



# TOWER VIEWS

Galt Area Historical Society, Inc.

Arno • Clay • Colony • Elliott • Galt • Herald • Hicksville • Liberty • Thornton

June 2023

*From the Archives*

## First Football Champions



Sixteen years after fielding its first football team, the Galt High School Warriors won its first championship in 1941. Led by Coach Dominck J. “Dom” George, the team had a record of 5 and 2 and beat league adversaries San Juan,

Courtland, and Elk Grove. The group included future Galt City Clerk, County Supervisor Jack Mingo, and future Galt Mayor Bob Biederman. Because there were only eighteen players, it made the championship extra special.

June 2023  
Newsletter

## GAHS Membership

Please contact us for any address, phone or email changes.

Contact

**Liz Haglund**

with any questions about membership.

**aguire@hotmail.com**

**or (209) 327-1098**

If you have received your annual dues invoice please remit payment. If not, let Liz know. She will gladly get you an invoice.

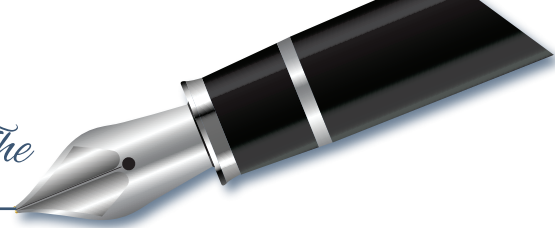
Consider gifting a membership!

We make it easy at

**www.galthistory.com**

*A Message From The*

## President



I hope you are having a wonderful spring; and looking forward to summer. This year has certainly moved at warp speed. June has some very important dates for celebration and remembrances. Beginning with June 6th (1944) we remember WWII and D Day when the Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, France. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history. Many men died that day. June 14th is Flag Day. This is the day in the United States when we honor our national Flag, commemorating in 1777 when the US approved the design of our first national Flag. June 18th is Fathers' Day when we celebrate and honor all the fathers in our lives. June 19th, or Juneteenth represents the end of slavery in 1865. This is also called Emancipation Day for the slaves. Finally, June 21 (this year) is the beginning of summer and the longest day of the year. The month of June holds much significance in our history as a nation.

Do you know the reason you should know our local history? All history could be considered local to wherever one lives. But local history helps you understand your ancestors. Local history helps shape who we are. Such items as letters, documents, ledgers, items connected to historical events in your town all are part of our local history. Local history is also human history. There are many triumphs in our history; and also failures. We learn from the failures and hopefully, do not repeat them again.

Because we learn from the failures, perhaps they can become triumphs if we learned well.

Local history is a way to immerse ourselves into a place we love and feel rooted in. By trying to understand local history, we learn why things are the way they are today. It connects us to the past. Today's younger generation seems reluctant to learn history. Perhaps it's because in school we have to learn history from other places and countries; and we do not feel invested in that history. However, all history affects us. It is similar to researching your own genealogy. You must start with yourself and work backwards. You start with what you know. Just like our local history. Start with what you know. You will find that history from other locations does affect you. Guess who protects, preserves, and restores the local history of Galt? Exactly! The Galt Area Historical Society. This is why our task is very important. If no one preserves their local histories, what information would there be to teach us about our past?

I want you to know how much I appreciate all of your passions for saving our piece of history for those who come after us. Think of a child 50-100 years from now in Galt. They will benefit from all our hard work in preserving our history just for them.

Hope to see many of you at the June BBQ Meeting at the Rae House Museum

*- Janis Barsetti Gray*

## 2023 Historical Society Executive Board

Janis Barsetti Gray ~ President

Lyle Lagge ~ 1st Vice President

Gale Webber ~ 2nd Vice President

Liz Haglund ~ Recording Secretary

Tom Haglund ~ Treasurer



209.745.1925

**www.GALTROCK.com**

BARKS • DECORATIVE ROCK  
SOILS • SAND & GRAVEL

U-TOW CONCRETE & READY MIX TRUCKS

## LAW OFFICE OF LEN REIDREYNOSO

TRUSTS • WILLS • PROBATES  
CONTRACTS • BANKRUPTCY • BUSINESS  
WE ARE A DEBT RELIEF AGENCY

908 C STREET  
GALT, CA

209-745-4411

IN GALT SINCE 2002



MEMBER OF  
GALT BUSINESS BUILDERS  
WWW.GALTBUSINESSBUILDERS.COM



## Upcoming Dates

June 4:  
Open House at the Rae  
Museum & McFarland House  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

June 12:  
Executive Board Meeting  
4:00pm at Barsetti Tasting Room  
400 Fourth Street, Suite 150

June 26:  
General Members Meeting  
& Summer BBQ at the  
Rae House Museum  
6:00pm

June 28 to July 4:  
Fireworks booth is open  
See Dan (916-952-2368)  
& Liz (209-969-0694)  
for your volunteer shift times

July 1:  
City of Galt July 4th Parade  
9:30am Market Grounds to  
C St to 4th St to E St.

July 2:  
Open House at the Rae  
Museum & McFarland House  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

# Trip Through the Cemetery

Last month's gravestone inscription was "Botzbach, Henning H. and Helene B."

Henning "Henry" Botzbach was born Broager, Denmark, in 1854 and came to the US in 1882. He went to San Joaquin County around 1884, where he met and married Helene Neun. Helene was born in Darmstadt, Germany, in 1857. The Botzbachs made their home in Galt and opened the Empire Bakery on C Street in 1888. Henry died in 1900, and Helene continued to operate the bakery until she built a new hotel restaurant that replaced the bakery. The grand opening was on the 4th of July 1906, with a banquet for one hundred twenty-five guests. Initially, the hotel was called the Galt Restaurant and Lodging House, then the name was changed to the Botzbach Hotel. Helene continued to operate the



hotel until her passing in 1924. The hotel was located on the southeast corner of 5th and C Streets.



*for next month's  
newsletter...*

*"Who was  
Hiram Chase?"*

BARSETTI  
FAMILY OWNED  
CELEBRATING  
111 YEARS

# Barsetti Vineyards®

## WINE-TASTING BOUTIQUE

JOIN OUR MONTHLY EVENTS:  
*Floral | Bunco | Painting*  
Live Music Twice Monthly  
on Selected Fridays

- Follow us on Facebook for Event Information -

**209.744.6062**

Old Town Galt | 400 4th St. | Suite 150

OPEN FRI. - SUN., NOON-5PM



**MENTION THIS AD and receive  
TWO COMPLIMENTARY TASTINGS  
and \$5 OFF a bottle of wine!**

f ricjan@barsettivineyards.com | www.barsettivineyards.com



## FLORAL DESIGNS

Weddings • Quinceañeras  
Corporate Events

**209.745.0726**

J.M. Enterprises

Joan Werblun  
Owner



# Bits & Pieces

## Flags Replaced

New flags have been replaced at both of our cemeteries by Cemetery Chairperson Eric Schneider. They will look perfect for Memorial Day. Thanks, Eric, for putting up the flags and cleaning both cemeteries of the debris left by thoughtless people. Eric performs an invaluable service as our cemeteries chair.

## Liberty Cemetery

Gallo Vineyards next to the McFarland Ranch mowed all of the Liberty Cemetery as a service to the Society. Thanks to Elizabeth and her crew for giving us the help to keep the grass in check at the cemetery.

## Appeal Letter

We all recently received our annual Appeal Letter requesting donations. Many of you have sent very generous donations. Thank you all so very much. Any amount helps. For those who have not yet sent in your donation, please consider doing so.

## Car Show

We still need more volunteers for our annual car show, "A Drive Down Memory Lane," Saturday, August 26th. We do have quite a few cars signed up already. If you have a car that is 1970 or older; or you have family or friends with those cars, please encourage them to participate. There will be our huge raffle table put together by Maria Spannuth, food trucks, tours of the McFarland House, vendors, and DJ Brian King playing some great 50s and 60s music. The annual car show is always loads of fun.

## Fireworks Booth

As a reminder, we still need help to work in our Fireworks Booth. To volunteer, contact Dan Tarnasky (916-952-2368) or Liz Haglund (209-327-1098) to sign up for a time slot. The more people we have working when we need them, the better chance we have of attracting more buyers to our booth and raising the funds we need for the Rae House Museum, Liberty Schoolhouse restoration, historic cemeteries upkeep and programming. Tell your friends and family to come to our booth and buy their fireworks.



## McFarland Roof Repairs

In a previous newsletter and at meetings we talked about the electrical and roof repairs needed at the McFarland discovered after our insurance company performed an inspection. The electrical is complete. The roof repairs will begin the first weekend in July and continue during that month until completed.

## Rae and Liberty School House

Our first vice-President, Lyle Lagge, and his crew repaired the front steps of the Rae House Museum in time for the Tea at the Rae event. The orange tree by the garage that fell over earlier in the was removed by Lyle and Earl Frey with help from Rita and Bernice. Historian Dan Tarnasky has added more pieces and information to the various displays with items received by donors which he has set up for self-tours. Now, when a person has completed their perusal through the museum, they will have a much greater knowledge of Galt and surrounding communities. Great job Dan. Dan also reports that the contractor who is volunteering his time on the Liberty Schoolhouse, collocated on the historic site of the Rae House Museum, has begun work. We should start seeing some progress soon. This is a very exciting project, long in the making and is supported by our fundraisers like the fireworks sales booth.

## June General Meeting

Our June General Membership meeting will be held on June 26th at 6:00 p.m. at the Rae House Museum in the rose gardens. Our June general membership meeting is when we host our annual BBQ. We ask that everyone bring a dish or dessert. The board members will donate the cost of the hot dogs, buns, condiments, and drinks. Let me know what you will bring so we can ensure a variety of side dishes and desserts.

# A Town Disappears; A School Survives - Part 3

Residents of Liberty learned Central Pacific Railroad would be building a railroad line from Stockton to Sacramento and desperately wanted to be part of this enterprise. They were certain with their reputation as a bustling stage stop and their growing town they would be the recipients of a Train Depot because no other town existed at the junction of the roads going north to Sacramento and south to Stockton, San Jose and San Francisco.

To insure Liberty Township would have the cherished depot thirteen men from Liberty formed a land committee and bought a section of land south of Liberty and nearer Woodbridge to be sure Liberty was considered (Baxter Sperry). Railroad plans showed tracks would go through the middle of this section. In 1869 The Stockton Independent wrote that the committee was laying out streets for this new town and even moving buildings (which they weren't). (By the way this was the beginning of Acampo.)

Whatever their hopes and endeavors,

it's obvious they didn't have the right connections to obtain the depot. Enter Obed Harvey, who owned several hundred acres of land west of Liberty, had been a State Senator and now was a State Assemblyman. He also knew the Railroad Big Four -- Stanford, Huntington, Crocker and Hopkins. Realizing the importance of a railroad to a town, he offered his land for the railroad-right-of-way and depot.

The Big Four quickly agreed. Central Pacific Railroad laid the tracks on Harvey's land a mile and a half west of Liberty. Several articles commented that now there was no need of another town just a mile or so away.

But wait a minute -- there still was a town with stores and houses. Would it be abandoned? As the townspeople gazed to the west they realized it might be. The new depot would bring people and commerce. What would they be left with?

So Liberty moved. A company named Sawyer Brothers moved much of it. Almost all the houses and buildings

had been built with lumber shipped from the east coast. The populace was sure these houses and buildings now could be moved. The Sawyers were equally certain they could do it.

Imagine moving a town. It was done by a horse driven windlass. The windlass was staked down, a rope was tied around the house, and a good horse was at the windlass end of the rope. The sections of round log under the house were the rollers, and as the horse walked around the windlass the house was slowly pulled up the road. The circular plodding of the horse was transferred to the drum of the windlass by cast iron gears. As the rope or cable was drawn in, the building would come trundling along the road on the log rollers.

Larger buildings also were moved -- the hotel, perhaps a church and even the school. The hotel was relocated to Fourth Street and remained there until it

...Continued on page 7

## 8th Annual Galt Drive Down Memory Lane Car Show Saturday, August 26, 2023



**Stop By Our Booth**  
**Enter to Win Prizes**  
**GRAND PRIZE Set of Tires\***  
**\*UP TO \$500**  
**vehicle exhibitors only**

**Sponsored by**



**9 AM - 3 PM**  
**(Set up 7 AM)**  
**McFarland Living**  
**History Ranch**  
**8899 Orr Road Galt**



1970 Vehicles & Older  
Pickups \* Muscle Cars  
Custom \* Special Interest Street  
Rods \* Motorcycles  
Vintage Campers \* Trailers

# *The Life & Times Of* Lawrence Leon Smith

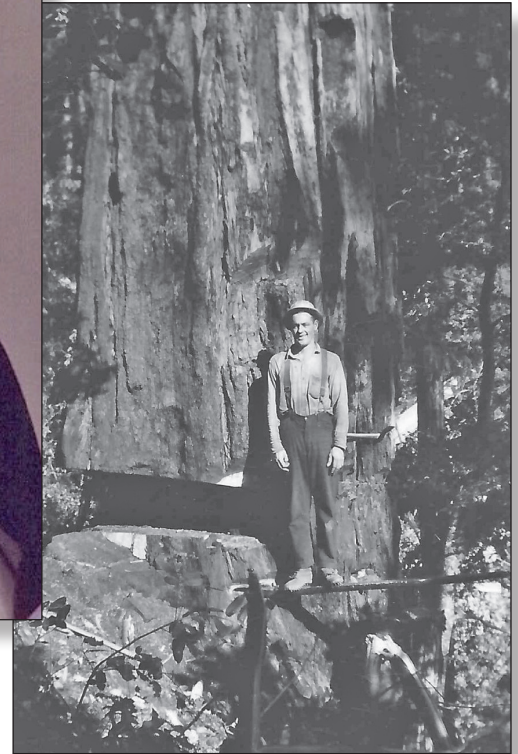
In past newsletters, we asked for local family stories to share with our membership. Rhonda Melhalf Smith wrote a biography of her father-in-law Lawrence Smith and shared it with the family at Christmas time in 2018. Here is a condensed version of that story.

Lawrence Leon Smith was born in Konawa, Seminole County, Oklahoma, to James and Minerva Smith in 1924. Lawrence grew up during the Great Depression, and times must have been tough because he never shared much about his childhood. His only story was of the lack of food, which led him to plant vegetable gardens for the rest of his life. Lawrence had five siblings, Ethel, William "Willie," Glendon, John, and Abbott.

During World War II, Lawrence worked as a welder in one of Henry Kaiser's Richmond shipyards. Here, he met a "Wendy the Welder" Myrtle Bernice Dukes. Myrtle was born in Illinois but was raised in Lodi. They were married by a Navy chaplain in Richmond on July 22, 1944. After the war, Lawrence served in the US Army's First Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Once Lawrence finished his military commitment, his father-in-law James Dukes started him as a lumberjack in Eureka, California. The first two Smith children, Catherine and Wayne, were born during this time. Around 1956, Lawrence and James Dukes started work for the Pickering Lumber Company in the forests east of Angels Camp. The Smiths lived in a trailer on site but ate in the company cookhouse. Lawrence spent nineteen years working in the forests of the western Sierra Nevada mountains. The third Smith sibling Warren was born in San Andreas.

Around 1960, the family moved to Galt, where Dennis was born. Myrtle attended Stockton Beauty School and received her cosmetology license. She opened Town and Country Beauty Shop in a studio apartment next to the family home on Oak Avenue. 1966 Myrtle died from a sudden illness, leaving Lawrence to raise four children. While Lawrence went to work logging, their grandmother Betsy Dukes babysat the younger siblings.



When not working his logging job, he would do welding jobs on the side during the offseason. He was known around dairy circles as the person to see when you needed a new gate or stall.

In the early 1960s, Lawrence was approached by Jesse Ross Sr. about moving his house on the corner of Oak Avenue and A Street. Ross offered to rent the house if Lawrence secured a lot and moved it. Lawrence moved the house to 2nd and E Streets. He borrowed funds to do it from Eric Spiess. This set-in motion a routine that Lawrence practiced for the next few years. Once he moved the Ross house, he borrowed money to bring another one. He never paid more than \$1,000 for a home. By 1964, Lawrence had moved about eight houses, most from outside Galt. This motivated the City of Galt to pass an ordinance prohibiting transporting homes from outside the city limits.

In 1965, Lawrence Smith and his sons switched to building and buying multi-family rental housing. The Smith family built a five-plex on 2nd Street, a triplex on Spruce Street, an eight-plex on the corner of A and 5th Streets, and so on. Wayne, Warren, and Dennis would help maintain the rentals. At one point, the Smith family was turning a profit on more than twenty-five properties. He also purchased "the Pit," a site at A Street and the SP Railroad tracks. It was used to dump broken concrete and other debris.

In 1968, Lawrence's brother Willie introduced him to Martha Tucker. Once married, she moved from Salinas to Galt and began teaching at Valley Oaks School. The union lasted twenty years until Lawrence's passing. The rental legacy continues.

- Rhonda Melhalf Smith

*Continued from page 5*

was demolished in 1970. Obviously other buildings also were erected to make Galt a new and bustling town . . .

...And one vital part of Liberty survived -- Liberty School House. While the school house itself was moved to Galt and the School eventually changed its name the actual building remained Liberty School House. It was so well built it survived the children to become the residence of Sally Baxter Sperry and now is part of the Galt Area Historical Society's Rae House property.

Liberty School history continued in Liberty Township.

First let's go back to the total history of Liberty School House because education of children was very important in the 1850's. The first Liberty School House was built by C. C. Fugitt in 1852. It was ten feet by twelve feet to accommodate the first children (obviously his). In 1854, he built the second school. At first the ten students in the school were on a subscription basis.

The new school house was the heavy wooden frame structure now located at the Rae House. The building is composed of studs that are joined together by mortise and tenon construction. Such technique was typical of prefabricated structures from the east coast shipped around Cape Horn during the gold rush. It was moved to its location at the north end of Main Street in 1870.

However, there still were families in Liberty Township and they wanted to have a school of their own. So, with petition and a vote to provide money through bonds, a new school was built in October 1871. It was close to the original town and housed the students still in Liberty township. It was a good, substantial building and furnished with new desks with total cost \$1200. This school continued with the Liberty School name.

History of San Joaquin County 1879 had some interesting facts about Liberty school as well as Liberty township. In 1878 the township had 22 people living there -- all farmers. They also had 49 children, ages 5-17, attending the school. Eight children under 5 also attended.

In 1907, the Liberty School District

voted to sell bonds to raise \$2500 to build a new schoolhouse, purchase furniture, yard apparatus, and clear any debts. In August 28, 1941 Liberty School became part of the Galt Joint Union School District. While Liberty had disappeared, the school served the residents of the township for many years.

Additional note: In doing my research on the school subject I came upon an interesting incident.

A man named Victor Jahant and his family lived southwest of the town of Liberty in 1870. By this time a new school in the southern most part of Liberty

Township was built called Houston School. Jahant's children were assigned to this school but he felt they were closer to Liberty School. Consequently, he sent a letter to the San Joaquin County Supervisors requesting that his children attend Liberty. The request was granted.

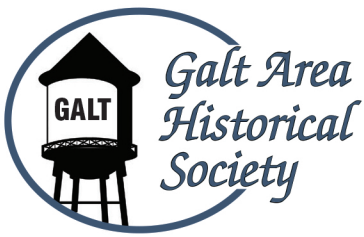
BUT have you ever wondered why the schools north of Peltier Road send their children to Galt High School District rather than Lodi District? Maybe Jahant's request started that trend, or was it Liberty School joining the Galt Joint Union School district?

*Story by Durlynn Anema*

## Tea at the Rae

Our annual *Tea at the Rae* was a huge success. Approximately 60 ladies attended. Chairperson Joan Werblun out did herself. The decorations, table settings, food, tea, champagne punch, and door prizes were to perfection. Joan, thank you so much for putting on this event. Just listening to the ladies, they loved the afternoon under the trees and sun umbrellas in the back yard of the Rae. Dan Tarnasky opened the museum for tours. Thanks to Tony Keese and his band for the afternoon music. Joan's hard work and meticulous planning, along with that of her expert crew, made the Tea a truly wonderful event that introduced many participants to the Society.





P.O. Box 782  
Galt, California 95632

Non Profit PRST  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 17  
Galt, CA 95632

First Last  
Address  
City State Zip

**GALT** 515 N. Lincoln Way  
Galt, CA 95632  
**SMOG** 209-745-5001  
& REGISTRATION Se Habla Español

- Locally Owned & Operated
- Two smog machines for faster service
- We perform most smog tests
  - Biennial Smog
  - Diesel
  - Change of ownership
  - Out of state
- Vehicle Renewal/Registration  
Issue Plates and Stickers
- Title Transfer / Change of Ownership

ASE  
SMOG REC  
Test Only

**Super Premium Ice Cream Made Every Day**

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

**VELVET & GRILL**  
**CREAMERY**

400 4th Street • Galt  
209-744-1413

**ANN ULLRICH**  
REALTOR®  
DRE Lic. # 01706199

**PARKER REALTY**  
UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

- 📞 209.481.5489
- ✉ Ann@ParkerRealtyGalt.com
- 🌐 www.ParkerRealtyGalt.com
- 🏠 545 Industrial Drive #105  
Galt, California 95632

MLS

**Missing Your Local Craft Show?**

*Come to L'Chayim  
for handmade items & crafts.*

**Sidewalk Sale Every Tuesday & Thursday**

Visit us online at  
[www.LChayimofGalt.net](http://www.LChayimofGalt.net)

**209-744-1143**  
440 D Street #160  
Galt, CA 95632  
*Located on 4th Street  
(between D & E Streets)*