

Elk Grove Citizen  
History Happened Here  
By Elizabeth Pinkerton  
September 26, 2008  
Elk Grove Unified –The Beginning, part 3

Continued from last week...

Elk Grove in 1959 was a very different place from what it is now, and I am certain that no one who lived here then could have possibly envisioned what is here now. We are a city of more than 130,000 people and a school district that serves more than 60,000 students—and in 1959 we had 3,800 students and there were about 1,000 people living in this area. In 2008 Elk Grove Unified opened its the 9<sup>th</sup> high school and 9<sup>th</sup> middle school—and in 1959, there was only one high school and a few elementary schools. Today, we have shopping centers in many locations and a huge one is being built at Grant Line Road, but all we had in the 1950s was Main Street in what we now call Old Town. We have Highway 99 today that was constructed in 1957 as our first freeway, and it took the place of Upper Stockton Road that had been there since the gold days. Today Highway 99 has more lanes and is much, much busier than it was in the 1950s, and we also have Interstate 5 that crosses through here.

We have hotels, movie theaters, hotels, fitness centers, many, many restaurants, hundreds of businesses, huge churches, and an auto mall. And, we also have thousands of houses in fields that were once filled with cows, sheep, and horses. The Elk Grove of today would be strange to comprehend for someone who slept through the 50 years.

The majority of folks who live here now were not here 50 years ago, and many of them came here from all over the world. For those who were here in the 1950s and those whose families are part of the fabric that created Elk Grove and Sloughhouse, Franklin and Florin, Sheldon and Wilton, and our other crossroads places, the changes have been steady. They were slow by the pace of the past decade, but change has been part of life in south Sacramento County for a long time. It is safe to predict that change will continue to be with us.

As Elk Grove Unified School District embarks on its search through the past to uncover significant pieces of its history, the public is invited to come along for the ride. At the first Board of Education meeting of each month (first Tuesday), a new segment of the documentary that is being made will be shown. The team of Joe Airoso and Shawn Sullivan (both EG grads), Carley Davenport, and Elizabeth Graswich are doing an outstanding job of gathering the stories of years gone by. Students are involved through the Regional Occupational Training classes and all schools are collecting their history as a major focus for the year.

As readers of this column, feel free to contact schools if you have information, photographs, or stories that would be of help to students as they research their history. If you don't know who to call, let me know and I will provide the information for you.

In taking a little trip back to 1959 when the school district was getting organized, I found many interesting stories in the minutes from the first board meetings. Keep in mind that early records were not computer generated as they would be today, but the purple ditto sheets and hard to read carbon copies are just fine for the sake of history. I share a few of the stories with you today.

1. The new Board of Education (Jake Schneider, Robert B. Walker , Dr. Wyland "S" Cripe, James R. Guttridge, E. Henry Kloss, Robert S. Mackey, and Alfred W. Schopf)

met for the first time on May 11, 1959. They had lunch at the Cripe home and then had their first meeting in the home of T. R. Smedberg.

2. One of the first tasks facing the new Board was hiring a superintendent. They had eight of them from the independent districts that were now unified, but apparently, they chose to look out of the area for their first educational leader. They interviewed four candidates: Gordon Arlett from Roseville, Dr. Harold Schoenfeld from DeCoto, Dr. Robert Belknap from Santa Paula, and Dr. George Kibby from Los Angeles State College.
3. The new Board hired Dr. Kibby as the first superintendent of EGUSD.
4. In the minutes of the May 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, Robert Walker is listed as Board president and Dr. Cripe as the clerk. Glen Beeman, who had been superintendent of Elk Grove Union High School District, was appointed as Assistant Superintendent for Business. Present at that meeting were these high school staff members – Don Morrison, Michael O’Neil, Howard Winter, and Dave Morse.
5. Richard Leupp, Everett Bradley, and Martha Robertson were at the Board meeting representing teachers in regard to salaries. There was a large discrepancy among the salaries. High school teachers were paid more than elementary teachers, and there were large differences among the salaries of the elementary districts.
6. Surprisingly, some teachers had to be laid off. Lee School, for example, was closed right after the unification election and the students assigned to Dillard School. The Lee teachers were asked to write letters of resignation as were six others. So were the superintendent-principals whose jobs ceased to exist. This was the letter that was sent to these individuals. :

*“May 7, 1959 – Notice is hereby given you in accordance with Section 13582 of the Education Code and Section 13442 of the Education Code as enacted by the 1959 Legislature that your services will not be required by the Elk Grove Unified School District for the ensuing year.”*

One can easily conclude that these were not easy decision for the new Board members to make. However, budgetary concerns were very high on the priority list. The new Board had to find out what was needed at all the schools, especially in regard to renovation and construction of added facilities to meet the increased enrollments. Salary questions were put on hold.

The members of the Elk Grove Unified School District boards of education over the years will be recognized at a reception that is being planned for present and former board members and their families. However, some of them have been difficult to locate. Those who are from well known families of the area are easy to find. In some cases though, board members moved away and we do not know how to locate them. Let us know if you know how to reach someone who no longer lives in this area.

This is the list of Elk Grove board members over the years as kept by Arlene Hein, our first class, gold star history lady in EGUSD.

<b>Past Board Members</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Serving Dates</b>
Robert B. Walker	2	1959-1961
Dr. Wyland "S" Cripe	5	1959-1963
James R. Guttridge	6	1959-1971

E. Henry Kloss	4	1959-1963
Robert S. Mackey	7	1959-1965
Jake Schneider	3	1959-1961
Alfred W. Schopf	1	1959-1963
Frederick E. Anderson, Jr.	3	1961-1967
William "Bill" Y. Kashiwagi	2	1961-1968
Olga Batey	5	1963-1967
Richard Deller	4	1963-1964
Phillip Elliott	1	1963-1970
Ben S. Howard	4	1964-1969
George K. Haas	7	1965-1977
Dr. Edward R. Jenkins	5	1967-1971
Harold K. Miller	3	1967-1970
Jack W. King	2	1968-1977
Jordan W. Montano	4	1969-1973
Joseph R. Santos	3	1970-1975
Stanley M. Carrothers	1	1970-1972
Frank X. Sansone	6	1971-1975
Ronald C. Stinson, Jr.	5	1971-1972
Dr. Edward R. Jenkins	5	1972-1975
Fred Cooper	1	1972-1975
Ronald W. Smith	3	1975-1979
Marcie Stamm	1	1975-1983
A. Thomas Rothey	6	1975-1977
Steve Weaver	2	1977-1981
David H. Knickerbocker	7	1976-1988
Clifford L. Allenby	4	1973-1990
Albert E. Gates	6	1977-1992
Katherine L. Albiani	5	1977-1994
Alex R. Joe	4	1990-1994
Edward Harris, Jr.	3	1979-2000
Gregory N. Jones	6	1992-2000
Susan L. Aronson	4	1994-2001

<b>Current Board Members</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Started Term</b>
William H. Lugg, Jr.	1	1983
Jeanette J. Beach	2	1981
Chet Madison, St.	3	2000
Pollyanna Cooper-LeVangie	4	2001
Priscilla S. Cox	5	1994
Pamela A. Irey	6	2000
Brian D. Myers	7	1988

To be continued.....

- 1. History Happened Here, Book 1-River, Oaks, Gold -- \$20**
- 2. History Happened Here, Book 2-Fields, Farms, Schools -- \$20**
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