



TOWER VIEWS

Galt Area Historical Society, Inc.

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

September / October 2023

From the Archives

Sunny South Boarding House



Built around the turn of the century, the Sunny South Boarding House was among the many places a weary traveler could spend the night in Galt. Located at 603 C Street, the Sunny South was four blocks from the railroad station and three blocks from the Lincoln Highway. Business would have been good. Around 1920, the Sunny South was owned and operated by British-born William and Jennie Gibson, who came to this country in 1889. Before taking over the

Sunny South, William was a vineyardist out on Arno Road. The Gibsons had three daughters, Grace, Mary, and Berenice, who was Miss Galt in 1918. William was the manager, Jennie was the cook, and the girls helped where they could. In the photo, Jennie is at the gate, Berenice is behind her, and the other two daughters are off to the left. The Sunny South still exists and has been renovated into its former glory.

September & October
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

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2023 Historical Society Executive Board

Janis Barsetti Gray ~ President

Lyle Lagge ~ 1st Vice President

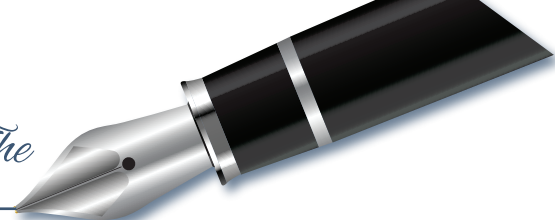
Gale Webber ~ 2nd Vice President

Liz Haglund ~ Recording Secretary

Tom Haglund ~ Treasurer

A Message From The

President



Dear GAHS Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and avoiding some of this summer's heat.

I recently was on vacation at my house in Bellingham, WA, the birth city of my late husband. It is there that I seem to have the time to reflect on family history. I have researched his family and both sides of my family. However, since he has no one left to tell me more about the family, my research has pretty much stopped with only what I can find online. Without anyone to lead me in the direction of family history, even if just stories, I have a difficult time substantiating the stories or names. These stories can be true, revised, or basically changed because no one remembers correctly. On my father's side of the family, I am very fortunate to have been introduced to a distant relative who has done extensive research on the Barsetti Family. She travels to Italy and has gone through church and government records and, yes, visited grave sites to make sure she has correct information. Of course it helps that she can speak and read Italian which I cannot. She has traced my family back to 1495. She is still working to find further generations. What I can see is that because handwritings may not be legible, the Barsetti name has various spellings. When researching, you have to try different spellings and sometimes you find the person. Just imagine 1492 was when Columbus, an Italian, funded by the Spanish, traveled to the "new world." Could one of my relatives have known him?

Researching one's ancestors and genealogy is a serious matter if you want to get it right. Too many of us simply rely on stories passed down. While stories may hold some truth, until you can research these stories, your history is not complete. Years ago when I was in the town my grandparents came from in Switzerland,

I had friends take me to the Catholic Church. I was very fortunate the priest allowed me to look through their historic records. Thankfully my friends could read and interpret for me. I heard stories that my great grandfather came from Bagni di Lucca, Italy; but was not sure until I saw my grandfather's birth record showing that both my great grandfather and his father were from Bagni di Lucca. Puzzle solved! I did not know that my grandfather was one of 13 children either.

I bring this all up again because our family histories are important: Not just to us and our future relatives, but to insure the accuracy of our relatives' presences in this world. Would we like someone to make up or revise facts about us because they did not have all the accurate facts. Good or bad, facts are facts. I admit family research can be addictive and difficult to set down. Start with yourself and what you know of your families and then work backwards. Interview those who are still alive. Interview friends of those relatives. Sometimes older relatives or friends think they cannot help, but just one story or something about a person can open up a new path for you. Do not wait until it is too late to talk to those people. Their contribution to your research is vital. Just a remembrance about their old school or about the town will lead you to success. Make up a list of questions that you need answers to; but do not be surprised if they just start talking. Record and document these conversations. The important thing is accuracy! The clues can help in your online searches.

Enjoy your searches as you find connections and descendants and stories you did not know about. Be sure to let our Historian, Dan Tarnasky, know if you find out information about your Galt connections so he can archive your family in our records

- Janis Barsetti-Gray

Upcoming Dates

September 22:
Nomination Forms Due

September 25:
General Members Meeting
at the Rae House
6:00pm

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

October 9:
Executive Board Meeting
at Barsetti Tasting Room
4:00pm

October 23:
General Members Meeting/
Election
at the McFarland Barn
6:00pm

Trip Through the Cemetery

Last month's gravestone inscription was "August Wegat."

August Wegat was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1854. He came to this country as a young man of 26 in 1881. Wegat first went to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad in Prescott, Arizona as a laborer. After a couple of years, he went to the Hicksville area to work on a farm, something he knew how to do very well. In 1885, August Wegat married Mary Korach in Sacramento. Mary was an immigrant from Posen, Germany (now Poland). Together they began a lifelong endeavor to become well-known area farmers. The Wegats

first rented 50 acres of bottomland along the Cosumnes River. Over the years, the acreage swelled to 1,000 with great success. August and Mary had nine children, Anna, George, William, August F., John, Agnes (who married into the Need farming family), Henry, Fred (who founded the 417 Club), and Otto.



*for next month's
newsletter...*

*"who was
James Larrick?"*



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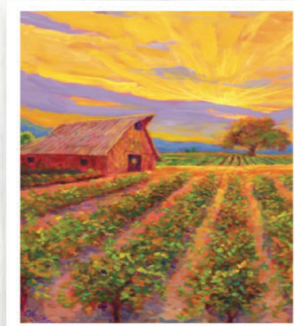
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Bits & Pieces

Election of Executive Board

A board nomination form to run for office has been included in both the August and September newsletters. Those of us who will be running for an office must have the form filled out, signed and sent to Shaun Farrell by Sept 22, 2023. At the October membership meeting on October 23rd, each candidate will have the opportunity to speak for 5 minutes on how they can improve the GAHS and what they can bring to the organization. There will also be a 10-minute collective question and answer period for all candidate.

Charter Night Dinner

At the October Meeting, after roll call and the reports; we will hear speeches and then vote. While ballots are being counted; we will continue the meeting. Once the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, Shaun Farrell has tallied the votes, he will announce those elected during the meeting. When we adjourn, we will have our Charter Night Dinner. The cost of the dinner is \$12.00 per person. Please submit the form included in the newsletter along with your payment. We ask that members bring a dessert to the dinner. Our meeting and election will be held at the McFarland Ranch Barn.

Lodi Chamber Mixer

On September 7th the Historical Society hosted a mixer with the Lodi Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Lodi Ambassador Committee were in attendance as well as many of our Society members. Everyone enjoyed Barsetti wines, sodas and light appetizers. The docents were very helpful with the house tours and sharing stories associated with the Mansion. Hosting events like this helps to expand awareness of the McFarland Living History Ranch.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the event. We could not do it without our volunteers.

Guest Speaker in November

We are honored to have Peggy Ward Engh speak at our November meeting. Peggy's family is historic to the Elliott/Lockeford area. She was also a cousin to deceased member, Bill Ward. She has done extensive research on the Elliott area and other areas within the reach of the Galt Area Historical Society. She has written many papers and is currently working on two books. We will have a short meeting prior to Peggy's presentation. Our meeting will be held at the McFarland Barn.

Drive Down Memory Lane Car Show

Our annual car show for 2023 was very successful. We had 97 paid entries and picked up some who paid at the door. Our Raffle table came through again, generating \$2340. The House collected \$366 donations, the public parking brought in \$ 569, a couple of vendors on the lawn were \$50, and

the car entries brought in \$2525 for a grand total of \$5850. We have very few expenses for this event other than the DJ and the plaques. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for working the event as well as set-up and take-down and our great docents who gave the attendees the royal treatment. Many people spoke of enjoying the house tour. It reflected in the amount of donations we received. Thanks to Gayle Webber for all she did for the event and for manning the public entrance; thanks to my partners at the car show entrance gate, Darlene Alden and Lisa Haug. You helped make the process easy. Thanks to all those who helped park the car show entries. A very special thank you to Delores Gregorio, Rhonda Smith, and all those helping at the raffle table and for putting all the prizes together. I know Maria is proud of all you did in her absence. Thank you again to everyone who helped make this another successful car show. Next year, our car show will be held on Saturday, August 24th, the fourth Saturday of the month.

No October Newsletter

There will be no newsletter published in October. Newsletters will resume in November.

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NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS
For the GALT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2024 OFFICERS

Notice is hereby given of the opening of nominations for the following officers for the calendar year 2024:

Officers to be Nominated / Term

President	One-Year
First Vice President	One-Year
Second Vice-President	One-Year
Secretary	One-Year
Treasurer	One-Year

Eligibility Requirements

- Any Member whose dues are paid in full for the current year may be nominated for, and elected to, any office;

Nomination Process

- Everyone interested in running for office must send an *Acceptance of Nomination* form (see below), even if currently holding an existing officer position
- Nominations must be filed with the Nominating Committee Chair no later than **September 22, 2023**, on an *Acceptance of Nomination* form that has been dated and bears the signature of the qualified nominee. (A scanned signature will be acceptable).
- All nominees must be paid members of the Galt Area Historical Society at the time the *Acceptance of Nomination* form is filed.
- At the October general meeting, each nominee may provide a candidate statement presentation, up to five (5) minutes. Following the candidate's presentation statements, there will be a general question/answer period of the candidates collectively not to exceed a total of ten (10) minutes.
- Elections will be held at the October general meeting following the question/answer period.

Acceptance of Nomination

I, _____, a Member of the Galt Area Historical Society and whose dues are paid in full for the current year, declare that I will serve in the position of _____ if elected.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Nominated for _____

Mail/E-Mail to:
Shaun Farrell, Nominating Committee Chair
989 Elsworth Ct, Galt, CA 95632
farr2328@gmail.com

The Story of George Barber

Here is a Thornton story from many years ago written by Jane C. Bilello.

Have you heard the one about Judge George Barber, who held court in Arthur Thornton's saloon in the 1880s and 1890s? While the court was in session, proceedings would temporarily stop so those present could have a swig of the ol' juice, although the judge was no drinker himself. There's more. Since the area was still the wild west, the circuit court was held throughout Union Township, and Judge Barber toured the circuit court. On one of these tours by horse and buggy to Walnut Grove, Barber came upon a hard-working Chinese coolie busy at work building levees by hand in the Delta area soil reclamation. Barber's horse never saw a man carrying dirt-filled baskets on the end of a long pole across his back. The horse became so frightened that it jumped into the river with the buggy and the judge. Although a little soggy from his ordeal, Judge Barber made it out of the river, but the horse and buggy didn't! They were gone.

So, who was this colorful George Barber? Are his descendants still around? It all began shortly after 1872 when the young George Barber family came here from Summerhill, N.Y. Barber purchased 100 acres in the New Hope area (now Thornton). Remember Mokelumne City and Benson's Ferry from another article? It was there and the land, including the defunct town of Taison at Beaver Slough, that comprised his land holdings. The present generation of Barbers still farms this land.

Judge Barber had two sons. Edward and George both farmed and served the community as their father did. The brothers also kept a diary and continued to add to their land holdings. Edward and George eventually owned 425 acres and 100 acres in the Yaqui Valley in Mexico.

The second George Barber, who pursued part of his education in the East, became a teacher for a year before returning to the farm. His short career as a

Galt Firsts Fred and Anna Harvey in Their New Automobile 1901



teacher probably sparked his interest in the New Hope School in Thornton. He was elected to serve on the New Hope School Board as its president from 1910 to 1925. However, he could have served even earlier than this. There are no records before this time. The present George Barber held the same position as his grandfather.

Edward Barber was no less active than his father or brother in community affairs. He was elected justice of the peace and held this position from 1906 to 1926. Edward also served on the first Galt Joint Union High School District Board of Trustees. He became a leader in organizing the Reclamation District in Thornton and served on its board for many years.

So, what are the present-day Barbers doing? George Barber's son James became Thornton's appointed Constable in 1939 and was continuously re-elected until 1951 when the lower court system was reorganized. Like his uncle, Edward,

he was elected to the Galt Joint Union High School Board and served for two terms beginning in 1953. He also held the Thornton Progress Club offices, which became the Thornton Chamber of Commerce.

The present George Barber held the New Hope School trusteeship and was elected to the Delta College Board for two terms until he was elected Supervisor in San Joaquin County in 1975. He has held the position ever since.

Are there other Barbers doing terrific things? Our own Alberta Barber is an active Galt Area Historical Society member. Alberta diligently calls each member of GAHS each month to remind everyone — including me — that there is a meeting. She generously shared her newspaper articles with me so I could write this article. Thank you, Alberta.

- Historian

CHARTER NIGHT DINNER
October 23, 2023 – 6:00pm
McFarland Ranch Red Barn

Join us for dinner prior to our Charter Night general meeting and enjoy a delicious dinner of Lockeford Sausage, potato salad, macaroni salad, sauerkraut, etc.
Please bring a dessert

Advanced reservation and payment required. The cost is \$12.00 per person.
Money/checks must be received by Friday, October 20th. There will be no sales at the door. Mail checks to the address below.



Member's Name: _____

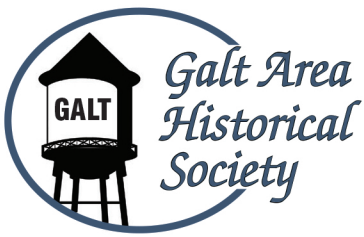
Number of Dinners: _____

Total Paid: _____

Send this form with payment to: GAHS, PO Box 782, Galt, CA 95632

Can you name the two gentlemen in this photo?





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