

Taft, California

Greetings from Pete Gianopulos, Class of 1942

The Taft Newsletter



Attachments: My father's sister, Georgula, from Zurtsta, her son, daughter-in-law and a friend

Tom and Vasiliki Gianopulos

(NOTE: The series continues about my parents who both came from Greece and settled and lived the rest of their lives in Taft. This information is from the writings of my brother, George Gianopulos, from a document that he wrote in 1994 called "Tom Gianopulos, Citizen of America – Citizen of Taft, A Biographical Sketch," from George's book called "Wake Up Eddie for a Dime" and from my memory.)

(Number five in the series)

Vasiliki had a father who had a successful career in the military and in law enforcement. He was a good provider, Vasiliki's true mother had died when Vasiliki was two years old. She was now the older of five additional children after her father's second marriage. Vasiliki was properly trained in all household skills, had spent almost a year in Athens attending school for seamstresses. She was the proper age for marriage, and she even accepted the prospects of moving to America for the rest of her life. Serious discussions between the families took place, dowries were considered, and the formal selection was finally made. The arrangements was communicated to Tom in America, and he accepted the findings of his family in Greece. (Seventy years later Tom would meet the woman in Lynistena who had originally suggested Vasiliki. This was in 1977 when brother George took Tom and Vasiliki to Greece

on their first return since they had left. Tom, being a jokester, looked at the women from the village in the eye, who had originally suggested Vasiliki as his wife, and when that woman said "Didn't I pick a good women to be your wife?", and with Vasiliki at his side, he replied with a smile on his face, "She was so, so."

It was not easy to bring a bride into America. Formalities that stipulated responsibilities and commitments were required by the government. To bring his prospective bride to America, Tom had to sign an affidavit, properly notarized and attested to by his witnesses, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Harris, confirming his status in America and his intent. This legal document stated in part:

"Efthimios P, Gianopulos, also known as Tom Peter Gianopulos, being first duly cautioned and sworn says: that he is thirty-one years age, that he comes from the town of Lynistena, County of Olymbias, Prefecture of Trifilias, Kingdom of Greece ---- has been in the United States since 1909 and has lived in Taft, California for about 12 years; that he is a naturalized American citizen and an ex-service man ---- is in the fruit business and the owner of a fruit store known as the Westside Fruit Company --- is the owner of a lot at Taft ---- is making about three hundred dollars (\$300.00) per month --- has an account with the Security Trust Co. and Bank of Italy ---- and is worth clear and free of all encumbrance for about ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars."

(To be continued)

The Taft High's "forgotten Valley Football Championship Team"

This article is about the "Forgotten Valley Championship Football Team" that won the valley football championship over sixty years ago during the 1946-47 school-year. The 1947 school yearbook states that this was Taft's "second Valley Championship team in the history of the school."

The game was played in the Fresno State College Ratcliff Stadium just west of the campus back then and east of Blackstone Avenue .

The score ended up in a tie of 13 to 13, but there was no way to break a tie in those days; so, the teams earned the title of "Co-champions." The Taft opponent in that game was Fresno 's Edison Tech.

According to the school yearbook, the Taft Wildcat football team won the county championship because they had defeated Wasco and played West Bakersfield to a tie ball game. It is said by some that Taft won the honor of playing in the valley playoff by virtue of a coin toss. The coaches were Dean Johnson, Vern "Moon" Mullen and Noah Curti.

That fall I was attending my second year at Taft Junior college after the end of WWII, and I went to that game. We got to Fresno because a special passenger train was chartered with five or six cars to make the trip to Fresno from the Bakersfield train depot. The train was packed with Taft rooters from the community, making a stop on a railroad siding west of Blackstone Avenue in Fresno . The rooters simply walked across Blackstone Avenue to Radcliff Stadium.

Another Taftian who made the trip on that train was John "JP" Patterson.

Many readers of my articles have commented about the 1946 Valley Football Championship team not being included on the wall of the gym at the north end of the stadium. All of this information has been sent to the District Superintendent/Principal Mark Richardson. We expect that he will change the wording on the wall at the north end of the stadium to include this "forgotten Valley Football Championship team." When that happens, we will bring you the news!

Reader's Responses

From Brad Cross from Bakersfield

Pete. Our Moron Golf Tournament continues to grow every year and have donated over \$11,000.00 to the golf teams at T.U.H.S. As you know, we have a great turnout every year. Hope to see you at the dinner Aug. 8th. Brad

(NOTE: Brad Cross is one of the organizers of the very popular Moron Golf Tournament held every year at the Buena Vista Gold Course. Participants come from everywhere, even out of state to play in this tournament which is followed by a dinner where all the prizes are handed out.)

From Carol (Captain '54) McIntosh

I'm sending this out to every TUHS alumni for whom I have an email address. Here's is a website dedicated to the TUHS band; the website was created and is maintained Ken Kirkpatrick, Class of 1963. Not only is the site informative and nostalgic, but very professional - <http://www.tafthighband.com> Thanks, Ken, for the memories.

There are some album downloads that the band made in the 1960's that you can listen to online, there's a chat forum and a few pictures of the band. Be sure to pass this site to others who may enjoy it. Ken is requesting any additional pictures of the band back in the day and any other memorabilia you may have. I know some majorettes who marched with the band might have some photos also. I was never in the band, but I, for one, would LOVE to see a old film of them coming out on to the field doing double time - WOW did they look sharp! I was so proud of our very outstanding TUHS band; they were one of THE most impressive bands in my memory. Band Director, Jim Marsee, left an extraordinary legacy.

From Larry Peahl, Class of 1953, from Bakersfield, California

There was also a recording made in 1967 of the Taft College Stage Band called "The Big Band Sound Swings" directed by Jim Marsee. That band

included Dennis Gurwell and Mike McCormick. I have the recording in wave form. Larry Peahl

From Sandi (Sturgeon) Rhodes, Class of 1961, from Belton, Missouri

Pete...Sandi Sturgeon Rhodes, Belton Mo....I was class of 1961 and remember the band well...I was a real fan and student of Janice Dilley, the lead Majorette...What great memories this bring back...On a more serious note I would like to request prayers from anyone who remembers me or my husband Richard Rhodes, class of 1956....Our first Great Grandson, is at St Jude's, in a chemo trial. He was born with a rare brain tumor, ATRT, that strikes 3 in a million....His name is Diesel Rhodes....His Dad is our grandson Nathan that we raised.....There is a great website caringbridge.org under dieselrhodes that gives daily updates from Memphis....Dick is down there right now helping them with the daily care...Thank you in advance for your prayers....

From Trice Harvey, Class of 1955, from Bakersfield, California

Pete Gianopulos wrote: Big Brain, Jim Marsee was a friend of mine too!! He was a good man that left us way to soon! His bands were something to be proud of.

Little Brain