



McConnell Park History

Today Elk Grove proudly boasts of having one of the most beautiful rural parks in California. Credit for this veritable paradise goes to the vision and integrity of Ms. Jennie McConnell. On her way to the post office, one spring day in 1903, Ms. McConnell noticed a man cutting down one of the biggest oaks in the grove from which Elk Grove derived its name. Being a lover of beauty and interested in preserving the trees, she was very upset by this incident. Together with her father, Thomas McConnell, and several other leading citizens, a one year option on the 33 acres of land was purchased from Zaccheus Markofer for the fee of \$1.

In April of 1903 these same concerned citizens formed the Elk Grove Park Association for the purpose of saving Elk Grove Park. This association was responsible for the sale of 2000 shares of common stock at \$5 each, with a limit of 100 shares per person. Within that year the land was purchased and Elk Grove Park, consisting of 33 acres of beautiful oaks was made available to the public. Over the years since the founding of the Park in 1904, the land has seen many challenges ranging from irrigation problems to fires.

As these and other challenges surfaced the support of the community grew stronger, and the Park and its facilities continued to grow. In the first years, the Park saw the addition of a dance platform and bandstand, baseball diamond, horse trough, and arches over the east and west entrances. In 1936 the Workers Progress Administration (WPA) built the first swimming pool in the Park. A year later a softball association was formed and lights were added to permit night softball on what is known today as the Grey Diamond. Over the last 35 years, Elk Grove Park has come a long way with the addition of the Pavilion, Strauss Island, the softball complex numerous baseball fields, the Rhodes Schoolhouse, the Youth Center, the Dog Park, BMX Bike Park, hundreds of trees, and of course the glorious old oak trees which Jennie worked so hard to save.

In May of 1952, Jennie McConnell was honored for her work in preserving the Park by the Sacramento County Grange at an 'old-time' picnic similar to those held in the "good old days". Through Jennie's vision and foresight we may all enjoy the many things that Elk Grove Park has to offer.

The information within this document was created at the time of park dedication and may not be current.