

ELK GROVE CITIZEN
HISTORY HAPPENED HERE
History of Elk Grove Schools, part 7
EGUSD – ABOUT TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH
June 13, 2008
by Elizabeth Pinkerton

This is the 7th article in the series on the history of Elk Grove schools in celebration of the coming 50th anniversary of Elk Grove Unified. We left off in early May because there were other topics that needed to be brought forward, but we go on today with Part 7 as we look back to 1995.

And in bringing you up to date on the Golden 50 scholarships, two more commitments have been made for scholarship endowments for the Elk Grove Community Foundation.

The first two scholarships of the Golden 50 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Elk Grove Community Foundation have been funded at \$10,000 each.

1 -- Mary, Al, and Marielle Tsukamoto Scholarship – by Marielle Tsukamoto

2 -- Timothy C. Pinkerton Memorial Scholarship –by the Pinkerton Family

3 – to be announced soon

#4 – to be announced soon

This means that there are only 46 left!! I am still trying to get the TOP TEN before August when the official kickoff begins. Do you want to recognize a family member or the entire family? How about a memorial for a loved one? What about one for your business or your organization? And what about scholarships funded by schools or parent groups? Let me know if you want more information – 685-0606.

1995 - Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary School was Elk Grove's first school with a student uniform policy. Parents signed contracts, students learned Spanish, and they could learn in accelerated classes. The school was named for a strong-willed farm wife who successfully ran her ranch and raised her children after the untimely death of her husband in the middle of the great Depression of the 1930s. Mrs. Morse was a member of the Bruceville community, east of Franklin, and served on the Board of Trustees of the Carroll School, a country school of the early days of the 20th century. Many family members continue to live in the Elk Grove area.

1996 - Maeola Beitzel Elementary School had an interesting beginning. The children of Arthur Butler School started the new year of 1996 by saying goodbye to their portable school and moving to the new Maeola Beitzel School. Ms. Beitzel was a teacher at both Elk Grove and Pleasant Grove schools. She dedicated her life to the teaching and promoting of reading and was an active supporter of the local libraries and literacy programs. She passed away in 1999.

1997 - Sheldon High School was the district's 5th high school and the 3rd in less than ten years. The name is from the town of Sheldon on Grant Line Road, a place that had been active in the Cosumnes River gold activity of the 1850s. Sheldon is where the wagons were made. Jared Dixon Sheldon, for whom the town was named, was an amazing adventurer, entrepreneur, pioneer, and farmer of the Cosumnes River Sloughhouse area. In 1846, Sheldon obtained title from the Mexican government to 86,000 acres, the Omochumnes Land Grant. In 1851, Sheldon was shot by gold miners who had overrun his property. They objected to the dam he had built to irrigate his crops because it flooded their claims.

1997 - T.R. Smedberg Middle School is named for Theodore Roosevelt (known to all as Ted or T.R.) Smedberg who came to Elk Grove High School as the principal in 1935. He served there for 13 years until 1948 when he took a position with the Sacramento County Schools Office. He was appointed Superintendent of Schools for Sacramento County in 1950 and stayed in that position until his retirement in 1969. Mr. Smedberg was a lifetime supporter of science activities for young people, and one of his proudest accomplishments was the establishment of the Sly Park outdoor education facility. A prominent Elk Grove resident, Mr. Smedberg was active in community affairs in Elk Grove.

1998 - Arthur Butler School was reopened at its present site.

1999 - Joseph Sims Elementary School was named for the first of the Freeport settlers who recognized the value of moving inland away from the flooding Sacramento River. Sims settled on Franklin Boulevard where members of the Sims family lived until Joseph Sims, the grandson of the founder, passed away at the age of 97 in 2000. The Sims Ranch is in what is now known as North Laguna.

2000 - Raymond Case Elementary School preserves the name of a widely acclaimed and accomplished science teacher at Elk Grove High School. Case was also the principal of Elk Grove Elementary School in the 1950s. Under his leadership, the Parents Club became active in community affairs and started what is now known as the Western Festival. He also designed the gardens at the school at the brick building that now houses Cosumnes Community Services District. The beautiful camellias, rhododendrons, and azaleas that bloom there each spring are a tribute to his leadership.

2000 - Stone Lake Elementary School is as close to the Stone Lake preservation area as a school will ever be built. The region, a natural drainage of south Sacramento County, serves as a stopping off place for thousands of migratory water-fowl. In an earlier day, Miwok villages covered the area, and it is known that Russians who were encamped on the northern California coast came to Stone Lake to trade with John Sutter and with the native Americans.

2002 - Franklin High School was the district's 6th high school, and it opened in the midst of fields south of Elk Grove Boulevard. The fields are now filled with houses that rapidly changed the landscape.

2002 - Toby Johnson Middle School was named for a long time educator and member of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, Tobias Johnson, known to all as Toby. A former teacher and principal, Mr. Johnson represented the Elk Grove and Franklin areas for 16 years on the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

2002 - Irene B. West Elementary School was named for a teacher and administrator of seven Elk Grove schools for more than 30 years. She continued to serve Elk Grove schools as a supervisor of student teachers after her retirement.

2002 - Robert J. Fite Elementary School was named for a principal in the district— Joseph Kerr, Pleasant Grove, and Franklin. Bob Fite was a very active community member until his death in 1999.

2002 - Elliott Ranch Elementary School recognizes a family that was greatly involved in cattle ranching for the first half of the 20th century. The ranchland covered the acres of this development and the land upon which the school was built.

2003 - Edna Batey Elementary School is named for a long time kindergarten teacher in Elk Grove and a lifetime resident. Members of the Batey family were active in Elk Grove business and organizations for most of the 1900s.

That's 14 schools in eight years! It is a wonder that the Elk Grove district was able to keep up with such rapid growth and so many changes. There are still 12 schools to go in this list, and that will bring us up to date to 2008.

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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