

ELK GROVE CITIZEN

HISTORY HAPPENED HERE

The History of Our Schools, part 5

EGUSD – ABOUT TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH

April 18, 2008

by Elizabeth Pinkerton

EGUSD, Part 5 - Seven Schools of the 1980s -- including High School # 3, Florin High School

For those of us who have been around here for a while, it is still amazing to realize that the Elk Grove district had so few schools at the start of the 1980s. There were two high schools, two 7-8 schools, one continuation school, one special needs school, and 14 elementary schools in 1980, a total of 20 schools. Since that time 44 schools have been constructed including seven high schools, seven middle schools, three continuation schools, and 25 elementary schools. For the history of the schools prior to 1980, see the past four Friday editions of the *Elk Grove Citizen* and *History Happened Here*. Today you will find out about the seven Elk Grove schools of the 1980s.

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1981 - Ellen Feickert Elementary School in Elk Grove was not far from James McKee Elementary, but in the early 1980s houses were being constructed in the area east of Highway 99 and north of Elk Grove Boulevard. There were too many students for one school, and year round scheduling was not yet an option. Mrs. Feickert had been an Elk Grove teacher with Samuel Kennedy School as her last teaching assignment. After her sudden death, her husband, Adam Feickert, donated land from the Feickert Ranch to the district for a new school to be named in his wife's honor. The school is a lasting tribute to one of Elk Grove's long time farm families. The Feickerts were generous benefactors and pioneers in what was known as the Heifer Project, a world wide people-to-people agricultural project designed to help third world countries.

1981 - Rio Cazadero High School is a relatively small school, and like William Daylor, it was designed to help students stay in high school and continue their education. The school is located in the Valley Hi area and has served the students from that region for more than two decades. The Spanish name of the school signifies the flatland meadows and the rivers—the Cosumnes River to the south and the Sacramento River to the west. It also reminds us that we are historically of Spanish and Mexican heritage in California as are many of the students and families we serve.

1985 – Isabelle Jackson Elementary School opened on Cutler Drive north of Calvine, and the name for the school brought back the name of a school built by the Florin Elementary district in 1957—before unification. Isabelle Jackson had been the superintendent and principal of Florin. Her family continues to be very active in the Elk Grove community. (*See part 3 of this series for more information about the original Isabelle Jackson school.*)

1988 - Las Flores School was originally known as Independent Study and it was located at several locations, although its purpose has always been the same. Las Flores is an alternative choice school that serves a mixed population of students including those on home study and those who work and attend school on flexible schedules. The school was formally organized long before it was given the name of Las Flores. The name means the flowers, and like the name of Florin, it reflects upon a quieter time in our past when wildflowers covered the rolling flatlands with their blooms. It also makes us remember that children, like flowers, often bloom at different times, and some need different kinds of schedules and schooling to be successful.

1988 - Union House Elementary School has a name that commemorates an old time stage stop that was the center of its rural community. Union House was not far from where the school is now—but it was on Lower Stockton Road, now known as Franklin Boulevard. Houses cover the spot where the road once curved, but generations of old timers knew this area as Union House. The stage stop was built by a man named Amos Butler in 1862. He wanted to proclaim his strong belief in the union of states during the Civil War, and that is why he called the stage stop Union House. That busy road connected the two busy fledgling cities of Stockton and Sacramento. Union House had its own post office, and the little one-room Prairie School was its place of education.

1988 - Foulks Ranch Elementary School is located on a pioneer ranch of the Elk Grove area. Euphemia Foulks was a widow with small children when she journeyed the many miles across the plains to start a new life in California in 1852. The family members spent their first winter living in the covered wagon, and in the spring they were finally able to build a small house. The Foulks legacy lasted for more than a hundred years, and members of the Foulks family were prominent in the development of Elk Grove and south Sacramento. The Foulks family house is now at Elk Grove Heritage Park where it will be restored by the Elk Grove Historical Society. Foulks Ranch School was a pioneer in school construction, existing as a portable school that was called a “hopscotch school” until the permanent building was built in 1993.

1989 - Florin High School, Elk Grove's third comprehensive high school, is not located in the town of Florin, but it was determined by the governing board that this was probably the closest to the old town that a high school would ever be built. The arrangement of the school's buildings was patterned after the University of Virginia where its first principal and chief planner, Bill Huyett, had attended. The partnership of east and west, as represented in the architecture, was a good symbol for the school's diverse population and its students of many ethnic origins and languages. The school district in 1989 now had two high schools in the north area where growth had been the greatest, but as might be expected, boundary changes began to be an expectation for families who lived within the Elk Grove school district. Whenever a new school opened, students had to be moved around, and high school boundaries were the most difficult for families. The district began a new enrollment policy with Florin High—the school opened with only 9th and 10th grades and then another grade was added each year. This policy was the least disruptive to families and to school staffs and it has continued through the years.

To be continued.....

1. History Happened Here, Book 1-River, Oaks, Gold.

2. History Happened Here, Book 2-Fields, Farms, Schools

3. Images of America-ELK GROVE

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