



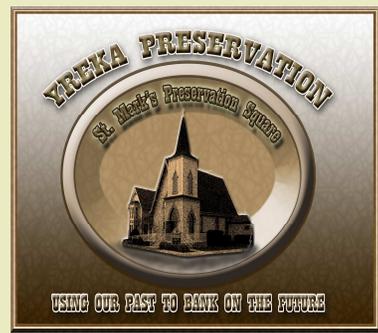
THE ELK AT COURTHOUSE SQUARE



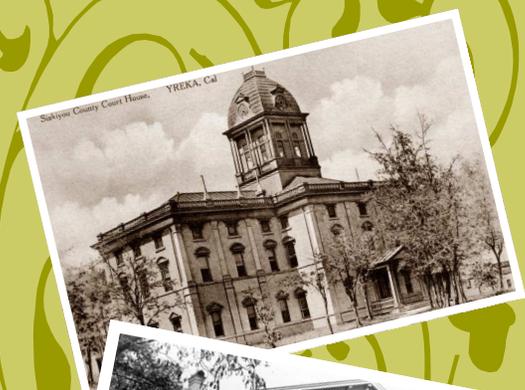
The year was 1876, the Centennial year for the United States of America. Yreka was an established County Seat and the Courthouse had seen service for 18 years. The brick building sat in the middle of “Courthouse Square” and was surrounded by trees, clover, native plants and a fence that marked the perimeter. In April of 1876 an elk was brought to Yreka to be sold to a local butcher, however, as the animal grazed nearby many folks became interested in this animal and the elk quickly became something of a public figure. Local citizens took up a collection and purchased the elk and saved him from his intended fate. Due to the fact that many citizens had financial interest in him he was soon pastured at Courthouse Square. Folks who visited the courthouse saw him regularly as he wore a path along the fence as he made his circuit through the square.

During the first days of July the townspeople’s elk managed to wander out of the square and headed out on his own. However, he was found and brought back. The courthouse elk had a rather unfortunate destiny as he became part of the menu at the Centennial celebration barbecue that was held on July 4, 1876 along with other meats.

Please visit:
St. Mark’s Preservation Square
 300 Lane Street
 Yreka, CA 96097
www.yrekapreservation.org
 Published by: Yreka Preservation
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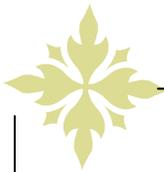


SISKIYOU COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE YREKA, CALIFORNIA



A BRIEF HISTORY OF COURTHOUSE SQUARE

Take a walk around the original Siskiyou County Courthouse Square to glimpse the original buildings. As you read through the chronicles in this booklet you can almost experience moments of the bygone eras.

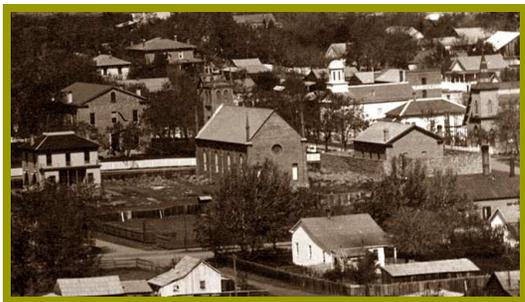


The second California mother lode happened right here in Siskiyou County. It was 1851 and in six weeks the flats that were to become the city of Yreka were teeming with miners. Within one year the Siskiyou County Government was officially organized on May 12, 1852. Yreka's first courtroom was located at a local saloon and place of lodging, known as the Veranda Public House. It served as a courtroom and offices during the day, and saloon and lodging at night.

During the winter of 1856 the Board of Supervisors called for bids to construct a permanent Court House on the Public Square located between Fourth and Oregon Streets. The building was to be a two story structure built of brick and stone. The building was completed within one year at the cost of \$15,497.00. This original building remained unchanged for almost 40 years.

In 1871 there was considerable excitement in this courthouse when women's suffrage came to Yreka! Susan B. Anthony addressed a large audience within these walls and gave a passionate speech on behalf of her beliefs. One of the local papers, *The Yreka Journal* provided an interesting editorial on this particular event. The editor seemed to be completely agreeable that women should be paid for equal work, but certainly disagreed on Anthony's premise that marriage was akin to slavery.

One can enter the original 1857 courthouse building today by entering through the main doors and continuing straight back to the wooden staircase. When standing near this stairway you are in the original main hallway to the building.



Circa 1888



THE COURTHOUSE GOLD DISPLAY IN THE RICHEST SQUARE MILE!



Following the discovery of gold in Yreka, and during the next few years that followed, miners wheedled an estimated \$60 million worth of gold out of the ground, and within those years Yreka became known to many as "The Richest Square Mile!"

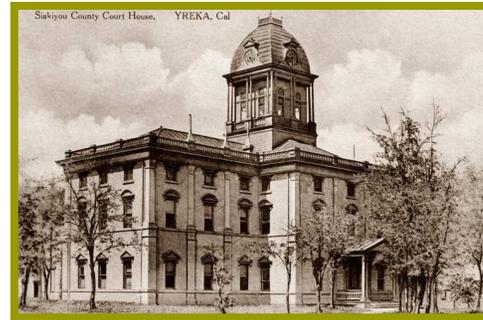
The Siskiyou County Gold Display was located in the foyer of the courthouse and was the only known collection of its kind and a portion of this same collection was even shown at the 1939 World's Fair in San Francisco, California at Treasure Island. The gold was owned by the County of Siskiyou and was accumulated a little at a time over 100 years by donations and purchases. The large nuggets in this amazing collection were stolen in January of 2012.

THE HALL OF RECORDS “ADDITION”

During 1953-54 another major building project was undertaken at the courthouse. The total cost for this new courthouse expansion, dubbed the Hall of Records Addition was \$286,213.42. A much larger, building was constructed ~ right in the exact front of the original courthouse and wings obscuring the view and replacing the front lawn and public area! The original Hall of Records still stands, however it was entirely swallowed up by the larger structure, and only a portion of one of the original walls can be easily identified when inside the building where one can actually see the original bricks from 1910.



THE EXPANSION AT COURTHOUSE SQUARE



In 1896 major improvements came to the courthouse with added wings for increased space to the original structure which stands in the center. A lovely cupola was added along with cornices and porticos over the doors and windows along with a new roof. Electricity and telephone service also came to the courthouse. Upstairs in the original portion of the courthouse the first courtroom is still in use today. It can be recognized by the dual copper-clad doors to the entrance.

In 1895 Yreka was still the wild west. By chance, there happened to be four men in the county jail all charged with murders. This was not common to have four awaiting trial for different murders and it stirred emotions to the point of action. By literally sending the sheriff in the wrong direction, a group of nearly 200 masked and hooded men descended on the jail and quickly took out the accused one by one and strung them up on a railroad tie placed between the limbs of trees in front of the courthouse. After the lynching was complete a hand printed note was pinned to one of the victims that read: *“Let this be a warning! It is hoped that all cold blooded murderers in this county will suffer likewise. Respectfully Tax paying citizens. P. S. Officers: Be wise and keep mum.”*

THE HALL OF RECORDS



In 1910 the county added a new and expanded Hall of Records just south and adjacent to the existing courthouse. This updated courthouse and lovely Hall of Records was a strong source of civic pride for many years.

THE STATE OF JEFFERSON

By 1941 many residents of Siskiyou County and neighboring counties to the north in Oregon and to the west and east felt seriously neglected by their respective state governments. A movement began, some in jest, others with firm belief, to create a new state. This area is rich in minerals and natural resources and the need for good roads to retrieve these resources was sorely needed. A media frenzy ensued with reporters from San Francisco and elsewhere reporting on the events. The residents of The State of Jefferson seceded every Thursday and stopped cars along the highway to hand out the "Proclamation of Independence."



On December 4, 1941 on the Courthouse Square the newly formed State of Jefferson held the inauguration of their governor, Mr. John L. Childs of Crescent City. Yreka was named the Capitol of this new fledgling State of Jefferson. The secessionist plans captured the attention of the nation and reporters and film crews from RKO, Movietone Newsreels, and Pathe came and filmed the events of the day. The Courthouse Square was jam-packed with people, and a parade marched down the main streets of town to the Courthouse for this event!

However, this was only three days before the fateful events on December 7, 1941. Following the bombing at Pearl Harbor and the entrance of the United States into World War II on December 8, Governor Childs of The State of Jefferson issued a statement that, in the interest of unity to fight this new war, the State of Jefferson would end.

The independence and self-sufficiency of this former movement is still alive in our area today. You can see many signs and symbols of the State of Jefferson and many still hope the state will rise again!

