

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



Date	Time	Event	Location/Presenter
Saturday Oct. 24, 2015	10:00 am- 2:00 pm	<i>History Day at the Museum Family Event</i>	Tracy Historical Museum
Wednesday Nov. 18, 2015	7:00 pm	<i>The life of a SP Locomotive Engineer</i>	Tracy Historical Museum Jim Dameron
Wednesday Dec. 16, 2015	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

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. 26-6

November-December 2015

WSPA President's Message Larry W. Gamino - President

**"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can
use to change the world."**

by Nelson Mandela

This newsletter is dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of Tracy High School's first graduating senior class of 1915. Sparked for a WSPA scholarship this year, Tracy High Senior Gabriella Tassano expounded on the centennial of the Tracy's first high school graduates with her application submission. I believe it is appropriate to make her well researched paper the centerpiece of this newsletter edition to all Tracyites and beyond.

As part of the WSPA mission, research and leadership development in our youth reflect our legacy to explore local history and openness to relevant topics and interpretation. By investing in the education of our high school seniors the value of Tracy's heritage and evolving culture, we plant the seeds of higher intellectual endeavors today and tomorrow.

To all high school alumni and history lovers, it is our commitment by the WSPA to kindle lifetime learning and local inspiration to secondary students to succeed as future leaders with endless possibilities. As represented by Tracy High senior class of 2015 Gabriella Tassano, congratulations to all our high school seniors now and in the future!

Latino Heritage Month

By Larry Gamino

In September, the WSPA proudly celebrated the diversity of our communities with a special program about Mexican Independence Day on the 16th of September and a larger discussion of *Cinco De Mayo* or the Fifth of May which honors the unlikely Mexican militia victory over the French in the Battle of Puebla in 1862. WSPA President Larry Gamino introduced the subject of Mexican Independence Day and then our guest speaker Tracy Adult Educator and Councilor Richard Soto who further discussed and expanded the similarities and differences of historical events in each country.

According to Mr. Gamino, the day of September 16th was significant because it was the anniversary of the beginning of Mexico's independence from Spain led by Catholic priest Miguel Hildago y Castilla with the *Grito de Dolores* or Cry of Independence in 1810. Leading an unorganized army of angry racial *mestizos*, a mix of Spanish and native offspring, and oppressed indigenous slaves, Miguel Hildago started the revolt against Spanish born rulers and slavery in his parish near Guanajuato in the central interior of Mexico. After four months and one major victory, he was captured, defrocked and decapitated. Yet, he was inspirational in the independence movement until victory in 1821 and was known as "the Father of Mexico."

Whereas in the British Colonies of North America, the Continental Congress declared their independence on July 4th, 1776 backed by the Continental army of free white men under General George Washington. A trained Indian fighter, land speculator and large slave plantation owner, General Washington was an Anglican Protestant who became the first U.S. President and "the Father of the Nation" and one of the wealthiest men in the country. Both Wars of Independence exemplify major racial and class differences in their struggles to be free.

Building on the foundation of Mexican independence achieved in 1821, Mr. Richard Soto linked the major historical events of the Texas Revolt in 1836, the Mexican American War of 1846-48, the California gold Rush of 1848-49 and the Mexican victory in the Battle of Puebla in 1862. These pivotal acts were critical to present day interpretation of *Cinco de Mayo*.

After the Mexican War of Independence in 1821, the Texas Republic became part of Mexico under the Constitution of 1824. After an increasingly large number of Anglo settlers in Texas, white Texans revolted from Mexico in 1835 and declared their independence as the Republic of Texas. Mexico refused to recognize their sovereignty. In 1845, the annexation of Texas as the 28th state led directly to the Mexican American War of 1846-48.

Speaking to a small but enthusiastic audience, Mr. Soto called the Mexican American War as a defining moment for both nations. By the War's end, Mexico lost nearly half of its territory. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago, Mexicans then living within the new borders became second class citizens while indigenous people were stripped of their Mexican citizenship in the U.S. Southwest. Under the banner of Manifest Destiny, former Mexicans suffered loss of rights, language, customs, land and law. This drastic change would be further amplified by the onslaught of the California Gold Rush of 1848-49.

Latino Heritage Month (Continued)

The discovery of gold in California immediately after the Mexican American War propelled great wealth for the Anglos and the U.S. The reverse is also true. If there had been no war in 1846-48, then Mexican Alta California and the northern frontier would have obtained great wealth of gold and agricultural potential while possessing the great San Francisco Bay for future development. Instead, Mexicans and *Californios* were relegated to second class status in an Anglo society.

As Councilor Soto explained this pivotal Mexican American War was soon overshadowed and downplayed with the coming of the Civil War of 1861-65. At the same time the Civil War raged, Mexico under President Benito Juarez fought the French monarchy invasion in the Franco-Mexican War of 1861-67.

When news of Mexico's victory in the Battle of Puebla on May 5th, 1862, Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest embraced this small symbolic act of heroism against French invaders. As Mr. Soto pointed out that had not the French army been defeated, their goal of aiding the Confederacy may have changed the course of the U.S. Civil War. In any case, *Cinco de Mayo* in the U.S. symbolized national pride and resistance against foreign invaders.

In his final comments, Mr. Soto debunks popular U.S. belief that *Cinco de Mayo* is an excuse to drink tequila, eat tacos and party hardy or a celebration of Mexican Independence Day. Instead, for Chicanos, Mexican Americans and Latinos, *Cinco de Mayo* was a day of immense national inspiration and Southwest heritage. By way of historical timelines, Mr. Soto has presented the 16th of September and *Cinco de Mayo* in historical and social context to shed light on the complexities that shaped contemporary ideals and practice in a multi cultural society. In sum, Mr. Richard Soto in our Latino Heritage program has provided for our diverse audience with an accurate, substantive and balanced account of Mexican Independence Day and *Cinco de Mayo* that bring greater understanding in the histories of Mexico and the U.S.



Mr. Richard Soto discusses *Cinco de Mayo* with young crowd along with train exhibit.

The Centennial History of Tracy High School
By
Tracy High Senior Gabriella Tassano

Today, many students take for granted the privilege to attend public school, particularly at the secondary level. Often time's, students do not realize the importance of obtaining a higher education. About a century ago, students rarely considered a secondary education, especially in a small railroad and farm town such as Tracy, California. Attending a secondary school, known today as a high school, was a privilege granted to very few people in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Even then, students traveled hundreds of miles to attend high school classes. As the population in small, rural towns such as Tracy began to increase, education systems became more common but secondary schools were still few.

In the United States, the high school system started in the colonial period. However, it was a very informal system. The teaching took place in family homes either by parents or by business owners who were looking for apprenticeships. On occasion churches operated schools for the poor, as it was an act of charity that boosted the moral of the Christian church and enabled the church to spread the beliefs of their religion. Most of the time, children became literate only because they or their parents wanted them to be able to read the Bible. In the 1600's and 1700's, children were only required to go to primary schools or grammar schools. Children ages eight to twelve or thirteen attended school to learn basic skills such as reading, writing and simple math. Children did not attend school full time either. They would spend a few months at a time attending school and then work either on family farms or for local businesses. There was a small percentage of students that wanted to attend college and those students went on to attend a preparatory high school. Up until the twentieth century, only the wealthy or privileged children were presented the opportunity to attend the "small-scale experience" of a secondary education. In the year 1910, it was recorded that only "10% of the American youth attended high school" (The High School Leadership Summit). However, with the end of the second industrial revolution, also known as the Gilded Age, the United States had a hunger for mass urbanization and this resulted in larger cities beginning to construct high schools. Because the amount of students able to attend a secondary school in small towns were so few, there wasn't a need to build high schools in every town. Instead, union high schools were built in larger cities and they had students attend from towns that were near the city. All secondary schools in the early 1900's were called union high schools.

The first American high school was Boston Latin Grammar School. It was founded in 1635 by the town of Boston and the main purpose was to prepare young men for college at Harvard, serve in the government or in the church system. During this time, the development of primary education spread rapidly throughout the United States, but the spread of secondary education did not. In 1821, almost 200 years later, the first public high school opened in Boston, the English Classical School. More schools began to appear in the areas of New England and New York around this time as well, but enrollment was still minimal. It took three fourths of a century and several laws to be enacted for the secondary education system to spread to the west coast.

The Centennial History of Tracy High School (Continued)

In 1852, a compulsory attendance act was passed by the state of Massachusetts. This was the first general law attempting to control the conditions of children. “This law required children between the ages of eight and fourteen to attend school for at least three months out of the year and of the twelve weeks at least six had to be consecutive” (Vicky Grocke). In 1890, the California legislature enacted a bill under F.R. Fassett that allowed any township to establish a Union High School. There is a lot of conflicting information on the first union high school in California, and many schools claim to be the first. Livermore High School had the oldest date of establishment in 1891. There were also laws passed in other states that tried to minimize child labor and keep kids in school. The state of California enacted a law that no child under the age of fifteen could be employed if they did not have proof of school attendance. Laws like that spread throughout the United States and by 1918, all states had passed a compulsory attendance. There was an exception to the original laws. This exception was that in the case of war, if a male was drafted or enlisted in the military, he could drop out of school to fight for his country. During World War I, many women took advantage of the open spots on the school system and joined secondary schools to become teachers, accountants or nurses.

The town of Tracy was originally a refueling station or “coaling station” for trains on the Central Pacific Railroad. “Ellis was just west of Corral Hollow Road. Soon houses, hotels and saloons all built of wood sprang up at Ellis” (Sam Matthews). “In 1878, another set of tracks were set three miles from Ellis so later that year, most of the wooden buildings were loaded onto horse drawn wagons and transported to the new junction, and Tracy was born” (Sam Matthews). Tracy officially became an incorporated city on July 10, 1910. Two years later, Willow School was the first primary school of Tracy, dedicated on March 1, 1912. Willow School later changed location and is now Central School on Central Avenue. In the same year, Tracy West Side Union High School District was formed; it would later change its name to Tracy Joint Union High School District. Because of a massive fire in 1911, the original plans to build a high school were postponed and the students of Tracy West Side Union High School attended school in the second story classroom of Willow Grammar School. Although established in 1912, the high school’s first building wasn’t completed until 1917. Since then, the school has expanded several times. Also, in 1917, the Holly Sugar factory was built, adding more crops, farms and farmers to the town. In the 1920’s and 30’s, 11th Street was the main highway that connected the Central Valley to the Bay Area, which caused a boom in gas stations, rest stops and restaurants. The automobile traffic and travel added to the hustle and bustle of the railroad town that already had a constant supply of trains and conductors coming and going. Businesses also started to arise along 11th Street in hopes of attracting customers or businessmen that stopped in the city for the day or night. By the time of World War II, the activity of Southern Pacific Railroad and the Tracy Depot or Tracy Defense Depot as it is now called, brought soldiers and war workers to Tracy.

The Centennial History of Tracy High School (Continued)

This surge of people living in Tracy, both for work for the war effort or Southern Pacific Railroad brought many families to the area. As people began to settle in Tracy, the town began to grow and families needed a place for their children to attend school and get an education. This need gave birth to two more schools; these schools were Banta Grammar School, which still is in use today, and the Early Day Public School, another primary school. The high school, West Side Union School, renamed Tracy Joint Union High School, remained as the only high school until 1993 when Merrill F. West High School was established.

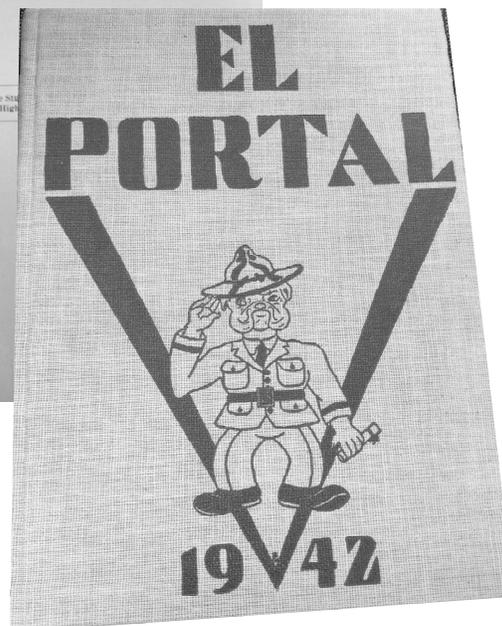
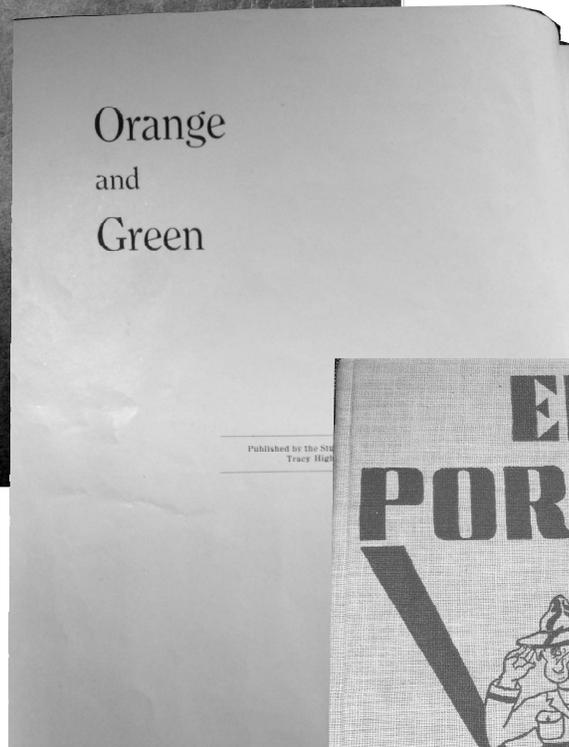
Tracy High School is the oldest high school in Tracy. The school was first known as Tracy West Side Union School and in the middle of September, 1912, eleven students attended the first class. As the school year went on, eight other students joined the first eleven in class. The principal was Mr. A.D. Tenney who was the principal from 1912-1916. Mr. Tenney was one of the teachers as well, along with Miss Mary Acheson. Some of the first students included Elizabeth O'Neal and Viola Sehrt, who were the first two graduates from Tracy High School in 1915; Dorothy O'Neal, the sister of the first graduate Elizabeth graduated from Tracy High School one year after her sister. Another student was Mr. Paul Tenney, the principal's son, although there were no documents showing he officially graduated, only photos and some records of attendance to the school. There were many other students who went to work as stenographers, teachers or attended college at the University of California. The most influential women in Tracy High were Miss O'Neal and Miss Sehrt. They were the first people to graduate after their high school experience. They both went on to teach at the Tracy Grammar School.

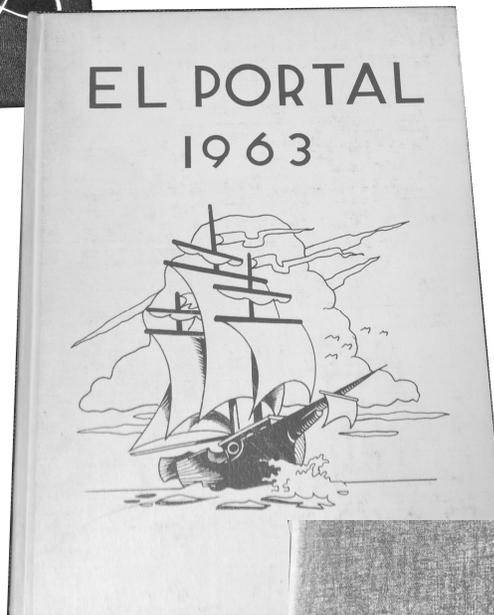
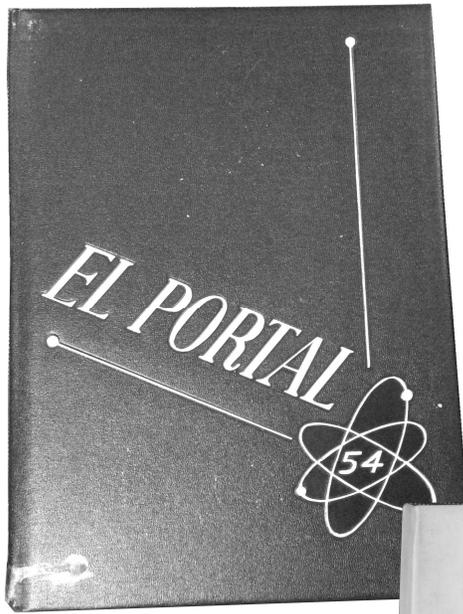
Tracy West Side Union High School was a union of the Tracy, Naglee, Lammersville, Jefferson and Carnegie districts. In December of 1914, the first twelve acres of the current site of the school was purchased for \$7,000. The construction of the West building started in October of 1915 and the school was finally completed in May of 1917. The new school site consisted of twelve classrooms and an auditorium. On April 6, 1928, the name Tracy West Side Union High School was changed to Tracy Union High School (Marjorie M. Dunton).

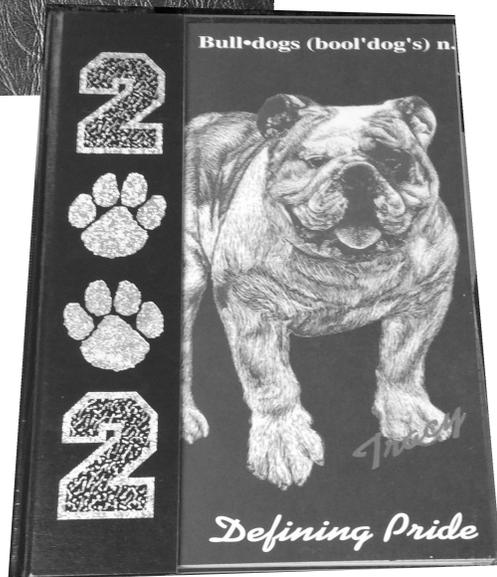
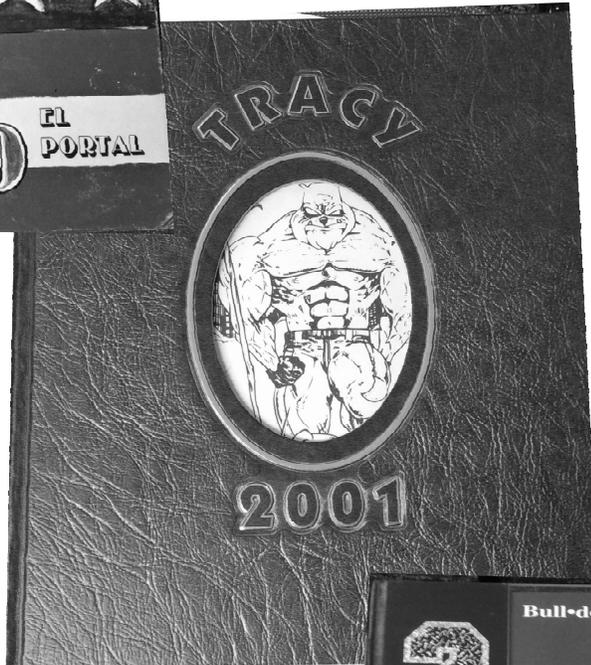
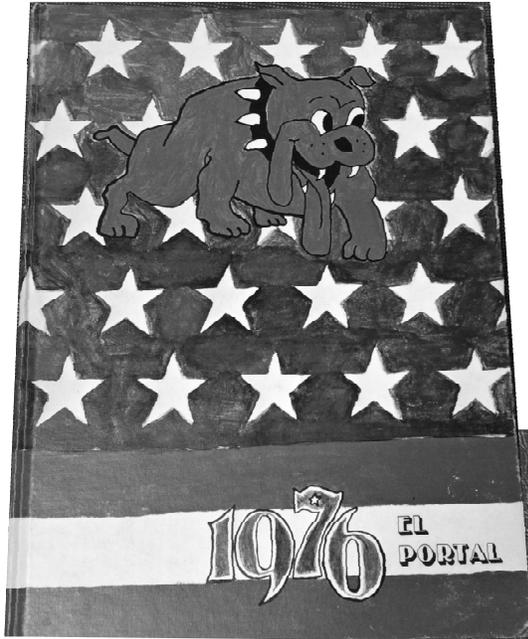
Public school and receiving a higher education is a privilege and all too often students take for granted the hard work put in by the generations before. It is important for this generation, and generations that follow, to understand where we come from and learn the history about the area where we live and call home. Although Tracy still may be a small town, it has come a long way in a hundred years and every day we continue to grow. Now we have three public high schools, many primary schools and a roaring town that has expanded in all directions. If one of the first eleven students to attend Tracy High came to visit Tracy today, I hope they would be pleased with what they would see and perhaps they would be heartened by the fact that what was once considered a rare privilege for them is now considered to be commonplace and the standard for education today.

About the Author: A Tracy High Senior, Gabriella Tassano is now attending Dominican University. She plans to major in graphic design and marketing

**Tracy High School First Year Book
starting from 1922**







Landmark Preservation Series Begins With Ellis Dedication



In public attendance were Archivist Ellen Opie, former Board member Bill Kaska, Park and Recreation Commissioner Gene Birk, City Treasurer Ray McCray, Council woman Mary Souza Mitracos, Tracy Press Emeritus Editor Sam Matthews, Pro Tem Mayor Robert Rickman, Council woman Linda Vargas and Past President Richard and Sheila Kendell.



Landmark Chair Peter Mitracos speaks and stands on original site of Ellis Town, the predecessor of Tracy City at Joan Sparks Park. In attendance were Public Works Supervisor Mike Contreras, City Manager Troy Brown, Mayor Michael Maciel and Board member Kathleen Berghold

History Day at the Museum

**Saturday, October 24, 2015
10:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Civil War Re-enactors, Spinning,
Basket Weaving,
Junior History Explorer Kids Activities

Free – Bring the Family

Tracy Historical Museum, 1141 Adam Street
209-832-7278, www.tracymuseum.org

2015-2016 Scholarship Application Now Available

The Tracy Historical Museum/WSPA Scholarship Application packet for 2015-2016 school year is now available. The Scholarship is a great way for graduating seniors to get involved in local history and have a chance to win a \$500 scholarship. The application deadline is March 31, 2016.

The Tracy Historical Museum and West Side Pioneer Association 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. Applications are available through the Counseling Office at each high school or at the Museum's web site www.tracymuseum.org.

Spring Cleaning

ANY TIME TO SPARE?

The Tracy Historical Museum is in need of a GRAND DUSTING! We are looking for anyone with some "Dusting" power that can come in Tuesday and/or Friday at 9:30am. Two rooms in particular need "DUSTING". Rags are provided. There's soap and water to wash up afterwards! Please! Come and help! Let's get our Tracy Historical Museum in tip-top shape!



Contact Jean on Monday at the museum to set up a a date when you can help out, call 832-7278. For anyone wanting to take on another task: like moving a cabinet or a desk or writing down numbers???? PLEASE CALL!

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 on 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 - Open - 209-832-7278

- 3rd Grade Museum Program Coordinator – Judy Lee - 209-814-3358

- Historic Lammersville Pioneer School Program Coordinator – Wes Huffman - 209-879-3155



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

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.

SUPPORT THE MUSEUM



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2016

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



**Use the renewal form below to
help the museum continue to
serve your community**



Cut along this line

West Side Pioneer Association Membership Application

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Annual Membership Dues
(Starting every January)

Make checks payable to
West Side Pioneer Association

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

Return application and payment to:
West Side Pioneer Association
1141 Adam St.
Tracy, CA 95376

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>
President	Larry Gamino	209-836-9687
1 st Vice President	David Lee	209-814-6658
2 nd Vice President	Open	
Recording Secretary	Janice Johnson	209-836-3770
Treasurer	Mitra Behnam	209-740-2764
Corresponding Secretary	Jean Shipman	209-835-8933
Museum Chairperson	Open	
Old Lammersville School	Wes Huffman	209-879-3155
3rd Grade Tour Director	Judy Lee	209-814-6658
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>	Open	
	David Castro	209-835-2478
	Kathy Bergthold	408-569-8931
	Celeste Garamendi	209-914-0792
<i>Ex-officio</i>		
Immediate Past President	David Lee	209-814-6658