

Gustav Karewski

Gustav was born in Germany in 1826 and came to America around 1850. He first settled in New Orleans where he worked for Benit Brothers merchants. Like many others hearing about gold to be had in California, he headed west in hopes of striking it rich. Gustav arrived in the Sacramento Valley in 1851.

In 1855 Gustav was living and farming in the Applegate Valley, where he purchased some land and continued to mine.

Gustav moved to Jacksonville in 1860, where he re-established himself in a mercantile business. His participation in fraternal organizations and worship helped him develop a strong community of friendships.

By 1869 Gustav had acquired enough capital to open his own store. Initially he sold general merchandise but as mining faded and agriculture surged, he began specializing in large farm machinery.

In April 1869 his very close friend, Bernard Levy, died suddenly at the age of 49. His widow, Johanna, age 35, was left with four young daughters to raise on her own. Gustav became a friend to Johanna offering her support and advice. Eventually they grew close and were married. The family lived in a home on the northwest corner of California and 5th Streets.

Gustav pursued many business interests over the next 20 years, acquiring a flour mill which operated on south 3rd street in Jacksonville. He operated a farm and orchard, bought and sold properties and even continued mining. Gustav died in 1890, and Johanna once again a widow, died in 1903.

The Karewski family was one of only three Jewish pioneer families to remain in Jacksonville long after others left the area.