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Pleasant Grove House sinking into the dust of history



THE PLEASANT GROVE House was a point of exchange on the Pony Express between 1860 and 1861. It is located on Green Valley Road across from Pleasant Grove Middle School. Village Life photo by Krysten Kellum

Pleasant Grove House, across the street from Pleasant Grove Middle School on Green Valley Road in Rescue, is slowly sinking into the dust of history. Surrounded by chain-link fence and minus a few outbuildings, the former road house and Pony Express stop is deteriorating daily and no one can stop it.

The house was built in 1850 and originally had two barns that could accommodate 100 horses. One of

the barns had a 1,1600-square-foot dance floor upstairs. It also had a blacksmith shop. Pleasant Grove House was used as a way-station for travelers and, during the 1860-1861 run of the Pony Express, it was used as a station for riders to swap out their horses.

“Lillian Dixon (owner of the house from 1954 until her death in 1999), explored every potential protection from the government and heritage associations to preserve the house,” said Clarksville Historical Society member Bill Teie. “but it has been modified so much through the years that there is really no national historic significance.”

A marker designating Pleasant Grove House as California State Landmark No. 703 was placed in front of the house in 1960. Next to the landmark is a plaque placed in 1937 by the Native Sons & Daughters of the Golden West. The plaque recognizes the house as the only Pony Express relay station between Folsom and Placerville. Riders with the Central Overland Pony Express exchanged their horses at the barn and continued westward to Folsom or east to Placerville through Rescue, Dry Creek Crossing and Missouri Flat.

Despite the landmark status, the house is not on the state or national Historical Register. Vandals, squatters and time have caused significant damage to the inside of the home. Several outbuildings have already been taken down and the current owners, attorney Linda Parisi and Sharif’s Jewelers

owner Mahmoud Sharif, have a caretaker on site. Neither Parisi nor Sharif were available for comment about their plans for the property.

“It is in such bad shape it would take hundreds of thousands of dollars to save it and taking it to the ground is about all anyone can afford to do to it,” said Teie.

The Clarksville Historical Society is not planning to try to claim the house or preserve it and knows of no other group that is planning to do so. “It’s in private ownership,” said Teie, “and people can do what they want with their own property.”

There is speculation that a grapevine near the house may be of 1870’s stock, making it one of the oldest in the state. “We’ve already taken cuttings,” said Teie, “and when the vine bears fruit we can have the DNA tested.”

DNA testing is planned to be done by Mike Skinner, owner of Skinner Winery in Rescue and Somerset and a descendant of the Skinner family that built one of the first wineries in El Dorado County.

Using a drone, videographer Marilyn Gilham made a video of the history of Pleasant Grove House, which was shown at the April 30 Clarksville Historical Society meeting.

“We aren’t sure how we will use the video, yet,” said Teie. “This is just the first one. All we can do now is to take pictures of the house to remember it.”