

The Elk Grove Hotel Register



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MARCH 10 MEETING AT RHOADS SCHOOL

Program Chairman Dave Snyder has chosen the Railroad Museum as the topic of the March meeting of the Society to be held at the Rhoads School on Monday evening, March 10, at 7:30 pm. The Rhoads School, located in Elk Grove Park, has been the site of frequent Society meetings, and it is fitting that it should be for the little school is what brought the Elk Grove Historical Society into being. The predecessor of the Society, the Elk Grove Bicentennial Commission, is credited, along with Sacramento County Parks and Recreation, with the moving and restoration of the century old Rhoads School. Members will have an opportunity on March 10 to see the finished product if they have not already done so.

In addition, Walter Gray, permanent staff member of the Railroad Museum, will speak on the Sacramento Railroad Museum. Mr. Gray will show slides and explain the complex procedures which take place as a museum is readied. Society members and guests, involved as they are with the Elk Grove Hotel Museum project, will find Mr. Gray's talk informative as well as useful for the task at hand in Elk Grove.

BITS AND PIECES

Cindy Woodward was the guest speaker for the February meeting of the Historical Society at Jessie Baker's house. Cindy told about the massive restoration project now in progress of the state capitol. Cindy is an Interpretive Historian for California Parks and Recreation in addition to being an Elk Grove native.

An extensive research is taking place locally in regard to Martin Murphy Jr. and the Murphy's Corral Incident. The Murphy place was located north of the Cosumnes River and west of what is now the Freeway, south of present Grantline Road. The capturing of horses at the Murphy place, an overt act against the Mexican government by the local residents, was the first incident in California becoming a state. It happened on June 10, 1846, four days prior to the Bear Flag incident in Sonoma. Carl Amundsen and Elizabeth Pinkerton are coordinating the research. They have been assisted by Florence Markofer, Dave Snyder, and Howard Wackman.

OLD ELK GROVE HOTEL REGISTER COMMENTS

The Elk Grove, Michigan Bar and Slough-house areas have had colorful pasts and were well known places in the 1850's. One of the reasons for this is that they were in the direct route of travel from Placerville (Hangtown) to Stockton which was an important trade center.

It is likely that this is one of the reasons that James Hall chose to build his hotel and stage stop between Sacramento and Stockton on what was formerly the old Monterey Trail and then known as Upper Stockton Road. Imagine a chance meeting of men from Sutter's Fort with men from a sailing ship anchored at Stockton Port - conversations may have covered subjects from politics of the eastern coast to tales of gold in nearby streams for the California Gold Rush was in full swing! Think of the names in the Elk Grove Hotel Register that are now part of our great California history!

The Elk Grove Hotel and Stage Stop opened early in 1850 and was an instant success as a stage stop from the mountains to the valley or from Stockton to Sacramento. Mr. James Hall was the first justice of the peace and postmaster of Elk Grove which was located in the hotel he constructed near a large grove of oak trees. The hotel was purchased in 1859 by the Graham family whose granddaughter, Mrs. Guy Foulks, was born there.

The hotel building was fire-proof throughout and was elegantly furnished on two floors. As you entered, you faced the registration desk; next were the guest parlors with rooms or suites available for overnight guests. A ballroom was used for dances on weekends. The bar and dining area were well stocked with the finest delicacies.

When James Hall left the area, the post office went to the site previously known as Buckner, at what is now Elk Grove Road and the Freeway. The coming of the railroad caused the town to move farther east in 1876. The old hotel, in the meantime, became a residence in 1887 with the owners engaged in agriculture. Zaccheus Markofer purchased it in about 1901, and it was later owned by J.M. Brown who had a dairy and a fruit orchard. The ravages of time did not destroy the old hotel, but alas, progress did. Freeway construction on Highway 99 in 1957 caused the tearing down of the old hotel, brick by brick. It was the end of an era.