

GIO OBERTO & HATTIE GALLO(N) OBERTO

Guisseppi Massimo Oberto was born on December 10, 1872 in Aglie Canavese, Italy, the son of Carlo and Marie Oberto. He was one of four sons...the others were Peter, Joseph and Francisco.

Gio Oberto (who may have been christened "Giovanni") signed his name Gio and this was Anglicized to "Joe" when he came to the United States. According to family stories, Gio was about to be drafted into the Italian army and his family was pressuring him to become a priest....neither of which did he want to do, so he immigrated to the United States in 1892.

Gio spent a short time in Illinois and Wisconsin and then came to the San Juan Mountains of Colorado. He arrived in Telluride, Colorado before the turn of the century and had only \$1.65 in his pocket. He worked for one day in a coal mine across from Society Turn near Telluride and did not like it at all. He then must have gone over the mountains to the Virginius Mine above Ouray, Colorado as he was counted in the 1900 census in the Sneffels #10 District as a "miner of silver ore" residing in the boarding house at the Virginius mine. (This is the same boarding house that Paul Nardin was listed in for the 1900 census).

Gio had ambitions beyond mining and as soon as he had saved a little money, he left the Ouray area and travelled over the mountains to Telluride where he became involved in other activities. on March 1, 1901, he and M. Perimo opened a grocery store on Main Street in the Masonic Temple building. Gio was also involved in running a store on the road to the Smuggler mine (which probably included buying hi-grade ore from the miners) and he began acquiring interests in various mining properties.

On March 5, 1901 Gio married Henrietta (Hattie) Josephine Gallon, who was the daughter of Joseph and Caroline Gallon. Although the name of Gallon appears on all documents found so far in this country, the name was almost certainly "Gallo" in Italy as "Gallon" is an English name. (Many early day Italian immigrants changed their name to a more English sounding name so that they could compete for jobs with the Cornish miners) On July 29, 1901 Gio Oberto became a U. S. citizen.

Joseph Gallon, Hatties's father, had come to the United States in 1883. He was born in 1855 in Crescentina, Italy. What he did for the first few years in the United States is unknown but in 1892, Joseph Gallon's wife, Caroline, and his son, Frank, and daughter, Henrietta, joined him in the United States. Caroline Gallon was born in 1855 and her son Frank in 1874 and Henrietta in 1882.

In 1897 Josphe Gallon purchased the Miner's Saloon in Telluride, Colorado and in the 1900 census, he and his wife and children were living in Telluride, Colorado. It appears they had been in the Rico area prior to that date. Around 1903 Joseph Gallon and his wife returned to Italy to live while daughter Hattie and son Frank remained in the United States. Josphe Gallon died in 1912 in Italy.

Hattie Oberto bore two sons, Leo born in 1902 and Silvio born in 1904. Hattie made two trips to Italy with her sons to visit her parents after they returned there to live.

Gio Oberto continued to pursue various activities including mining, ranching and several businesses. He was apparently a partner in the Cosmopolitan Saloon in Telluride for a time and sold the assets in February, 1913.

In July of 1913 Hattie Gallon Oberto died, leaving her two sons age 11 and 9. She was 31 years old at the time of her death which was caused by Peritonitis resulting from a miscarriage. Gio Oberto never remarried. Hattie Oberto is buried in Telluride's Lone Tree Cemetery.

Gio Oberto continued his involvement in mining properties and at one time owned the Nellie Mine, located south of Telluride up Bear Creek Canyon. This was not a successful venture as he lost \$30,000 on it (which was a considerable sum of money for the times) and it was reported by his attorney, E. B. Adams, that it was the last time Gio personally put his own money into any of his mining deals. (The Nellie Mine was later acquired by Paul Nardin who operated it from 1929 to 1942.)

During the 1920's Gio Oberto became a partner with J. W. Eames in the "Pastime" located at 101 W. Colorado Ave (Main Street), Telluride. The Pastime sold tobacco, candy, and had a soda fountain on the main floor and gambling on the second floor. Gio and "The Big Kid" Eames also had a wholesale distributorship in Grand Junction and Pueblo. The Grand Junction branch was located on the southeast corner of 4th and Colorado avenue.

In 1924 Gio Oberto and Jake Lewis leased claims belonging to U. S. Radium Co. on Calamity Creek near Gateway, Colorado and mined them for Radium, Uranium and Vanadium. In the 1930's Gio was heavily involved in uranium/vanadium mining and he acquired most of Long Park southwest of Uravan, Colorado. He sold this to Vanadium Corporation of America for \$60,000 which was a considerable sum of money for those Depression Era times.

In the early 1930's Gio Oberto acquired a lease on the Farmer Coal Mine, north of Grand Junction, Colorado and his son Leo operated it for several years. Gio acquired many mining claims, ranches, etc. through default. He would loan money to almost anyone who asked and many times when they couldn't repay their loan, he would come into possession of the property involved.

In the mid 1930's Gio and two partners (they put up most of the money) acquired the fabled Tomboy Mine in Savage Basin above Telluride. The Tomboy had been owned by an English syndicate but had been pretty well mined out. Gio pulled the pillars in the mine, scrapped out the mill, etc. for salvage and made a fair amount of money in the process.

Gio Oberto had interests in many other mining properties including the Emma mine near Dunton, Colorado; the Silver Pick mine on Mt. Wilson, the "77 group" and Carbonero mine at Ophir, Colorado and numerous claims scattered from Utah and all over Western Colorado. He had a large ranch in Paradox Valley (Talbot Ranch) and owned a large amount of acreage at the base of what is now the Telluride ski area at San Miguel. He had interests in various retail businesses, including his partnership with J. W. Eames (the "Big Kid" who was shot and killed at his gambling house in Grand Junction in the 1930's); the Dover Hotel in Denver, Colorado; Lathrop Hardware and Hartman Brothers Motors in Montrose, Colorado.

Gio Oberto was not afraid of anyone or anything and enjoyed new experiences. When his grandson, Edwin Oberto, won a trip to Italy in 1937 playing his accordian, Gio intended to meet him in Italy but was advised that he would have trouble getting a Visa

so he waited in New York until Edwin returned and then showed him New York City; including riding the Roller Coaster at Coney Island which they both enjoyed!

Gio Oberto died of a heart attack on February 10, 1942 while in Nucla, Colorado. He was 69 years old and is buried next to his wife in the Lone Tree Cemetery at Telluride, Colorado