

Elk Grove Citizen ONLINE



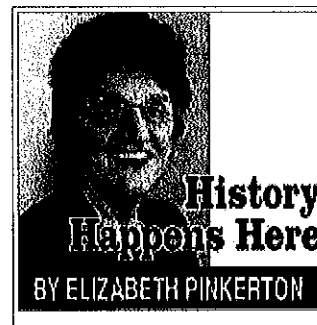
LIFESTYLE

History headlines – March

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We will get back to the EGUSD Super Grads, but today there are history headlines to address. I have no complaints – I am thrilled to see so many folks interested in finding out more about days gone by, but I just don't know how we have become such history hunters. Is it a general interest in families and genealogy and knowing more about one's self? Is it because we are wondering how people survived in the 1930s under the worst economic times this nation had ever seen? Is it trying to make sense out of this city that has grown so fast in such a short time and knowing that the more we know about how we got to where we are today, the better we will be able to plan for the future? I suspect it may be a combination of all three, but it is a real pleasure to know there are so many of us on that history path. Today, I am going to share with you some history happenings of this past month and some that are coming up.



Wilton History Group – I spent an evening last week at the Dillard School at a combination history meeting of two groups, the Wilton History Group and the Elk Grove Historical Society. EG president and Super Grad Jim Entrican created this traveling around for the society, and each month they will visit a different school site. Wilton was the first in the series, and president Jim Ring, Jr., also an EG Super Grad, presided over the general meeting, and then another Super Grad, Elma Conner, took over as the main speaker. She told about going to the long gone Dillard School that was named for her grandfather. Many in the audience identified with her country school tales because they too had gone to similar schools. The concept of one teacher with as many as 40 students, grades 1-8, and even 10th graders sometimes, is very difficult for younger folks to comprehend. But, if you have ever spent time in a one-room school, you know how the teacher got the job done – and usually, very well indeed!

Time Capsules – The concept of a time capsule has been around for a long time. It is a simple process of putting items from the present into some sort of container that you hope will last a long time and establishing a year when it will be opened. Sometimes it is 20 years, sometimes 50 and sometimes a century later is the opening time. Unfortunately, many time capsules disappear – either because they were forgotten over the years or the exact spot where they were buried is no longer known. And, sometimes, the process used is faulty and when it is opened, nothing is there except some worms and shreds. But, today, time capsules are an entirely different type of project, and we have two of them being developed in Elk Grove. The huge difference now is that they are registered with an international Time Capsule organization and GPS (Global Positioning System) is used to mark where they are. One of our local Time Capsules is that of the Elk Grove Unified School District to commemorate its 50 years of existence. The other is the one being created by the city of Elk Grove to recognize its first 10 years in 2010. I will be sharing the progress of both of these projects with you.

Elk Grove Citizen – 50 years and 100 years – Needless to say, I am very happy with the Citizen's approach to its two special birthdays. If you missed the first wrap around edition, March 6, 1909, with the regular paper a few weeks ago, you can probably still get one from the Citizen office. These will be coming to you on a regular basis, so look for them. Roy and David and their staff are looking for copies of the Citizen from 1909 through the 1920s, so if you find some old copies, let us know.

Gabriel Gutierrez – I received a phone call this week from a gentleman who lives in Livermore. As a young lad, he lived in Sloughhouse in the 1930s on several different ranches. He is trying to trace his father's story from Mexico to the farmlands of California. He sent me some of what he had written, and I was very impressed with it. He has given me permission to share it with readers. I think you will enjoy this trip into the past – and maybe we will find someone who remembers Gabriel's family.

"My father's name was Domingo Gutierrez and my mother, Eufemia. They had five children when they first arrived in Sloughhouse: my brother Heriberto (Heri), Jovita (Jovie), Lupe, Esther and Mike. When my father came to Sloughhouse, he was 37 years old and my mother was 32. My brother Heri was 14, Jovie 11, Lupe

9, Esther 6, and Mike less than a year.

"My father crossed the border into the U.S. at Nogales, Arizona in the spring of 1933. He walked across the Arizona desert and lost his way, getting disoriented as to where he was heading. He ran into a Papago Indian family that lived out in the desert. They took him in, fed and housed him for a few days, then helped him reach Tucson, Arizona. In Tucson he jumped aboard a freight train that was heading west. My father had heard that San Francisco and Sacramento were areas where work could be easily found. He did not really know where he was heading, but in the Los Angeles train station yard, he jumps unto another train that was heading north. Before he knows it, he finds himself in Vacaville, California. While in Vacaville, he was told that they were looking for workers in the Sacramento region in a place called Sloughhouse.

"Somehow he makes his way to Sloughhouse and here he is told that they needed workers at the Dalton Ranch. Here he meets other migrant Mexican workers and a Japanese foreman who was in charge of the workers. He befriends a Mexican family whose wife could read and write Spanish (my dad didn't know how to write), and she writes a letter for him to my mother, who is in Guadalajara, Mexico, telling her that her husband was working at the Dalton Ranch in Sloughhouse, California. My father had not had any kind of contact with the family for over five months. At this time, mail to Mexico would take about one month to reach its destination.

"Upon receiving the letter about where my father was living, my mother packs her bags and heads north with her five children. Once my mother and the children reach Sacramento by bus, she now has to convince a driver to take her to Sloughhouse. It was in the evening and Sloughhouse was considered to be way out of the way. Talking to various drivers, she convinces a driver, who probably felt sorry for her and the children, to drive them to Sloughhouse. Upon reaching Sloughhouse, the driver had no idea where the Dalton Ranch was located and it was late in the evening and the general store and saloon were closed. My mother, being a strong courageous person, tells him to just leave them there and she would somehow find her way in the morning. So she and the children slept that night under a prune shed that was located across the street from the general store.

"In the morning, she found someone and asked them where and how could she reach the Dalton Ranch. She was told that it was approximately three miles down the road crossing the bridge along the Cosumnes River. They walked all the way to the entrance of the ranch and there they met a Japanese man. They asked him if he knew a person by the name of Domingo, he said, Papa Domingo. They said yes, yes, and he took them to where my father was living. They were a bunch of happy campers for they had found my dad. They had a great feast eating pears, prunes and other fruits that were grown on the ranch."

Tomorrow – Stage Stop Hotel is OPEN ... Be sure to stop in and see the great exhibits!

1. History Happened Here, Book 1-River, Oaks, Gold – \$20
2. History Happened Here, Book 2-Fields, Farms, Schools – \$20
3. Images of America-Elk Grove – \$20
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