

TOWER VIEWS



January 2021



From the Archives
Liberty School

For years, anyone driving up and down Lower Sacramento Road saw this building and never knew its original purpose. The Liberty Schoolhouse was situated just north of Forest Lake Road on what was supposed to be the new site of the Town of Liberty. Back when Galt was being established, Dr. Obed Harvey and the small Town of Liberty on the other side of Dry Creek were vying for the railroad to pass through their properties. Harvey won, but there was a rumor that if Liberty

moved its town closer to the railroad line, they could have a depot and could prosper just like Galt. A few buildings and this schoolhouse were built close to the rail line one mile south of where the old town was. The depot never materialized, but the Liberty Schoolhouse continued to be used by the rural children south of Galt until the construction Fairsite School. Until its demolition some time ago, the schoolhouse was used as a wrecking yard.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Dues for the 2021 calendar year have been trickling in. We have made a resolution to be fully paid by March 1. You should have received an email reminder or a notice in the mail for dues to be paid.

Thank you to these members who have already paid this year: Matt Barsetti, Dave Hamilton, Rev. Maurice O'Brien, Marguerite Genasci, Gale Webber, Roger Watson & Ralph Cortez.

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.



2021 Historical Society Executive Board

Janis Barsetti Gray ~ President
Lyle Lagge ~ 1st Vice President
Harry Souders ~ 2nd Vice President
Liz Haglund ~ Recording Secretary
Toni Gerling ~ Corresponding Secretary
Bobbi Lewis ~ Treasurer
Dan Tarnasky ~ Historian



A Message From The President



I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday; and that you remain safe and healthy going into the New Year. When you read this, it will probably be 2021 already. We will, hopefully, be on the coattails of COVID-19, looking for an end to what we experienced in 2020; and on our way back to as normal a life as possible.

Two thousand twenty will certainly go down in the history books. I am sure 151 years ago, the new little town of Galt had no idea what would be in store for our town, our country, and the entire world. But like all negative happenings throughout our history, there are brighter skies ahead. We are working through it, moving forward, and learning from this experience. Many businesses and nonprofits have had to become resourceful in order to remain in operation.

In 2020, we lost one of our beloved members and friends, Louise Loll Dowdell. You will read more about Louise later in this newsletter, but I wanted to say a few words here. It was my honor to serve on

the Executive Board with Louise. I loved her feisty attitude; and I admired how she loved her town and its history. She worked tirelessly to help preserve our history for future generations. My family and the Loll's go back many years. Louise went to grammar school and high school with my father and his sisters; and Louise remained a friend to my aunt, Lillian Barsetti Jenks to Louise's passing. They were in the Galt High Class of 1937. My other aunt, Emily Barsetti Cippa, told me the story of how Louise's brother, Carl, her classmate, helped her with her studies in grammar school. Her first language was Italian (Swiss) and did not speak much English. Carl helped her learn and she was able to teach my father and Lillian and my grandparents English. Louise came from an exceptional family. Louise taught us so much about our history, our town, and our area. Without her, we would not have such an accurate picture of our history and stories of our past. As I write this with a tear in my eye, I say to our dear friend, Rest in Peace Sweet Louise. You earned it.

Janis Barsetti Gray

McFarland Ranch Update

We found several old tree cutting saws and decided to make use of them. Volunteers cleaned and painted the signs and with the help of Amber Velselka cut the vinyl lettering and applied the to the saws. We attached the saws on several buildings; restrooms, tank house, wood shop, carriage house to name a few.

This year in concert with our caretaker, Trevor Currier we have logged 2,553 hours to help maintain the property. However, we still have a lot to do, please come out and join us.

Many thanks to Ron Jacobson, Francis Jacobson, Earl Frey, Roger Watson, Kirk Swim, Dan Corbett, Robert Scott, Bernice Lee and Brian Fox for your support for 2020.



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Community Icon, Centurion Dies at Age 102

By Bonnie Rodriguez

Doris Louise Loll Dowdell, a lifelong Galt resident and first president of the Galt Area Historical Society, died on Thursday, Nov. 26; she was 102. Never liking to be called Doris, she was known by all as Louise. Louise's remarkable memory and recall of Galt's history and past times has been invaluable in preserving Galt's story for generations to come.

"Louise was not only instrumental in the preservation of Galt's history, she witnessed it through her own eyes," Galt City Councilmember Shawn Farmer said. "Her work will remain for generations, and it is now up to us to honor her memory and continue her efforts for future generations of Galtonians."

Louise was born just seven miles east of Galt in her parents' small home on her grandparent's ranch on Aug. 15, 1918.

When she was six years old, Louise began attending The Brown School, a one-room schoolhouse a mile away from home. Louise was a member of the last class to attend classes in the Brown School before it was moved to Woodbridge, where it was subsequently used as a grade hall.

She went to Galt High School and attended class in what was the third school building that housed GHS.

Louise married Earl Dowdell on July 23, 1937 just before her 19th birthday. They were married for 58 years, until his death in 1995.

Although the couple did not have any children, according to her grandnephew Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, Louise was devoted to her extended family.

"She loved her family and community family, and she was loved by them," Nottoli said. "I myself am blessed to have her with us all these years; she will really be missed."



Doris Louise Loll Dowdell

Nottoli said that Louise would host family gatherings on Memorial Day and Thanksgiving, "to see that folks came together. She kept them close. She knew 5-6 generations of names, and kept track of us with frequent contact."

While Louise's husband was serving in the Navy during World War II, she worked for Greyhound Lines in Stockton. She went on to work as the only cook at Galt High School, preparing food for over 300 students every day.

After the war ended, Louise was offered a job at the local Post Office, despite never having taken the civil service test. She retired in 1978 after 26 years of service.

One of the charter members of the Galt Area Historical Society (GAHS) in 1987, Louise served as an officer every year, including six terms as president until she was forced to leave her position due to

medical restrictions. Until her death, she remained as an honorary member of the executive board.

To fulfill the goal of the Galt Area Historical Society to preserve the unique history and culture of Galt, Louise led the historical society in acquiring the Rae House and turning it into a museum, and helped to oversee the renovation of the McFarland Living History Ranch.

"Louise was a remarkable person who had such recall of Galt and our area's history," current GAHS President Janis Barsetti Gray said. "She was the 'go to' person if we did not know about a happening in the past. The citizens of Galt and the area can thank Louise for the preservation of our history. She will be missed by all of us. I am so glad that many of us were able to celebrate her 102nd birthday in August with a drive by parade in her honor."

Nottoli agreed with Barsetti Gray.

"She had an amazing recall of events, people's names and dates," Nottoli said. "She knew businesses and really watched over the happenings in town, and could tell you about them years later, many years later."

Long before she became the first president of the Galt Area Historical Society, she was involved in the local community and watched it grow year by year. In 1935, she was Galt's first Fair Queen, and attended many community events with her husband, including the Fireman's Ball.

Nottoli summed up Louise.

"She had a wonderful spirit; we are going to miss her," he said.

*Article reprinted from The Galt Herald
December 2, 2020*

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Bits & Pieces

What Fundraisers Mean To Us

In 2020, we were not able to hold any of our usual fundraisers and events: Ladies' Tea at the Rae, Drive Down Memory Lane Car Show, Sip & Snack at the MAC, Pioneer Days and Pumpkin Patch, and wedding rentals at the MAC. The projected revenue would have been approximately \$47,575 with expenses of \$4195. This is a huge loss for us.

Fortunately, because of the generosity of our members during the annual appeal donations and throughout the year; and with low expenses, we will go into 2021 in better condition than most nonprofits. With this said, Toni Gerling, our Corresponding Secretary, will be sending out our annual appeal letter later in January or first of February. It has been a tough year for everyone, but we hope that you will consider helping us move forward with our mission of preserving the history of Galt and our area.

Another way you can help might be to gift someone you know, a membership to the Galt Area Historical Society. It would be nice if you know a student that would appreciate being a part of Galt's preservation, to gift them a membership.

2021 Projects

The projects we have on the books so far for 2021 are: Renovation of the Liberty Schoolhouse, continued organization of inside Rae Museum, and the McFarland Fence Painting. Of course, more projects pop up all the time. If you want to be a part of any of these projects, please let me or Lyle Lagge know.

Updates

A few updates to report, the Executive Board is still taking bids to install cameras at the

McFarland Ranch for security and to help should any liability concerns occur. We should be able to finalize this in January.

Anyone coming to the McFarland or the Rae to take photographs, will be required to pay a donation of \$40 per client and sign a Hold Harmless and Liability Form.

Rhonda Smith, our Membership Chairperson, is working on a membership drive. If you have any suggestions, please contact her at: rhonda@galtsmiths.com.

Amazon Smile

As I recently emailed those of you whose email we have, if you purchase online through Amazon, please register the Galt Area Historical Society as your nonprofit of choice. It is very easy. Login by going to Amazon Smile. Use your normal login ID for Amazon. It will ask you what nonprofit you want to choose. Just type in Galt Area Historical Society. Amazon will send us .5% of the amount you purchased to us. If everyone does this, it could help us make up some of our lost revenue.

Memorial Donations

If anyone would like to make a memorial donation in the name of Louise Loll Dowdell to the Galt Area Historical Society, please send it to: GAHS, PO Box 782; Galt, CA 95632. Louise's family will be notified of your kind donation.



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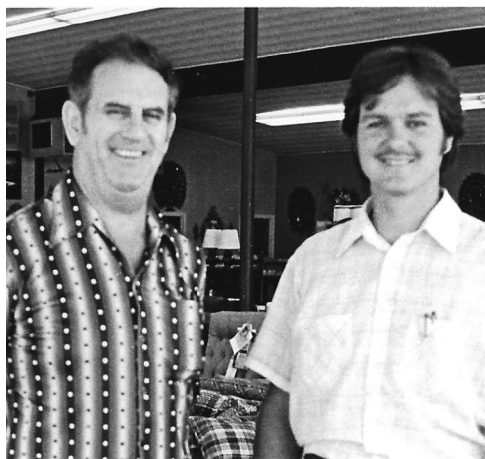
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Can you help us identify these Galt area citizens?

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

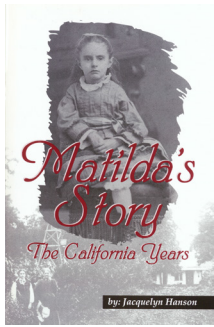
Dan Tarnasky - GAHS Historian

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



Local History Books

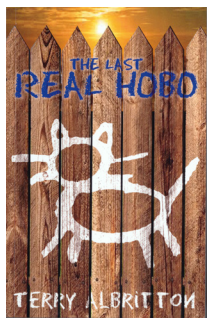
Books can be purchased at the following locations unless otherwise noted:
 Barsetti's Tasting Room, 400 4th Street
 GAHS Website: www.galthistory.org



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

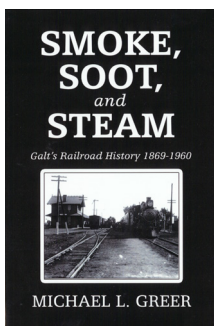
Sacramento County the last half of the 19th century.



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.

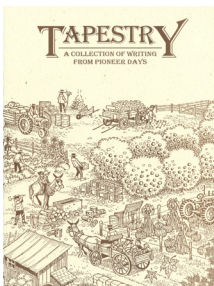
Available only through Amazon.



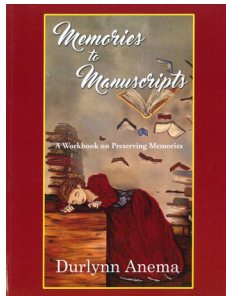
Smoke, Soot, and Steam
 by Mike Greer

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

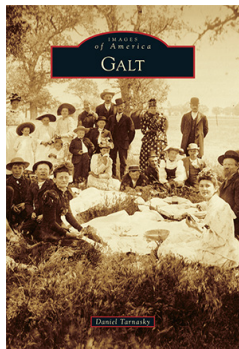


Memories to Manuscripts
 By Durlynn Anema

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.

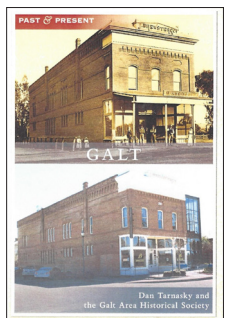


Images of America: Galt
 By Daniel Tarnasky

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.

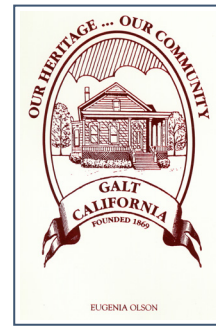


Past and Present: Galt
 By Daniel Tarnasky

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

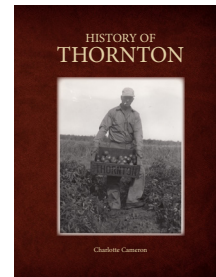
disappeared. All are still contained in the memories of those who grew up in their small town.

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

The Town's Doc

Almost every small town in the West had its town "Doc," a country doctor who visited the sick in their homes, traveling miles by horse and buggy. He was a respected leader in the community to whom folks went not only for their aches and pains but also for advice on family matters. Frederick "Doc" Harms, who came to Galt in 1898, was Galt's town doctor, and he served the community in that capacity for 50 years. During that time, he delivered 350 babies. His daughter, Beatrice Harms, wrote the following description of her father, the "Town's Doc."



Respect was strong in the men's voices as they spoke to the "Doc." As his daughter, I sensed this respect. Proudly I took Daddy's hand as we walked to the post office together. Years later, that post office flag hung half-mast at his death. A town had lost its doctor, but not before the Chamber of Commerce had given him a deserved letter of commendation.

A small-town physician-guided Daddy, as a young fellow, into a medical career. In gratitude, more remuneration as a surgeon was given up for service to humanity – often without pay and at any hour of day or night. Nor did transportation difficulty restrict getting to a patient. First starting out with a winded racehorse, it was later replaced by a Franklin Ethenone of the first Model T Fords in the town. Like Dexter the horse, the Model T got there – chuck holed country roads and all. Once there, it stayed until the patient was better or even a birth had taken place.

Even a small town "Doc" could find drama in his day! Aman – a family friend, took chloroform. It was serious, whether intentional or otherwise. He lay stretched out under our trees on a hot summer evening. Daddy worked over him. His wife



Dr. Frederick Harms

sobbed, "Don, speak to me!" Then she pleaded with my father, "don't let him die, Doctor, please!" Daddy didn't.

In those days, morphine addicts would go from place-to-place begging doctors for dope. Denied, even the most emaciated body could get supernatural strength. One fellow evicted from the office and almost forcing his way into the car where I was waiting hopped a freight and beat us to the next large town where we were going. We saw him first and dodged before he saw us. I was scared for Daddy and myself.

Daddy had a surgeon's hands. At over 70 years of age, he did a "stitches required" repair job on an auto accident victim. Those hands could, by feel, set a broken limb perfectly. This, then, without the benefit of an x-ray! There were many fractures from cranking cars.

Maternity cases were successful in spite of rural conditions. Almost no prenatal care was provided. Rarely did the mother-to-be consult the doctor until time for the delivery. Daddy's record was unblighted

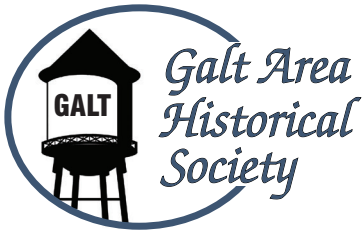
except for one where he was not consulted in time to save the baby and patient. At that, he did save one twin.

Diagnosis was made, generally correctly and without the benefit of hospital tests and laboratory equipment. We can marvel how they did it, but they did! One woman was spared unnecessary wrong surgery by turning to my father for a correct diagnosis. It proved to be a dead fetus instead of cancer as she was told it was. It was a late-in-life pregnancy, so she hadn't considered that a possible cause for trouble. Caught in time, she was saved and became Daddy's patient for years after in gratitude. Her older boys kept their mother, which they would have lost.

On the humorous side was the almost unbelievable advantage taken of the agreeable doctor. One fellow living way out in the country came after my father late at night. Daddy quietly got out of bed and ready to go, on arrival at the home, asking, "Who's sick?" The admission was made that he had only wanted transportation home. Once, a frightened, newly married woman, formerly lived in a city, phoned and bade, the doctor come out. Her request was merely to see how long it would take for him to get there if needed!

Because my brother and I were often taken to my father's country calls, we certainly had more father than a city specialist's children. We could stop by his office for a "Between-patients" visit. Sprees to a nearby city were rare and often understandably canceled. Yet they did happen – for treasured fun!

The country was bettered, not only by the physician's services but by his activities in community organizations. Daddy found time and felt it a duty to take office in lodges, the Chamber of Commerce, and even became a high school trustee. His name, his handwriting, is on my high school diploma – a treasured signature!



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