



ST. HELENA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THE ELECTROLIER
Illuminating St. Helena's History

January 2025 • Volume 23 • Issue 1

COMING UP AT THE HERITAGE CENTER!

The Turbulent History of Vineyard Valley: 2/11 @ 4pm

We're kicking off the year with a program about Vineyard Valley. Before you roll your eyes, note that this mobile home community has an interesting past. It was billed as the "ultimate park for discriminating adults", but those discriminating adults weren't buying in. One of its managers was convicted on 13 counts of grand theft.

Then came severe flooding

Vineyard Valley suffered several catastrophic flooding episodes when Sulphur Creek and the Napa River threatened to break their banks. Residents were evacuated and the city council enacted rent control. There's more . . .

Feb. 11, 2025 @ 4pm at the Heritage Center, 1255 Oak Ave., St. Helena





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Historic Barn Tour: May 2025

Last year we partnered with Napa Valley Landmarks to produce our first Garden Tour in 20 years and it was an unqualified success.

So this year we're teaming with Landmarks again to produce a Historic Barn Tour. We're still in the planning stages, so if you know of a historic barn that definitely belongs on this tour, contact us at shstory@shstory.org.



Dinner at the Museum: July 26 2025

Last year's event exceeded our expectations, so we're planning another Dinner at the Museum. Same great paella, same guitar player. **Same great cause: Keeping history alive.**

Walking Tour: Summer 2025

A walking tour of the downtown commercial district. We'll highlight an estimated 20 buildings on Main St. and side streets, with a special focus on those on the historical register.

Research Director Mariam Hansen is overseeing the Walking Tour Program.

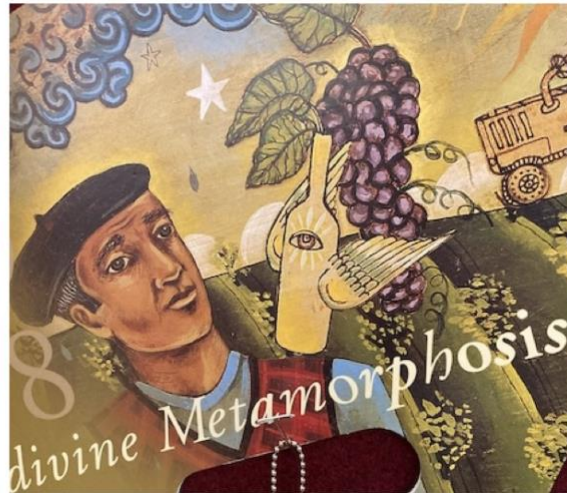


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Pictured above: The Carnegie Building, 1360 Oak Ave. is on the walking tour. It was originally St. Helena Library, begun privately as a subscription library in 1875. With funds from Andrew Carnegie, the new library was built in 1908.

Wine Auction Mementos from 1999-early 2000s
Now on view at the Heritage Center Museum



The first Saturday of every month | Noon-4pm | 1255 Oak Ave.

Beyond the Vineyards: Brewing Beer in St. Helena in the Mid-1800s



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By Mariam Hansen



A faceoff on Main Street—saloons competing for business

Ask those who've made wine—they'll tell you that beer is a critical ingredient of every successful harvest.

St. Helena has a longtime connection to beer. It's not surprising given the immigrants who made their way to St. Helena from Germany, Austria and eastern Europe where there's a beer tradition. Beer was also important in the 19th century Napa Valley when water quality was marginal.

In 1857 Fred Bender and Henry Schwartz were selling lager beer in bottles in Napa City. German Gotthelp Barth advertised his 1867 Gundlock's Bavarian Brewery bock beer. He built a new brewery in 1880, making 1,000 gallons a day.

A time when Spring Mountain Road was called Brewery Lane

The 1881 History of Napa and Lake Counties states that 63,500 gallons of beer were made in Napa County in 1880. St. Helena Brewery was built in 1870, according to historian Lin Weber. By 1874 500 gallons of beer a day were made by German Edward Fautz. The brewery was located on Spring Mountain Road just past the York Creek Bridge. At that time the road was called Brewery Lane.

The German connection: A beer tradition fueled the rise of Napa Valley breweries



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On Oct 31, 1872 Edward Fautz became a US citizen in Sacramento. He is listed in a city directory as a brewer, working for Sacramento Brewery. The next year he left Sacramento, came to St. Helena and bought the St. Helena Brewery from George Ebert. Louise Zimmerman became his bride and their son Edward, Jr was born around 1880. Napa County produced 68,000 pounds of hops in 1877, crucial to making beer.

Edward Fautz and Leopold Wert were listed in the 1880 census at the same address as brewers---both from Baden, Germany. Wert came from brewing in San Francisco and lived with the Fautzes. Eggert Girau of northern Germany also worked at the brewery.



German immigrants celebrated Turnverein Vintage Festival with beer

The German Turnverein Vintage Festival visited the brewery Sept 14, 1891. The “resort” had been decorated for the special German guests by Mr. and Mrs. Fautz. The revelers “whiled away the hours by bowling, singing and drinking.” A year later a new ad came out for “Felsen steam beer and Porter”.

The business was in jeopardy when Edward Fautz died at age 48 on July 21, 1892. The inventory of his estate lists the assets: Two brewery wagons, 300 beer kegs, 300 boxes, 3600 bottles, brewery machinery, a safe, one phaeton, one spring wagon, four horses, harnesses, plow, and a cultivator.

Louisa Fautz emerges as a savvy businesswoman

Louisa Fautz was known as a “stirring business woman” She kept the brewery going by leasing it to Emil Wackerling. She bought 20 acres in Yountville near the entrance to the Veteran’s Home and built a saloon, restaurant and summer garden. This caused a conflict with the home manager in 1894, when the home residents boycotted their canteen over a decision to withhold residents’ pensions.

St. Helena Brewery beer was not allowed at the canteen, so Mrs. Fautz retaliated by luring home residents to her saloon nearby. The Veterans Home said they were protecting veterans from “designing creatures”.

On Sept 11, 1895 the St. Helena Brewery burned to the ground. No beer was made there again. Not long after on Nov 7, 1895 Louise Fautz died at the age of 50 after a long illness. She left her property and a small fortune to her son Edward.



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George G. Daeweritz learned the brewmaster trade at Jackson's Brewery

George G. Daeweritz was born in Germany and came to this country in 1881 and located in San Francisco, where he found employment in Wieland's Brewery. After several years he became brewmaster of Jackson's Brewery and live years later occupied the same position the California Brewery. On July 3rd, 1894 he married to Emilie Riessau in St. Helena, whom he had met in San Francisco and the couple moved here.

According to the Star in 1898: A new brewery in the works

"George Daeweritz is arranging to start a brewery in St. Helena early in the spring and has three buildings in view, any one of which could be easily converted for use in such an enterprise. It is Mr.Daeweritz's intention to put in a first-class plant and make as good a quality of beer as can be procured anywhere in the state".



St. Helena Brewery and Gee Gee's Saloon



Daeweritz's St. Helena Brewery in a stone building on Hunt

He asked the city council for permission to erect a stone building on Hunt for his brewery. Upon motion, it was granted. He planned a stone building next to his saloon on Hunt Steet that would be 30 feet by 30 feet in size. The apartment in back of the saloon will be converted too.

Stonemasons were Battista Maggetti and C. Martin, with stone from Dr. Davis' quarry. The first brew was made on July 1 and George delivered it in his newly custom-built wagon. A few months later he was fined \$25 in Calistoga for peddling beer without a license.

Another German, Tillmann, Diamond Edge Steam Beer

George Daeweritz died on July 10, 1913. The following year his wife Emelie sold St. Helena Brewery to Dominic Tillmann, the agent for Golden West Brewery of Oakland. Tillmann added a large delivery truck to the brewery equipment. Tillmann began to advertize St. Helena Brewery's "Diamond Edge Steam Beer". The city council granted a liquor license to the brewery saloon on July 3, 1914.



Dominic Tillmann was born in Germany and came to America as a young man. He settled in Oakland, where he became a close friend of Theodore Gier's, a Napa Valley vintner. Dominic purchased a ranch on Howell Mountain, but later moved into St. Helena. He moved back to Oakland when Prohibition started.

Prohibition: 53 breweries affected, including St. Helena Brewery

At midnight on November 30, 1918, all breweries in the US closed down by order of the president. Making beer required wheat and barley, which was in short supply and must be used to feed the people, was the argument. There were 53 breweries in California affected by the order, including St. Helena Brewery.



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In 1923 a Prohibition raid caught Felix "Gee Gee" Freilone with alcohol at the "Old Brewery" Saloon. A week later he bought the business from A. Bruno, who moved to Calistoga and was arrested selling liquor there.

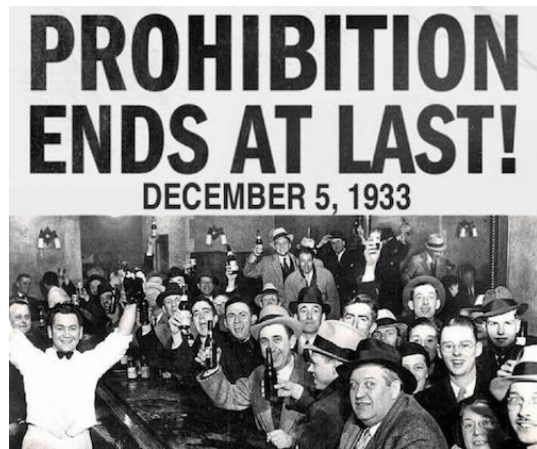
While Felix owned the saloon business, the Tillmanns owned the property. St. Helena Brewery equipment was still inside the building: a cooler, mash tub and kettle. In May 1933, Mr. Tillmann brought an investor to town with interest in reopening the brewery.



Felix "Gee Gee" and Frances Freilone

Prohibition ended in December 1933

The ghostly brewery building had been shuttered since 1918. Later in that year Mr. Tillman died, and in 1935 Mary Tillman sold the property to Helene Paetsch. Gee Gee's continued to operate—legally now.



The brewery business winds down

Dano and Shirley Mattiuzzi bought the property from Paetsch in 1957. They demolished the brewery and Gee Gee's Saloon in 1958. A caterpillar pulled the soft stone walls down.

Amid a cloud of crumbling stone, old square nails were found inside. Frank Creasey bought the stones. The Mattiuzzis built a new cocktail lounge, naming it

Dano's. And that was the end of the St. Helena Brewery.

VOLUNTEER AT THE HERITAGE CENTER!

Open the first Saturday of the month from noon-4pm

We're looking for volunteers to help staff the Heritage Center on the first Saturday of the month. Noon-4pm shifts. Contact shstory@shstory.org, 1255 Oak Avenue, St. Helena, CA 94574



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Visit the Heritage Center: 1255 Oak Avenue, St. Helena, CA 94574 • SHHS Mailing Address: PO Box 87, St. Helena, CA 94574 • shstory@shstory.org • 707.967.5502 • shstory.org • 501(c) 3 Nonprofit Organization • Tax ID#: 30-0087096

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