



Women in Union Cemetery: Stella Ralston Tracy

The women featured in this series of articles are part of the Women in Union Cemetery Tour conducted by Mike Roberts in 2024.

Stella Ralston Tracy 1876 – 1968

Buried in Placerville Union Cemetery, Section 37 Block 23 Plot A

Portrayed by Amanda Anderson, Save the Graves 2021 event

Born and raised in Placerville, Stella Ralston Tracy was one of many local connections to the Comstock. In her case the connection was to Comstock profit, much of which was made by her uncle William Ralston, a San Francisco banker who did well until he didn't.

Stella grew up in a large, comfortable home on Cedar Ravine in Placerville.

Early on, Stella demonstrated that she would become a talented musician and vocalist, composing her first music at age 7. Her mother was her musical mentor. The pair toured regionally performing duets.

After graduating from the Conklin Academy, Stella went to college, an unusual experience for women at that time. In 1895 she graduated from San Jose State Normal School, the predecessor to San Jose State University, and came back to El Dorado County where she taught in one-room schoolhouses until her marriage.

One can imagine the suitors lining up during the eight years she was single, before tying the knot with lifelong friend Henry Tracy, whose family owned the Tracy Shoe Store on Main Street.

Stella immediately quit teaching as married women were not allowed to teach until the passing of the civil rights act in 1964.

The couple lived in a fine home on Union Street. Henry died in 1949. When the freeway came through in the 1950s, the home was demolished. Stella bought a small house on Coloma Road where she lived out the balance of her life.

Stella was a charter member of the Shakespeare Club, the Native Daughters, and a founding member of the Arts Council and the El Dorado County Historical Society in 1938.

When she died in 1968, she left the Historical Society the contents of her house, which included photographs, documents, and fine antiques, many of which are currently on display at the El Dorado County Historical Museum and the Fountain & Tallman Museum. Stella also set up a scholarship fund for County high school graduates planning to attend college, a scholarship which is still in place today.



Stella Ralston and her class at the Brandon

Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2024

SaveTheGravesElDorado.org

Category

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