

The Pioneer Press
 West Side Pioneer Association
 Tracy Historical Museum
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Upcoming Events



Date	Time	Event	Location/Presenter
Wednesday May 20, 2015	7:00 pm	<i>Cinco de Mayo Literature</i>	Tracy Historical Museum Richard Soto
		<i>European Train Enthusiasts (ETE)</i>	Tracy Historical Museum
Wednesday October 21, 2015	7:00 pm	<i>The life of a SP Locomotive Engineer</i>	Tracy Historical Museum Jim Dameron
Sunday December	7:00 pm	<i>Museum Holiday Open House</i>	Tracy Historical Museum

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



THE PIONEER PRESS

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May-June 2015

WSPA President's Message Larry W. Gamino - President

"People are trapped in History, and History is trapped in them."

James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*

March Madness arrived with a spring flurry of tasty corned beef and cabbage at our annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner on March 15th. The delicious meals by caterer Michael Bacchette and crew at the Tracy Community Center on East Street wowed the over 100 attendees of members, guests and dignitaries. During a brief update on the Lammersville Pioneer School restoration project, School Chairman Wes Huffman announced the improved security of the structure by being fitted with night lights. The interior and doors adequately replaced. Shortly afterward, the feast began.

In keeping with our Mission to serve Tracy area citizens to preserve and protect Tracy history, we also encourage High School senior students to further their knowledge of local heritage and to apply for two WSPA college scholarships. Two deserving seniors will each earn a \$500 educational scholarship to a four and/or two year accredited college. By presenting a local history report or project, all applicants will receive a one year student membership. All examples of local history will be recorded and added to our local repository of knowledge for future students and scholars.

This immediate goal of Tracy city-wide High School scholarships would not be possible if not for the exemplary dedication and community generosity by dinner attendees whose proceeds goes entirely toward the \$1,000 in historical scholarships. By supporting local scholars today, we prepare the global lifelong learner for tomorrow. To this cultural principle of preserving the past, this President thanks the staff, the Membership and the Tracy public for engaging and supporting our college bound young adults.

A California Gold Rush Woman's Perspective From The Shirley Letters

By Larry Gamino

On Wednesday evening on February 18th at the Tracy Historical Museum, guest speaker Marlene Smith-Baranzini discussed the life and times of Louise Clapp who lived in a northern California gold rush town in 1851-52. Ms. Smith-Baranzini, who resides in Tracy, has edited the most recent reprint of The Shirley Letters From California Mines which gives great insights into the everyday lives of gold miners on the Feather River during 1851 and 1852.

In her introductory remarks, Marlene carefully prefaced the rediscovered 23 letters with a brief biography of the letter author Louise Clapp, a doctor's wife who was born in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, on July 28, 1819. She later moved with her retired parents to Amherst, Massachusetts at the age of eighteen. Here, she completed in 1840 her formal classical education at Amherst Academy, a female seminary, under the influence the contemporary New England's theological Great Awakening, an overt spiritual renewal and revival movement.

In 1848, after extensive travel in the East, Louise married Dr. Fayette Clapp on September 10th. Seeking new opportunities, they traveled to San Francisco in January, 1850. In the spring of 1851, the Clapps boarded a steamboat to Marysville. Over the next 15 months, Louise Clapp under the fictitious name of Madame Shirley as the *nom de plume* wrote 23 letters to her sister Molly who lived in Massachusetts. At thirty-two years of age, L. Clapp was ten years older than the average miner and was one of four women and a few children surrounded by more than 2,000 male miners. When the mining companies failed in 1852, the remaining miners vanished and the Clapps returned to San Francisco. Louise filed for divorce in 1854. She settled here and became an assistant teacher at the Denman Grammar School for the next 24 years. In 1878, she retired and returned to New York City. Louise Clapp died on February 9, 1906.

The Shirley Letters were shaped by her attitudes as a white upper class educated New Englander which mirrored her intellectual and Yankee biases of the 19th century. Her choice words conveyed the clash of Anglo-American culture with indigenous and Mexican cultures. Her projection of Eurocentric values divided the natural world into two realms-the wild and civilized. Her articulated concepts described a strange new world from a woman's perspective. Her female popularity and Puritan cultural baggage uncovered what miners from around the world found and why they came and what they left behind in terms of negative and positive cultural contributions.

Continued on next page

California Gold Rush Continued

In Louise's early letters, her Eastern assumptions and generalizations overturned conventional beliefs for large families and the home as solely a woman's domain. Other letters expounded on the mental and physical health of miners and what they ate, what they drank, what diseases they caught and what methods of treatment were used to heal. In later letters, she observed the changing landscape of California and in particular the Sierra Nevada. She commented how indigenous tribes like the Maidu adapted differently than the Euroamerican. She expressed interest on the local rites and ceremonies introduced by different global cultures. She sensed the importance of recreation and card games in a male dominated society with multilingual men reflecting racial rank and style. In great detail, she explored gringo justice on the frontier with their new punishment for pioneer crimes. Overall, she projected and captured a strange multilayered western society in transition as Mexican Alta California became a part of the U.S. after the Mexican American War of 1846-48.

The historical significance of The Shirley Letters cannot be ignored as it revealed the hopes and dreams of everyday miners with stark harsh reality of isolation and death in a strange land. Our guest speaker, Ms. Marlene Smith-Barazini, left us with more questions than answers in the kaleidoscope world in The Shirley Letters of the California gold rush in 1851-52 power point presentation.



Ms. Marlene Smith-Baranzini educates and entertains local audience with Gold Rush facts



Don Ridolfi greets Bill Kaska at check-in desk



Happy St. Patrick's Day



Table decorators Janice Johnson and Kathy Bergthold get wrapped



WSPA members meet and greet.



WSPA members Betty Galli and Leona Willis check in at reservation desk.

**2015 ST. PATRICK'S
DAY CORN BEEF AND
CABBAGE DINNER.**



Board member Wes Huffman updates membership and audience on improvements to Lammersville Pioneer School at Clyde Park.



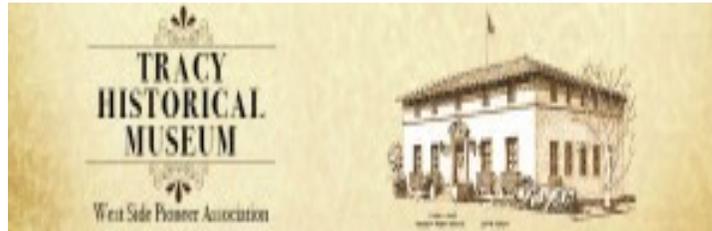
Board members Janice Johnson and Kathy Bergthold announce raffle winners with help from a little admirer.



Over 100 hungry members await delicious corn beef and cabbage by caterer

Museum Launches New Web Site

www.tracymuseum.org



We are pleased to present our new web site at our existing URL, www.tracymuseum.org. We have not only updated basic organizational information, but we can also now easily post announcements and program updates on the site. We will also start to build an online archive of many written documents and photographs that are in the Museum library archives.

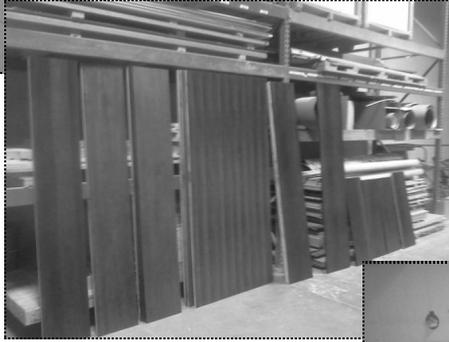
Special thanks to Kevin Harb for his technical expertise to develop the site.

Check back regularly at www.tracymuseum.org for the most current news from the Tracy Historical Museum and West Side Pioneer Association.

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



Museum Bookshelves Are Almost Ready For Installation

By Larry Gamino

As of March 29th, the Tracy Historical Museum bookshelves are in the final leg of production by John Mitracos and Company of San Francisco. In a recent update, our bookshelves are in the number one production slot. All the parts are cut to specification and stained. As of today, half are completed. The remaining shelves are being finished now.

The purpose of the new shelving in the museum conference room is to replace the mismatched asymmetrical bookshelves donated by a former Outlet bookstore. The new shelving will compliment the original heights of the two conference doors and be stained in matching red mahogany used by the U.S. Tracy Post Office in 1937.

The two wall units will be fixed with a minimum open height of 13 inches in each opening. Both wall units shelving material will be constructed of Vertical Grain Douglas Fir (VGDF) on two exposed sides. The remaining shelves and vertical shelf sides are to be constructed of VGDF veneer on hardwood ply core with a solid VGDF noising. The back wall is VGDF veneer on a hardwood ply core. All shelving will be stained in red mahogany and coated with a final clear satin finish. The south wall unit will include one slide out desk shelf for researchers. Installation may take place in approximately one week.

"Rosa the Railroader: 1941-1945"

By Larry Gamino

"Rosa the Railroader" is a fictional name who came to symbolize the thousands of Mexican women who filled U.S. railroad yards during World War II in the Southwest as exemplified by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. To illustrate this point, nine Mexican women in segregated Tracy responded to the general women's "Rosie the Riveter" call to join the war workforce after the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941. Twenty-three women in Tracy responded to this war recruitment and did all kinds of work. However, accepted racial barriers allowed only white women to do traditional secretarial and office work while second generation Mexican women worked in the outdoor rail yards and plants doing men's traditional work.

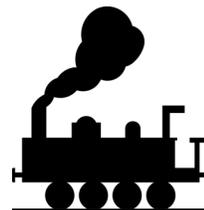
The contrast in dress exemplified by the accompanying WWII picture demonstrates most white women but not all as file clerks, secretaries and office personnel. On the other hand, Southside Mexican women came to work in overalls, pants, boots, gloves, neckerchiefs and bandanas. Brown skinned women did the dirty, heavy and dangerous jobs as boilermaker assistants, switch tenders, oilers, painters, janitors, turntable operators and roundhouse helpers. For example, on December 31, 1942, Jessie V. Fragosa made the ultimate sacrifice when she was crushed between two S.P. boxcars.

Together, these twenty-three women heeded the call for long hours and dangerous railroad work due to the shortage of manpower caused by world conflict. Although many of the jobs held by women during WWII were returned to men after the war ended, the workforce would never be the same again. As they answered the government's war-related "get-women-to-work" campaign, they opened the doors to all women in the workforce to broaden women's civil rights. Although most are deceased, four "Rosas" survive today. They are Tillie Rangel, Rita Gamino, Ida Del Porto of SP Tracy and Angie Eddy of SP Dunsmuir. They are presently in their 90's.

For Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Chicanas in particular, these nine "Rosa the Railroaders," of Tracy, opened the door for Mexican Women's Lib. Once they took the man's job, this was the beginning of women feeling that they could do something more than being a housewife. They found a freedom, a pride, a dignity and independence that they had never known before. Together, they altered the demographics of the workforce in later years by laying the foundations of future women's civil rights for equality forever. The historic importance of "Rosa the Railroader" can no longer be ignored.

Women of Mexican descendant: Dora Rosales, Irene Rangel, Rita Gamino, Jessie Rios, Tillie Rangel, Mary Rivas, Lupe Granados, Consuelo Rios and Jessie V. Fragosa.

Women of European descendant: Mrs. J.A. Nichols, Mrs. Helen Stevenson, Jennie Walters, Mrs. C.L. Richards, Mrs. Eva Cooper, Lina Del Porto, Ida Del Porto, Frances Petrucelli, Ariilla Bettencourt, Audrey Smallwood, Margret Jones, Madeline Texeira, Marian Dynes, Emilee King,



Journey's Superstar Steve Perry Was Banta's Notable Resident in 1976-77

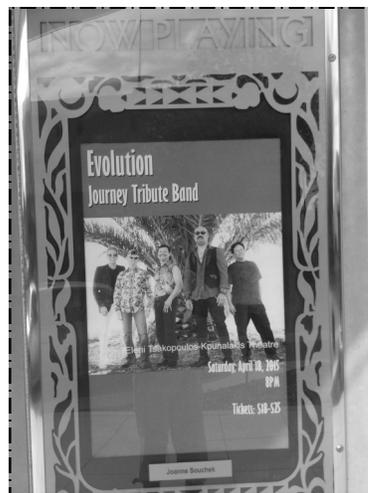
By Larry Gamino

On Saturday, April 18th at 8 PM, Evolution, a Journey Tribute Band, will perform at the Tracy Grand Theater, not far from Banta where lead singer Steve Perry once called his home. Here, he formed the Allen Project rock group in the mid-1970. Suddenly, he disbanded when his bassist Richard Michaels was killed in a tragic automobile accident. Disheartened, Steve nearly gave up his singing career. A short time later, at the urging of his mother, Mary Quaresma, Perry answered a telephone call from former Santana manager Walter "Herbie" Herbert of a struggling San Francisco based band named Journey in need of a lead singer front man. The rest is history as they say in show biz.

Born as Stephen Ray Pereira (known best as Steve Perry) on January 22, 1949 in Hanford, CA, Steve is of Portuguese heritage. His family originated from Pico Island, Azores. The family moved to Lemoore where the long hair bilingual student joined the marching band as a drummer. Later, he attended the College of the Sequoias in Visalia where he sang first tenor in the choir before dropping out.

Perry moved to Banta, a small unincorporated farming community in San Joaquin County, 3 miles east of Tracy City in 1976. Between the cheap rent, open space to practice and the proximity to music entertainment establishments in Sacramento and the S.F. Bay Area, he fronted a progressive rock band and commuted to local gigs. But tragedy struck and with it an ironic opportunity to become Journey's lead singer.

On October 28, 1977 in S.F., Steve Perry made his public debut. Perry brought a radically creative, more pop rock ballad influence to the band's music. More mainstream with Perry aboard, Journey moved up the record charts with their first album *Infinity* including "Wheel in the Sky." By the early 1980's, Journey emerged as one of rock's all time top acts. Besides Perry's versatile voice, he helped write many songs and hits such as "Don't Stop Believing." After 10 years with Journey, Steve Perry left the band in 1987 due to job burnout. He currently lives in Del Mar, CA. Rolling Stone lists Steve Perry in the top 100 rock singers list. Today, the Steve Perry era Journey is considered the best ever!!



Tracy Sunrise Rotary Club Visits Museum Early

By Larry Gamino

On Wednesday, March 18th, the Tracy Sunrise Rotary Club held its weekly meeting at 6:30 AM at the Tracy Historical Museum. Normally, the regular meetings are held at Four Corners Restaurant on Linne Road with a free breakfast served. However, their sense of adventure and quest for local culture brought them to Tracy's public museum.

At the crack of dawn, they were greeted by WSPA docent Bill Carter. After the formalities of conducting a regular business in the conference room, President Mike Souza adjourned early in order to begin a tour of the local repository of cultural knowledge. Docent Carter started the walk with the indigenous Northern Yokuts early history and then expanded to the railroad and agricultural foundations.

A highlight of the 18 visitors before disbanding was the new acquisition of the original 1908 West Side Bank of Tracy vault. Donated by Jan Whit, the granddaughter of Hazel Fre-richs and Les Von Dack, a jeweler who purchased the vault after the West Side Bank closed. The unusual 104 year old cannonball vault captured the imagination of the Rotarians after its recent return to Tracy.

To surmise, the Sunrise Rotary Club demonstrated their commitment to serve above self. By exposing their membership to core beliefs of cultural awareness and personal growth and development, the members of the world's oldest service club exhibited their leadership skills and citizenship in the community.



President Mike Souza discusses regular club business in museum conference room



President elect Craig Mizuno explores collection of railroad artifacts.

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 2015-2016

<i>Elected Board Officers</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Telephone #</i>
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1 st Vice President	Open	
2 nd Vice President	Open	
Recording Secretary	Janice Johnson	209-836-3770
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Corresponding Secretary	Jean Shipman	209-835-8933
Museum Chairperson	Open	
Old Lammersville School	Wes Huffman	209-879-3155
3rd Grade Tour Director	Onalee Koster	209-835-2493
Landmark Committee	Pete Mitracos	209-835-0270
<i>Elected Board Members at Large</i>	David Middleton	209-835-3797
	Ruth Sanford	209-835-6023
	Virginia Mynatt	209-836-1171
<i>Appointed Board Members</i>	Bill Kaska	510-773-7066
	David Castro	209-835-2478
	Kathy Bergthold	408-569-8931
	Celeste Garamendi	209-914-0792
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Immediate Past President	David Lee	209-814-6658