

# Sacramento County Biographies

Information thanks to Nancy Pratt Melton:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~npmelton/sacsaw.htm>

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~npmelton/sacsawy.htm>

## JOHN H. SAWYER

John H. Sawyer was born February 4, 1830, in Strafford County, New Hampshire, in that portion which has since been set off as Carroll County. His parents, Joseph H. and Abigail B. (Hall) Sawyer, were also natives of the same locality. All the four children of the family of Joseph H. Sawyer are now residents of California, viz.: Mrs. Addie S. Grant, of Sacramento; John H., the subject of this sketch; James C.; of Galt; and Mrs. Susan Hughes, of Oakland. The boyhood days of John H. were "pretty tough." One year was all he had in school; he had to work hard and constantly. When he was fifteen years old the father died, and he had the responsibilities of caring for the family. From his father, who was a carpenter, he partly learned the same trade, and he followed it most of the time until he was of age. He then spent a year in New York, then a winter at Bristol, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, and in the spring of 1853, in company with his brother J.C., started with horse teams overland for the Golden State. Setting out alone, he fell in afterward with company. The journey was comparatively pleasant and the party arrived at Placerville, August 7. That was then a lively camp. After remaining there about a month, they went down to Dry Creek Township to build a house for Dr. Selan Russell, a large cattle dealer, who with others has taken up a large tract of land in what was called "Russell's pocket." Since that time, with the exception of three years, Mr. Sawyer has been a resident of that neighborhood. One year he passed in San Francisco. In the fall of 1856 he returned to Wisconsin and was married, and remained there two years. In the spring of 1859 he came again to California, bringing with him his wife, mother, and two sisters. His mother died in 1880, at the age of seventy-seven years. After his arrival here he worked steadily at his trade for four years. He then turned his attention to dairying for eighteen years, during which time it was a profitable industry. The first land he purchased was in 1878, when the town of Galt was started, his selection being a tract of 400 acres on Dry Creek just a half mile south of town. He also purchased 680 acres, the west boundary line of which was two miles east of town. Since that time he has been a resident of Galt, farming, raising cattle and horses, and building houses. He has built, or assisted in building, all the houses in the place. In 1859 he erected the Devins Exchange Hotel, which was afterward moved to Galt when this town was started. He also built the mercantile house of Whitaker & Ray, the school-house and two of the churches. One of these, the Methodist, was first erected for a school-house. Probably the first upland orchard in this section was set out by Mr. Russell on his place, and Mr. Sawyer built a windmill to irrigate it. This was the first windmill erected in the county. Mr. Sawyer belongs to Phoenix Lodge, No. 232, I.O.O.F., to Galt Encampment, No. 65, Rei Rebekah Degree Lodge, and to Galt Lodge, A.O.U.W.; he is a charter member of all these. The date of Mr. Sawyer's marriage was November 4, 1856, when he wedded Miss Jennie C. Newcomb, a native of Rochester, New York, and a daughter of Samuel E. Newcomb, who is now making his home with her; he is eighty-five years of age. Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer have four children: Frank N., Wallace B., Jean and Thomas. The eldest was born in Wisconsin, and the others are natives of this State.

Transcribed by Debbie Walke Gramlick

**An Illustrated History of Sacramento County, California. By Hon. Win. J. Davis. Lewis Publishing Company 1890. Page 382-383.**

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## JOHN H. SAWYER

A self-made man in every sense of the word was John H. Sawyer, whose death occurred January 6, 1904, in his home in Galt, Cal., depriving the community of one of its most dependable and best loved

citizens. In the face of the many trials which beset his career, he clung to his ideals and ambitions with an intensity of purpose well worthy of the emulation of many members of our present generation, who decline to maintain the patience and fortitude so essential to true success in life and, amid advantages far greater than those presented to our forefathers, slip through existence without understanding the meaning of altruism or appreciating the blessed privilege of labor.

A native of Tuffinboro, Vt., Mr. Sawyer's birth occurred February 5, 1828, and during the first fourteen years of his life he remained with his parents, Joseph and Abigail (Hall) Sawyer, natives of Vermont. At the age of ten he abandoned his studies through necessity and became an apprentice to a carpenter, leaving home four years later to take up his trade in Boston, Mass. Until 1850 he remained in that city, fairly successful in his work, and during the same year he settled in Wisconsin; after remaining there for two years, in 1852 he came to Galt, Sacramento County, Cal., crossing the plains with ox teams. Until 1856 he worked at his trade, establishing himself in the community as a man of high principles and unflinching industry. When he was able to establish domestic ties he returned to Wisconsin, to claim the girl he had loved and waited for throughout his residence in the west, their marriage occurring November 1, 1856. The bride, Miss Jennie Newcomb, was born near Albany, N. Y., the daughter of Samuel E., who settled in Wisconsin and later he located in Sacramento county. Mrs. Sawyer received her education in New York state and was widely known as a woman of exceptional culture and generous sympathies. After locating in Galt, Cal., Mr. Sawyer again took up his work, satisfied and happy in the thought of the great purpose which actuated his every effort. In connection with his building pursuits he carried on ranching, meeting with fair success.

To the union of Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer seven children were born: Frank M., whose birth occurred April 5, 1858, in Wisconsin, and who is now a practicing veterinary surgeon in Bakersfield, Cal.; Millie, who died in San Francisco; Silvia, who was born in 1861 and who died at the age of nineteen; John, who died in infancy; Wallace, born in Galt, January 8, 1868; Jean, who died at the age of twenty-nine years; and Tom J., whose birth June 7, 1879, occurred in Galt, where he is now engaged in the general mercantile business with his brother, Wallace, under the firm name of Sawyer Brothers.

Mr. Sawyer was an active member of Phoenix Lodge, No. 239, I. O. O. F., and the Ancient Order United Workmen for many years. He was a Republican of strong and progressive principles and endeavored to lend all aid in his power in the advancement of the party and to the general welfare of his fellowmen. His wife, who died in 1906, shared both his joys and his sorrows with a true heart and a calm, sweet mind, her companionship proving all and more than in his youth he had anticipated.

**Transcribed by Sally Kaleta.**

**Source: Willis, William L., *History of Sacramento County, California*, Pages 1038-1039. Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, CA. 1913.**

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