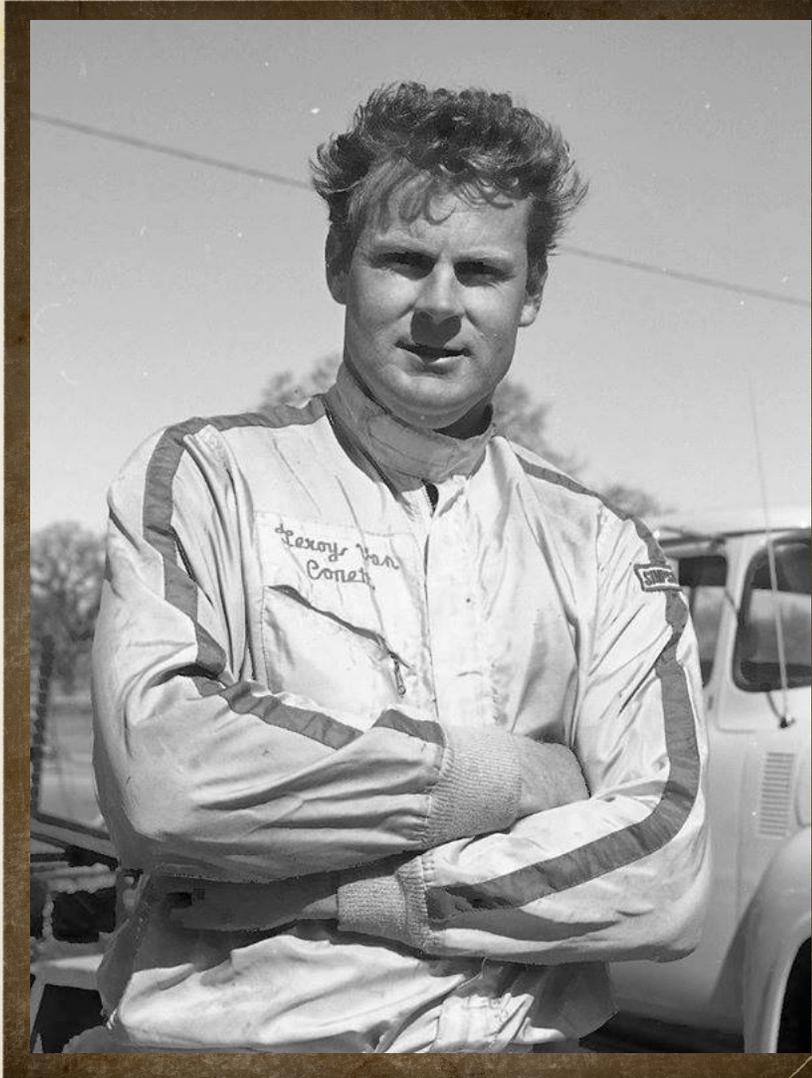




March 2021

From the Archives

Leroy Van Connett



A familiar face around Galt was also a familiar face in the car racing world back in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Leroy Van Connett, the “Dragon from Galt,” was born in Stockton, California in 1935 and began racing “jalopies” at Stockton 99 Speedway in the mid-1950s. A few years later, he moved up to modifieds and super-modifieds that he built and maintained. Over a thirty-year career, Van Connett accumulated 65 career sprint car wins. He only missed one season due to an injured knee-cap. At the time of his retirement, he held the record for the number of Northern Auto Racing Club (NARC) wins at eight (later to be broken by Brent Kaeding who now has eleven). Leroy Van Connett was inducted into the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame in 1999. He still lives in Galt and makes appearances at racing events around the country. Thanks to the Sprint Car Hall of Fame for the information.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Thank you to these members who have gratefully paid their dues this year: Debbie Martinez, Lisa Marangi, Branch 13 EDGE&TA, Kay & Otto Linberger, Ron & Leona Harris, Diane Weiss, Linda Graham, Alda Paine, Julie Hughes, Heather & Shawn Farmer, Ben Salas Funeral Home, Peter & Mary Ann Hall, Bobbi Lewis, Rita & Bob Martin, Violet Whaley, Rich & Pam Lozano, Joanie Ishizuka, Susan Nelson, David LaRoe, Durlynn Anema and Charles Carver. And we welcome new members: Mary Hunt, Frank Lourence, Joe Lourence, Philomena Hall, Allison Barsetti, Edward Shellenbarger, Bob & Tara Wilson, and Linda Stroh!

If you are a dues member and have not paid your 2021 amount, you will not receive the newsletter after this month.

Remember to please contact us for any address, phone or email changes that you have. We need to have updated addresses or it costs us each time a newsletter is returned for incorrect address. But more important is we want to keep everyone updated and informed of all our events and activities!

Contact Rhonda Smith with any concerns about membership. rhonda@galtsmiths.com. Or 209-745-4504.

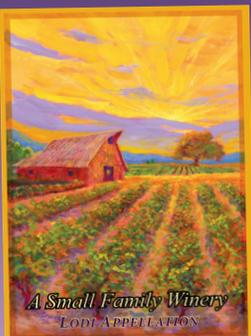


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A Message From The President



I hope you and your families are all well and getting ready for better things. Hard to believe that Day Light Savings time is March 14th and Spring is here on March 20th. What happened to winter. I think it will still knock on our door before it has left us.

I thought I would do something a little different. Periodically, I pick up a book that Genie Olson compiled called "Tapestry," and read some of the stories of Galt in days gone by. The story here was written by a small child, Walter Jahant. This is a child's description of Galt through his eyes.

Essay on Galt

Galt was made. There wasn't many bricks or wood on land so Galt is small - not too small. When Mr. McFarland seen it first it had two houses - the biggest was a saloon. There were men in it fighting and one man drinking. He made them stop. He said he wanted it to be a good town so they commenced to be pious.

Dr. Harvey, the father of two little children, quite bright, came along and said he wanted a railroad. He got it. He also brought the first cows to town. They were very big, especially the bulls and all the little girls was afraid of them.

He was a good man and helped to make the town prosper as Mr. McFarland done. Mr. Sawyer helped to make Galt pious too and bigger - he had six children.

He had a little boy Wallie who was bad. He wouldn't bring in wood or learn his A.B.C's or how much 2x2 is. He said he didn't want knowledge. The teacher said he'd come to a bad end - be old bachelor or sometim'. I hope he won't - I like him best of all the boys cause he makes pictures in school.

Mr. Whittaker and Ray came and builded a store. It contained pins & dresses & nails & pianos & coffins and ribbons & vegetables & laces & women's lingerie & many other things too awful to mention. My Pa says that some day Galt will have a bank. Ma don't think it can. He says maybe there'll be a paper with news in it about people been' sick and people so journeying to big place like Twin Cities, New Hope, Clay and other places too numerous to mention.

Pa says maybe some day the little boys like Bud Wristin, Charley McKinstry, Freddie Harvey, Charlie Ray, Johnnie Chase and many others too numerous to mention may drive a wagon without a horse. Ma says may as well say the Mormons will come in and can milk. There might be poets, too like Burns and a drug

store & a lumber yard & two stores and many other things too numerous to mention.

Galt school is made of logs & contains six children. The teacher is a old maid of 25 yrs and is kind of good when she isn't mean.

I guess I was taken by this story because it was so genuine out of a child's mouth and how he saw his town. He knew that John McFarland was important, as was Obed Harvey. I could visualize this small town that he said had two houses (maybe it was more). How John McFarland wanted Galt to be a good town. It is interesting that one of the two houses (the biggest) was a saloon. This child's story was truly about Galt close to when it was founded. Obviously the railroad came to this area because of Obed Harvey and others, but you see the significance of the railroad in creating a town in those days. When he talks about the store ran by Whittaker and Ray, you see a general store that carried everything the people would need. His parents talked about Galt getting a bank and newspaper, which seemed impossible at the time. I am not sure what the date of this essay was, but his father must have had some vision of a horseless carriage before its time.

The point of this essay today is that these people not only had a dream of something better, but they believed it could happen. If John McFarland and Obed Harvey and other founders did not have a dream and believe they could make it happen, we would not be in Galt today. Many negative things happened to many people in 2020: Occurrences we could not imagine or control for the most part. Most of us believed it would be over and we would resume life. We are seeing "light at the end of the tunnel," but that does not mean we can take light of what we went through. It has made us change how we look at things in our everyday lives. However, it never stops us from believing that we can accomplish anything. That is why we are moving forward with all our plans to hold our fundraisers and events because we believe in ourselves and our community. Today we are the pioneers for the future generations to look back and see how we followed our dreams and paved the way for them. None of us expect to be immortalized by future generations. We only want to be known as those pioneers who preserved the past and our history for them.

I am looking forward to a renewed time; and Spring is a good time for that. Best wishes to all.

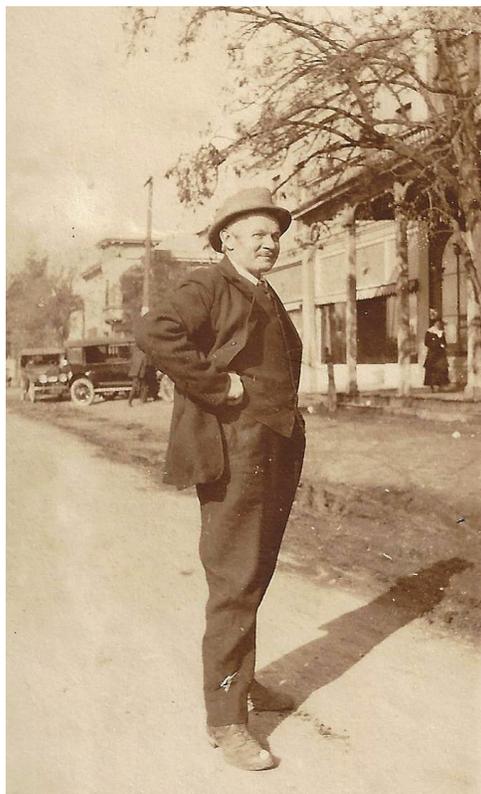
Janis Barsetti Gray

Can you help us identify these Galt area citizens?

We have several photos that are unidentified. If you know who one of these people are, contact:

Dan Tarnasky - GAHS Historian

Email: blckrssn@hotmail.com | Phone: (916) 952-2368



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Calendar of Events

This calendar has not been approved by the board, but will be at our next meeting. Please look over the calendar and let any board member know if you see something that needs correction or added.

- Jan 11 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Jan 25 General Meeting - 6pm - Cancelled
- Feb 8 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Feb 22 General Meeting - 6pm - Cancelled
- Mar 7 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- Mar 8 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Mar 22 General Meeting - 6pm - Cancelled
- April 4 Easter - Rae Museum Closed
- April 11 Kite Day - MAC - 9am-3pm
- April 12 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- April 16 Yard Sale - Hall - 8am-2pm
- April 17 Yard Sale - Hall - 8am-2pm
- April 26 General Meeting - 6pm - Tentative
- May 2 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- May 8 Ladies' Tea at the Rae
- May 10 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- May 24 General Meeting - 6pm - Tentative
- June 6 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- June 14 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- June 28 General Meeting - 6pm - Tentative
- July 3 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- July 12 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- July 26 General Meeting - 6pm
- Aug 1 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- Aug 9 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Aug 23 General Meeting - 6pm
- Aug 28 Car Show at McFarland Ranch
- Sept 5 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- Sept 13 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Sept 25 Sip & Snack at the MAC
- Sept 27 General Meeting - 6pm
- Oct 3 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- Oct 11 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Oct 25 General Meeting - 6pm
- Nov 7 Rae Museum Open House - 1-4pm
- Nov 8 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Nov 22 General Meeting - 6pm
- Dec 5 Rae Museum Christmas Open House - 1-4pm
- Dec 5 MAC Christmas Open House - 12-3pm
- Dec 13 Executive Board Meeting - 4pm
- Dec 20 General Meeting and Christmas - 6pm

News From McFarland Ranch

We are working on beautifying the ranch constantly. This is a new addition and we are calling it the mini tank house. It is a close replication of the original tank house. We used the same siding as the original tank house and the McFarland house. Many thanks to Earl Frey and Roger Watson for the many hours to make this mini tank house. Other accomplishments we have made in the last twelve months are: we acquired donations of really good stuff exceeding \$20,000.00 that will be available for the GAHS yard sales. We have items that include cabinets, coffee tables and end tables. Anytime anyone wants to come visit us at the ranch we are there Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 am to 1:00 am, come on by and say hi.

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Bits & Pieces

A Gift of Membership

Lately several of our members have given family gifts of a year's membership to the Galt Area Historical Society. What a wonderful idea to bring Galt back to someone's roots who may no longer live here. Please keep that in mind. Only \$20 for Individual; \$40 for Family; \$50 for a business, and \$10 for students up to the age of 18 Years.

Rae House Museum

Dan is still looking for some help cataloging the many donated items. It is very time consuming. It would be great if he could find 4 or 5 people to help him. We hope to open the museum in May, especially if we can hold the Ladies' Tea in May. We need some volunteers to wash down the outside of the house and get the buildings looking good. On another note, I had the opportunity to see all the work that Dan has done inside the museum. He has done such a fantastic job. For so long the Rae just looked like someone's old house. It now looks like a museum of Galt with much history and pictures. He has a couple of rooms to finish. I know that anyone who visits will now learn much more about Galt and our area and its history. Thanks so much Dan.

Yard Sale

Our annual Yard Sale is scheduled for April 16 and 17 from 8 am- 2 pm at our Hall on C St. LaVonne and Sue are working to get the items tagged and sorted now. They ask members not to donate clothes or books; but will take other items. If anyone wants to give them a hand now and on the days of the sale, please contact LaVonne.

Kite Day

Kite Day is scheduled at the McFarland April 11 from 9a-3 pm. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we will be able to hold this great fun community day for the kids. We are working on getting a food truck this year; and a kite person to display and sell kites. We may have a few vendors also.

Thanks to Earl

We want to thank Earl Frey for going to the Hall and cutting the grass. Earl is always ready to help and we appreciate you very much.

Website Updating

Gale Webber has taken over our website and social media. She has started to make changes. She is trying to make the navigation on our site easier when trying to donate or renew

membership, and she is updating all the items and events. Social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, are very important especially when you want to put the word out for events and generally about all the good work we do. Dan's Facebook Page, Snapshots of Galt History, has such a huge following of not only local people, but former Galt residents. He posts old photos that brings back memories for all of us. If you have not "Liked" this page, do so and you will see all his posts.

Financials

As we talked about last newsletter, because we lost all our 2020 fundraisers and wedding rentals, we have been struggling. However, Heather reports she has been showing the McFarland quite a bit and people are starting to book, even into 2022. Our organization is very fiscally responsible and all bills are paid. We rely on donations, membership renewals, and our fundraisers.

2021 Fundraisers

Everyone is so eager to get out and enjoy themselves after being locked down for a year. I recently sent our participation forms for Sip & Snack at the MAC September 25th. I immediately got 10 commitments. That never happens. It could be a big event and help us raise much needed funds. August 28th will be our annual Car Show, A Drive Down Memory Lane. James Guthmiller, has reported he is getting calls from car people wanting to come. James has found a sponsor for the flyers and sponsor for the event. Along with the car show, Toni Gerling and Sonia Tarnasky will be chairing an Antique Faire in the large field by the barn. Both these events will bring different people to each area, which could make it an all-time large event for us. We could not wait to see what will happen with the virus. We have to remain positive that these events will happen. We will be looking for volunteers to help at all events.

Liberty School House

We are starting to make some "rubbles" and getting together what we need to renovate the building. Lyle will be heading the crew. Lyle will start purchasing what we need to start repairs. Cal Waste will be donating a dumpster for removal of waste from the building. It is important we start on this because of timing of grants that will expire soon. We have to use those funds or lose them.

Amazon Smile

As a reminder, when you buy from Amazon, log into Amazon Smile with your regular login. It will ask you what nonprofit you want to donate to. Please put the Galt Area Historical Society. They have all our information. Within a year, we could accumulate a lot of money this way. Amazon donates .5% of what you spent back to us.

Donations

I want to thank all of you who have donated during our annual appeal. All your donations mean so much. It is not too late to send in whatever you can. It all adds up. Speaking of donations, we recently received a framed picture of Galt High and all the students from 1937 from Geneva Lauchert Erich. Forrest Jamison, a student at that time, a past member of the GAHS, and someone who held a track record at Galt High until recent years, took the task of identifying every person in the picture. All their names are on the face of the picture. Gen's husband framed it. She gave us the picture to hang in the museum. We are very grateful to have this piece of our history.

Tour Guide

Did you know that we have a Historic Tour Guide made for a downtown walking tour? It was paid for by local business sponsors and it tells about old buildings or places as you walk along Old Town and surrounding area. (See Picture of the Cover). You can get one of these free from the GAHS or at Barsetti Vineyards.

Historic Tour Guide

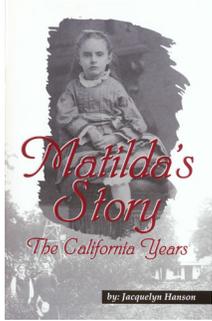


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Local History Books

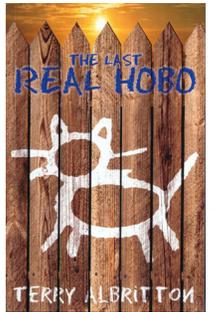
Books can be purchased at the following locations unless otherwise noted:
 Barsetti's Tasting Room, 400 4th Street
 GAHS Website: www.galthistory.org



Matilda's Story
 by Jacquelyn Hanson
 (Shellenbarger)

This story has been fictionalized, but clearly based on fact about Jacqueline's family coming to the Galt area and settling in Hicksville. It is about a farming community in south

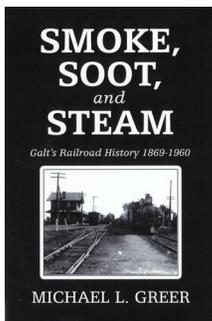
Sacramento County the last half of the 19th century.



The Last Real Hobo
 by Terry Albritton

This is a historical fiction, loosely related to the history of Galt. It tells about the life of a hobo coming into town by train. Terry says that some old timers in Galt may recognize the resemblance to some towns people.

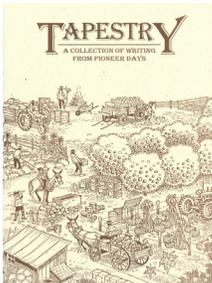
Available only through Amazon.



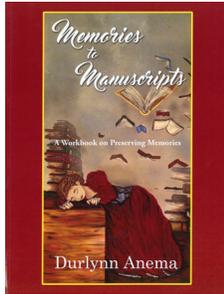
Smoke, Soot, and Steam
 by Mike Greer

Use this vivid, well-documented book as a guide to walk down Main Street and experience the sensations of smoke, soot, and steam from 1869 to 1960 in a Central

California community as it grew from a berg to an incorporated city and found its spot in the history of the golden state of California.



Tapestry
 A Collection of Writings from Pioneer Days
 Compiled by Eugenia Olson

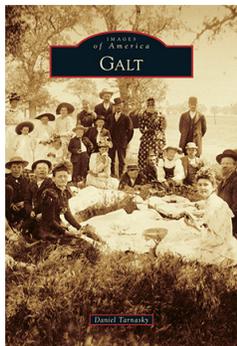


Memories to Manuscripts
 By Durlynn Anema

Memories accumulate over a lifetime to be pleasantly recalled, especially when we are older. Your memories tell a great deal about a unique time and a

unique you which needs to be preserved. This book evolved from a class Durlynn Anema taught called "Memories to Manuscripts." This book helps you go through the complete process from the simple act of writing to the final product. Learn writing techniques to turn your life into a book of memories.

Books are also available by contacting the author, Durlynn Anema at durlynnca@gmail.com.

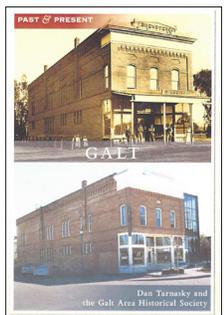


Images of America: Galt
 By Daniel Tarnasky

Contains vintage photos of Galt's past and a little history to go with it. The timeframe is 1869 to 1969. The Galt Area Historical Society is the source for the photos and

historical information. Other Galtonians shared their photos, information, and memories.

Books are also available by contacting the author, Dan Tarnasky at blckrssn@hotmail.com.

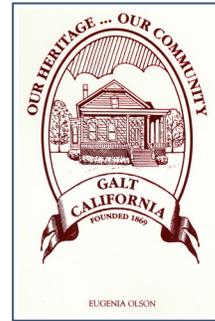


Past and Present: Galt
 By Daniel Tarnasky

Contains vintage photos of buildings from Galt's past and what the building looks like now. Some places are unchanged while others have completely

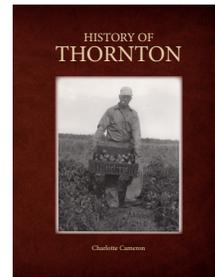
disappeared. All are still contained in the memories of those who grew up in their small town.

Books are also available by contacting the author, Dan Tarnasky at blckrssn@hotmail.com.



Our Heritage ... Our Community
 By Eugenia Olson

A history of Galt from the perspective of children who once lived in Galt.

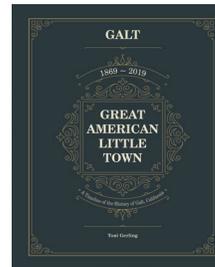


History of Thornton
 By Charlotte Cameron

A rich history of Thornton from 500 A.D. to 2009.

Books are also available by

contacting the author, Charlotte Cameron at 209-794-2511.



Great American Little Town
 By Toni Gerling

Wrapping up a year of celebrations, the Galt District Chamber of Commerce has published a book commemorating

Galt's sesquicentennial year. The book features a timeline of this area and includes photos and news clippings covering important milestones in local history from 1869-2019.

Books can be purchased at the following locations:

- Galt Chamber of Commerce
604 N. Lincoln Way
- Express Type & Graphics
740 Spaans Drive #2
- The Coffee Shop Bakery
239 4th Street

Toll the Death Knell

Historian's Note:

I have been asked several times about what happened to the Marengo Family back in 1926. It is a story straight out of the Police Gazette or True Crime magazine. We have articles in our archives from the Sacramento Bee and the Oakland Tribune that describe the events in detail. Here is a condensed version of the tale of John Goins and the Marengo family from ninety-five years ago.



On a spring afternoon in March of 1926, an unidentified young man rushed into Justice of the Peace Lydia Ward's home in Galt with a horrific story. He had been to the home of Alexander Marengo, where he found three bodies. Judge Ward quickly called Sacramento County Sherriff Charles Ogle. From that point, the story got larger.

John Marion Goins was having marital troubles. According to John, his wife Florence Podesta Goins hated the new house he built for her. While construction on the house progressed, the Goins lived with the elder Podestas. John believed the Podesta relatives influenced his wife's feelings toward him and her opinion on the new house. Florence had spoken to Stockton attorney George McNoble about starting divorce proceedings. John felt humiliated and that created a paranoia toward everyone who influenced his wife and anyone else



John Goins



Alessandro and Mathilde Marengo and family

who wronged him over the years. He made a "hit list" and started his rampage of revenge.

At 11:40 am on Thursday, March 18, 1926, John Goins cornered his wife Florence and her sister Minnie Podesta Clark in the Podesta home basement. He shot both three times with a 38. caliber revolver. Ranch hands heard the shots and came to see what happened. Goins rushed past them and drove off.

Around noon, Goins showed up at the home of George McNoble. His son George Jr. answered the door and spoke with Goins before calling for his mother, Mamie. After stating that her husband was in San Francisco, the two got into an argument. Goins shot her in the chest and left.

Goins made it to Galt around 1:30 in the afternoon. He stopped at the home of Albena Khonke, who he had known for years. He inquired about renting a room for the night, but she had none. He continued east of town and parked in front of Athos Loll's house. The late Louise Loll Dowdell was eight years old at the time, but she remembered that her family was sitting on the porch and that Goins never got out of the car and drove off after a short time. She later believed that there was a grudge between her father and Goins. Athos Loll was on Goins's hit list.

Around 2:30 pm, John Goins arrived at Alessandro and Mathilde Marengo's home. He murdered the Marengo couple and their daughter Mary Marengo Dutra (the three sons Joe, Gus, and Tony were out working on the ranch, and the older daughter Theresa was married and gone). A later investigation revealed that there had been a multiple room

struggle with blood spattered walls and overturned furniture. Goins had three reasons for the Marengo carnage; the elder Marengos testified against Goins in a lawsuit he had with Southern Pacific, they accused him of stealing cattle, and Mathilde was a relative of the Podestas. Goins left in a hurry leaving Mary's two young children as the only witnesses to the event.

Goins made his way to El Dorado County, where he had a small ranch in the Pleasant Valley area. According to Rae McKoy Bolton, Goins stopped at her store gas pump in Clay Station on his way out of the area. By the time he got to his destination, local law enforcement had scattered to different roads leading into El Dorado County and the Goins property. No one saw him arrive, but Goins visited one old acquaintance and had dinner with another before deciding to head to Sacramento. Heading west on what is now State Highway 50, Goins was spotted by local traffic officer Carl Slaterback, and a pursuit ensued. After Slaterback fired a few rounds toward Goins's vehicle, it suddenly drifted off the road and came to rest in a ditch. Goins had taken his own life with a shot to the head.

An inquest was held in Sacramento County by Coroner John T. Skelton. All the details described previously came to light. Albena Khonke, Rae Bolton, Carl Slaterback, and a few others testified. Skelton tried to get Mary Dutra's daughter to take the stand, but she was too frightened. The Marengos were buried in the Galt Cemetery the following Monday. John Goins was cremated, and one of his sons sent the ashes back east for burial.



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