 2015

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Tickets @ $20/plate _____ # Take-out plates@$20/plate _____

Sponsored by West Side Pioneer Association/Tracy Historical Museum
1141 Adam St., Tracy CA 95376, 209-832-7278, www.tracymuseum.org

History Seminar Series Presentation

A California Gold Rush Woman:
Louise Clappe's Letters from the Feather River, 1851-1852

Wednesday, February 18, 2015, 7:00 pm

Tracy Historical Museum, 1141 Adams Street, Tracy
Speaker: Marlene Smith-Baranzini

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Join Marlene Smith-Baranzini for a discussion about the life and times of Louise Clappe, who lived in a Gold Rush town on the Feather River in 1851 and 1852. Ms. Smith-Baranzini, who lives in Tracy, edited the most recent edition of *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines,* and will talk about "Dame Shirley" among the miners, and how the rediscovered letters have become a classic of California history and literature.

About *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines*

In January 1850, Louise Amelia Clapp[e], age twenty-nine, and her husband, Dr. Fayette Clapp, arrived in San Francisco by ship. By the fall of 1851 they were living in a lucrative mining camp in the narrow Feather River canyon, high in the northern Sierra. Located some 25 miles west of present-day Quincy, the small mining community of Indian Bar became their home for the next sixteen months. While Dr. Clapp stitched up wounds and dispensed medicines, Louise wrote.

In a collection of twenty-three letters addressed to her younger sister in Amherst, Massachusetts, "Dame Shirley," as Louise called herself, captured in crisp, vivid prose the rough-and-tumble world that surrounded her. Written with humor, compassion, satire, and wonder, Dame Shirley's first-hand account of life in an early gold camp is celebrated as an accurate, insightful, and highly entertaining portrayal of this fleeting era in American history.

About Marlene: Marlene Smith-Baranzini is editor of the *Overland Journal,* the quarterly history magazine of the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA), headquartered in Independence, Missouri. A former English teacher and school counselor, Marlene served as associate editor of the *California History* quarterly from 1989 to 2003. She has written or edited several works of American history, including (editor) of *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines* (Heyday, Berkeley, 2001) and co- author of the five-volume U.S. Kids History Series (Little, Brown, 1994+). Marlene lives in Tracy and can be reached by email at tealblue1@gmail.com.

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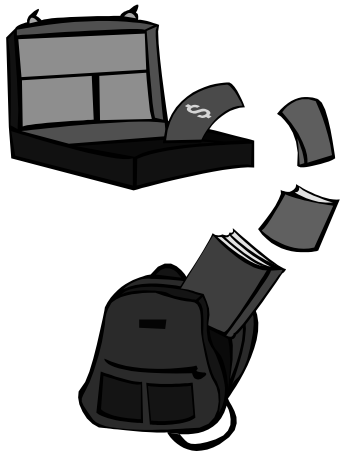
Tracy Historical Museum/WSPA
High School Local History Scholarships Available

Application Deadline **- March 31, 2015**

The Tracy Historical Museum and West Side Pioneer Association (WSPA) offer two $500 scholarships to graduating seniors from schools in the Tracy Unified School District (TUSD) area. One scholarship is targeted for a graduating senior planning to attend a 2 year junior college and one for a graduating senior planning to attend a 4 year college. Applicants must demonstrate some involvement in local history, for example through volunteer work at the Historical Museum or a local history project, research paper or essay. The **application deadline is March 31, 2015**. Applications are available through the Counseling Office at each high school or by contacting the Tracy Historical Museum at tracymuseum@sbcglobal.net or 209-832-7278.



WHO:	**High School Senior Local History Scholarships**
***WHAT*:**	**2 - $500 scholarships for graduating seniors in TUSD area**
***APPLICATION DEADLINE*:**	**March 31, 2015**
***INFORMATION*:**	**High School Counseling Office tracymuseum@sbcglobal.net 209-832-7278**

The Unforgettable February Friday the Thirteenth, 1970

By Larry W. Gamino

Last Friday the Thirteenth of February, 2015 was the 45th anniversary of Tracy's most unlucky day in modern history. Then, a small agricultural and conservative city of 12,000 previously inundated by the Altamont Rock Festival four months earlier, Tracy stood in the cross cultural currents of San Francisco's popular counterculture and Berkeley's political radicalism. Tracy reflected this conflicted change as embodied by the Tracy High school campus. The student body was polarized into two main camps such as rednecks vs. radicals, conservatives vs. liberals, Support the Establishment vs. Power to the People, pro-Vietnam war supporters vs. anti-Vietnam war protesters, Love It or Leave It vs. Peace and Freedom and Jocks vs. Hippies. In Tracy, the political spectrum was divided into Sporties vs. Stoners.

Tracy was no different than any other small town in the country except for what happened on Friday the Thirteenth. Sixteen ordinary teenagers on that night after a Tracy high school basketball team with only one senior after senior players politically quit soundly defeated Atwater High were cruising in a minivan waiting for an after game school dance at the Teenage Center—the original gym of the West building at Tracy Joint Union High School, the only high school in Tracy.

As basketball fans and families filtered home, basketball players with sideburns showered and dressed while teenage girls readied themselves for a night of romance before Valentine's Day. Others lucky enough to have a car or ride headed to a rendezvous in an orchard or to the Tracy Airport to watch the submarine races. Those near the airport heard the distant bells of the railroad crossing signaling an approaching locomotive and the loud blasts of an oncoming Western Pacific freight train racing toward Manteca.

At 8:15 PM, Troy Bunner's minivan with a peace symbol flag on the antenna stalled in front of an oncoming freight train, WP East Bound Engine 2007, after stopping for a wig-wag on old Highway 120 near Manteca. The minivan turned into a death van.

In less than an hour after the game ended, Tracy would be devastated by the news that seven Tracy High teens and one Santa Clara freshman had been killed when a WP freight train of gravel cars hit their 1961 Chevrolet Covair van bus or hippie bus at a Western Pacific railroad crossing near Yosemite Road and old Highway 120, four miles west of Manteca.

Continued next page

Unforgettable Friday the Thirteenth

Continued

As information of the car train accident spread after the 11 o'clock local TV news, frightened parents feared the worst. Many jumped into their cars and drove to the high school dance to check on their children's whereabouts. Others telephoned the Teenage Center snack stand demanding to speak to their son or daughter. Rumors, opinions, speculation and sadness quickly set in over the teenage train tragedy.

As a senior in the class of 1970, the train tragedy was an unforgettable and terribly sad experience. Whenever Friday the Thirteenth comes around I am transported back to February, 1970 and remember this unforgettable night of pandemonium and despair. Then, as now, I write with sorrow and express my sympathy to the relatives and friends of Tracy's worst nightmare on Friday the Thirteenth February, 1970.

Unaware of the train crash, fashionable students in bell bottom pants and miniskirts hung out on the steps and wood floor of the Teenage Center. As word spread of the train accident, the dance was cancelled. Cars with worried parents continued to circle the parking lot looking for a familiar face. Students stood in disbelief, fear, numbness and tears of grief.

Soon, the story of the eight teenagers who died and the other eight who survived emerged. Their names were remembered and repeated over and over. The whole community was affected. Instantly killed Tracy seniors Troy Bunner and Don Zimmerman, both 17; juniors Sheri Maddox, Robin Moore and Phyllis Handsome, all 16; sophomore Susan Pombo, 15; and freshman Joey Church, 14. Lisa Whiteman, a 13 year old from Santa Clara also died. Junior Shirley Dover, 16, and freshman Terry Knoll, 14, were injured but thrown clear of the impact. Other survivors of the auto train accident were juniors Mark Church and Bruce Knoll, both 16; Knoll's brother, freshman Tom. 14, sophomores Eldon Davis, Jr. and Patty Bryant, both 15, of Tracy and Scott Houser, 18, of Manteca.

As a senior in the class of 1970, the train tragedy was an unforgettable and terribly sad experience. Whenever Friday the Thirteenth comes around I am transported back to February, 1970 and remember this unforgettable night of pandemonium and despair. Then, as now, I write with sorrow and express my sympathy to the relatives and friends of Tracy's worst nightmare on Friday the Thirteenth February, 1970.

Betty Galli Is There When Tracy Needs Her

By Larry W. Gamino

The path of Betty Galli is one of long standing commitment in the greater interest of Tracy. As Past President of the West Side Pioneer Association from1992 through 1994, she along with other members was instrumental in establishing Tracy's first Museum at the former Boy Scouts Hut on Bessie and the former U.S. Post Office on Adam in 2003. Among her other honors were Tracy Woman of the Year and former Director of the San Joaquin County Historical Society.

Today, she still battles for security improvements at the Lammersville Pioneer School at Clyde Bland Park on West Lowell Street. Last Thursday on February the 5th, Mrs. Galli weighted on the agenda item of fencing for Lammersville School at the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting. After Lammersville School docent Sue Brzostowski expressed deep concern that inappropriate fencing might give an undesirable prisoner effect, Betty expounded on her comment. She believed City money could better be spent on surveillance cameras that act as a deterrent to criminal activity without being intrusive to third grade students nor violate privacy issues. Because the City fencing only protected three sides of the school building, vandals could still violate the unfenced entrance.

In attendance with Betty Galli were Peter Mitracos, Kathy Bergthold and Larry Gamino who all supported the immediate installation of surveillance cameras. However, the group suggested in an ideal world that a long term solution would be the return of the Lammersville School to downtown among its aged and iconic buildings in the Historic District, the heart of Tracy.

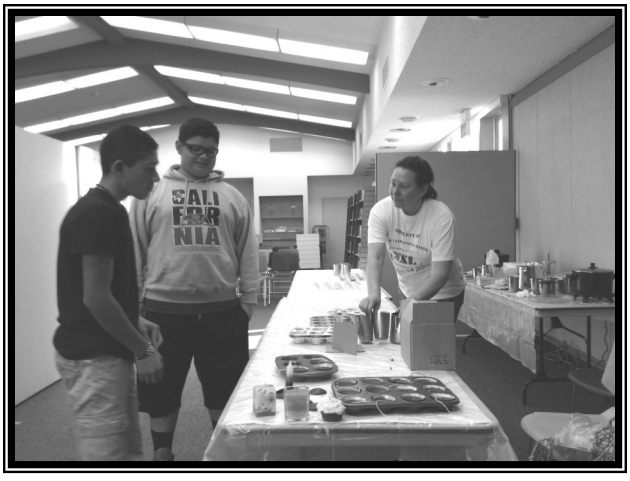
Betty Galli advocates for surveillance cameras for Lammersville School at Parks Commission meeting.

Landmark chairman Peter Mitracos discussing the importance of the Ellis Marker Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Janice Jonson Continues Candle Making Tradition

Among the many talents of well known WSPA Recording Secretary Janice Johnson is her candle making skills. Self taught, our current Parks and Recreation Commissioner on Thursday, February 12th, at the Tracy Branch Library demonstrated to approximately 25 boys and girls, with their parents, the art of candle making. In the Wadsworth room, Mrs. Johnson step by step instructed the techniques to create colorful cup-shaped candles for Tracy's youth. Letting children chose their own colors, Janice and her assistant started with the basic instructions of wax melting in a crock pot with proper safety procedures. With individual attention, Janice successfully guided each young novice their own cupcake shaped candle.

Using liquid dye to select the perfect color, Janice taught children the secret to getting centered wicks using pillar wick pins. With tips and tricks to engage young minds in the art of candle making, we salute Mrs. Janice Johnson for her voluntary continued commitment to educate and excite the minds of Tracy children. WSPA member Janice Johnson excels in coordinating popular culture at the Library and Museum to better Tracy families.



Historian David Stuart Recollects When Stockton Was the Capitol of Earth Moving Equipment for 50 Years

by Larry W. Gamino

Sponsored by the WSPA and Tracy Historical Museum at the Lolly Hansen Center on January 21, David Stuart, the Executive Director of the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum, discussed the local involvement in establishing Stockton City as the world's innovator of agricultural and heavy equipment for 50 years. Leaders like Charles Ball, Benjamin Holt, "Scrapper Bill" Adams and Robert G. LeTourneau transformed the San Joaquin Valley into an agricultural powerhouse.

Ideally situated on the water gateway of the San Joaquin River and Central Pacific Railroad, Stockton reinvented itself from a mine industrial base to an agricultural industrial base. Focusing on land development, local inventors like the Ball Brothers from Lodi, developed a wagon grader with steel blades to level fields and shore up levees. In 1883, the Fresno Scrapper was invented by Bill Adams and made possible the early day irrigation canals, ditches and level fields in Central Valley California. In the 1880's, Benjamin Holt developed the crawler track type tractor and in 1890 the caterpillar was introduced with steam traction engines. This steam tractor reclaimed the rich peat soils of the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta and was pivotal in ending dry farming to irrigated farming by moving earth to create canals. Finally, in 1929, Robert G. LeToureau took over the Holt Brother Co. and expanded assembly plant manufacturing around the world. Known as the "Dean of Earthmoving," he redesigned the slow tracks with two wide rubber wheels which could go faster. He the consolidated it with the gasoline engine and electric wheel drive which weighted less than the water driven steam engine. In 1935, R. G. LeToureau moved his operation to Peoria, Illinois from Stockton and is now known as Caterpillar Inc. around the world.

Historian David Stuart Recollects Evolution of Stockton As Earth Moving Capital for 50 Years

Program Director Celeste Garamendi introduces speaker David Stuart, who is seated on left side to Tracy audience.

DOCENT DUTY SCHEDULE*

DAY	DATE	TIME	DOCENT	DOCENT
Sunday	March 1, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Dennis Madox	Burke Sorti
Monday	March 2, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	March 7, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	March 8, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Onalee Koster	Open
Monday	March 9, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	March 14, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	March 15, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Dennis Madox	Burke Sorti
Monday	March 16, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	March 21, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	March 22, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Onalee Koster	Open
Monday	March 23, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	March 28, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	March 29, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Dennis Madox	Burke Sorti
Monday	March 30, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	April 4, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	April 5, 2015	1pm - 4pm	Onalee Koster	Open
Monday	April 6, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	April 11, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	April 12, 2015	1pm-4pm	Dennis Madox	Burke Sorti
Monday	April 13, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	April 18, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	April 19, 2015	1pm-4pm	Onalee Koster	Open
Monday	April 20, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman
Saturday	April 25, 2015	10am - 2pm	Bill Carter	Open
Sunday	April 26, 2015	1pm-4pm	Dennis Madox	Open
Monday	April 27, 2015	9am - 2pm	Onalee Koster	Jean Shipman

*** REMEMBER, IF YOU CANNOT WORK, PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT OR ALTERNATE AND CALL ONALEE KOSTER, 209-835-2493. VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOMED.**

Current List of Lifetime Members*

Mitra Behnam

Stephen Brenkwitz

Tom and Barbara Brenkwitz

Nick Buthman

Rich Calderon

David Castro

Larry and LeEtta Celestine

Celeste Garamendi/Mark Connelly

Ray and Carol Fosse

Larry Gamino

Betty Grande

John and Cindy Gustafson

Brent and Linda Ives

Bill and Mary Kaska

Richard and Sheila Kendall

Tammie and Andy Koster

Kimberly Krohn

Rose Lighty

Pete Mitracos

Albert and Celeste Navarra

Vasuki R. Nijagal

William Noblitt

Leroy and Sue Petz

Robert and Patrice Raspo

Marlene Reeves

Ruth Sanford

Dale Shupe

Joanne Souchek

Evelyn Tolbert

Bob Young

Thank you for all your support!!!

Marc Valdez

Volunteers needed for Museum and Living History Program

Our Historical Museum is run by volunteers. We need your help to volunteer to staff the Museum when it is open and the wonderful 3rd grade living history programs that Museum operates.

- Regular Museum Hours:
  Monday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
  Saturday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
  Sunday 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm OR by appointment for groups.
- 3rd Grade Program at Museum: Mondays 9:00-11:00 on school days
- Historic Lammersville Pioneer School Program: School days in January-May (one or two days a week)

If you can commit to a few hours one day a week or every month, or o special events, we can use your help to keep these wonderful programs going. Please call the program coordinator for more information and to lend a helping hand:

- Museum Coordinator - Onalee Koster – 209-832-7278
- 3rd Grade Museum Program Coordinator – Judy Lee - 209-814-3358
- Historic Lammersville Pioneer School Program Coordinator – Janice Johnson - 209-836-3770

Come out and volunteer and have fun at the same time.

We need you!!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2015

Annual Membership Dues
(Starting every January)

Adults	$10.00
Couples/Families	$15.00
Students	$ 5.00
Organizations	$10.00
Commercial	$20.00
Lifetime Membership	$150.00

Have you forgotten to provide your Email Address

Although we are a historical museum, there are some technological advances we need to adopt! Because email is now a common form of communication, we are going to start to update our membership records with email addresses. We will continue to issue the *Pioneer Press in* print. Please consider providing your email to us as it is the most cost effective way for us to communicate with members about program updates and reminders. You can add your email to the Annual Dues Payment Form included in this issue when you send in your check, or you can email the Museum at tracymuseum@sbcglobal.net with your name and address. Thank you for your help and support.

West Side Pioneer Association Board of Directors for 2014-2015

Elected Board Officers	***Name***	***Telephone #***
President	Larry Gamino	209-836-9687
1st Vice President	Open	
2nd Vice President	Celeste Garamendi	209-914-0792
Recording Secretary	Janice Johnson	209-836-3770
Treasurer	Mitra Behnam	209-740-2764
Corresponding Secretary	Jean Shipman	209-835-8933
Museum Chairperson	Onalee Koster	209-835-2493
Old Lammersville School	Wes Huffman	209-879-3155
Landmark Committee	Pete Mitracos	209-835-0270
Elected Board Members at Large	David Middleton	209-835-3797
	Ruth Sanford	209-835-6023
	Virginia Mynatt	209-836-1171
Appointed Board Members	Bill Kaska	510-773-7066
	David Castro	209-835-2478
	Kathy Bergthold	408-569-8931
	Open	
Ex-officio		
Immediate Past President	David Lee	209-814-6658