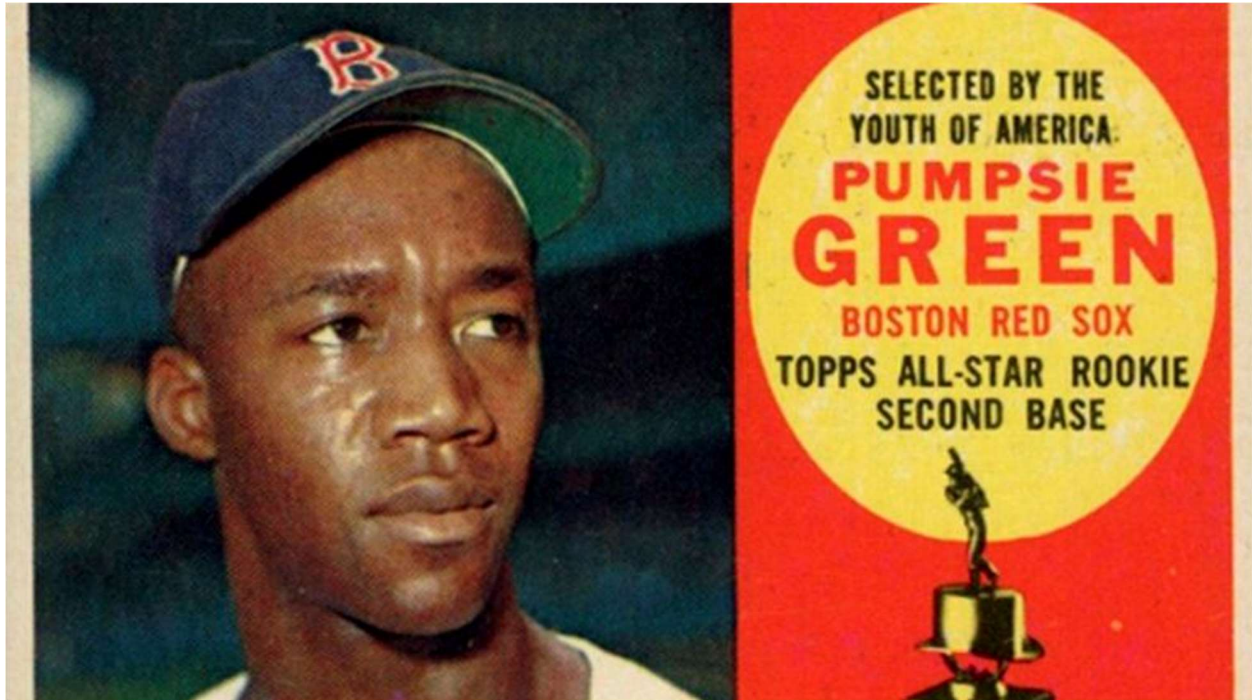


Sparks from the Anvil

December 13, 2019



Please attend our annual meeting to vote for officers, hear news about the society, and enjoy an enlightening program, Pumpsie Green: The Man Who Integrated the Boston Red Sox. The program will be a tribute to Pumpsie Green, featuring speaker Pete Elman, along with Arif Khatib, and Nat Bates.

Join the society at its annual business meeting as we focus on the great baseball player Pumpsie Green, who was the first African American to play with the Red Sox, in 1959 – 12 years after major league baseball first integrated. Mr. Green, who died in 2019, attended El Cerrito High and later lived in El Cerrito.

Elman is a Bay Area lecturer and writer who knew Mr. Green. Khatib, founder of the Multi-Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame, and Bates, a longtime Richmond councilman and former mayor, were also Green's friends. Bates also played on El Cerrito High's baseball team.

The talk will start after a brief business meeting and election of officers.

The meeting starts at 3 p.m. Sunday, January 26, with the talk starting around 3:20, at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moeser Lane. For information, Dave Weinstein, 510-524-1737, davidsweinstein@yahoo.com.

Sit on the Elijah J. “Pumpsie” Green Bench. An anonymous donor – who we happily acknowledge is a member of the Historical Society -- donated funds to refurbish a bench at the El Cerrito Library--with a bronze plaque in honor of Pumpsie Green. The bench, which is mobile, is often found near the fireplace. It has an inscription in honor of this well-known baseball player and late resident of El Cerrito.



This is the tie plate found by Dan Holzner.

Discovering railroad history beneath our feet. Recent months saw a discovery relating to railroad history in the city of El Cerrito.

It's amazing what an observing eye can find.

The discovery is of an old railroad tie plate, probably a relic of the Santa Fe Railroad that ran along what is now the Ohlone Greenway. The Santa Fe route followed that of the older California and Nevada Railroad, which first came through what is now El Cerrito in 1885.

Dan Holzner, who has assisted the Historical Society many times by video recording our programs and other historic events, reports on his discovery of the rail plate:

"I found this old railroad plate sticking out of the ground on the Ohlone Greenway after the spring rains washed it clear earlier this year. It sat there day after day as I walked past it, always thinking I should pick it up and take it home, but it was big and heavy and dirty and I was always on my way to work at the time, so it just stayed there in plain sight month after month.

"It's amazing to me nobody else saw it and took it, since it's obviously quite old and clearly a relic from the old railroad days of the right-of-way that is now the Ohlone Greenway, maybe from the old C&N railroad."

(Tom Panas of the Historical Society and a railroad history buff, who examined a photo of the find, determined that the tie plate was of later vintage, probably from the Santa Fe.)

Dan goes on: "But I guess nobody else was much interested in a rusting old piece of junk sticking out of the ground, so it stayed there for half a year until I happened to be riding past on my bike one time, and I couldn't make any more excuses so I popped it in my bike basket in back and took it home.

"It was found just yards away from the silver-painted relic Union Switch and Signal switchbox that is just down the greenway on the left as you walk from the Del Norte BART station to the Safeway."

Pioneer Reception Planned for Spring of 2020 in El Cerrito. The El Cerrito Historical Society is planning a celebration of our Pioneers: those who were born in, or very near, El Cerrito before 1940.

These Pioneers grew up here and their families were part of the early days in El Cerrito.

Our first Pioneer Reception was held at City Hall in 2014. We interviewed the Pioneers and wrote a short biography of their life story. We would like to do the same for this event for inclusion in the El Cerrito Historical Society's archives.

If you, or someone you know, qualifies as part of this group of Pioneers please contact Tom Panas via email at tmpanas@yahoo.com. You may also print out and mail this form to:

El Cerrito Historical Society

P.O. Box 304

El Cerrito, CA 94530

Person submitting this form: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail _____

I have asked this "Pioneer" for permission to suggest his/her name.

Name of Pioneer:

Contact (list at least one)

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail _____

Did you know the Fogertys or Stu or Doug? An author wants to hear from you. We hope you all enjoyed our Creedence Clearwater programs in 2019. We again thank presenters Alec Palao, who also organized our exhibit on the early days of the band, and Joel Selvin.

Now we have the opportunity to help another musical historian.

John Lingan is a young author in Washington D.C. who has written a well received book about country music, "Homeplace:A Southern Town, a Country Legend, and the Last Days of a Mountaintop Honky-Tonk," and articles about music, among other things.

Now he is turning his attention to Creedence Clearwater Revival, and says he has a contract to produce a book about the band.

But let's hear from John directly:

"My notion is to skip all the litigation and acrimony that followed the group's breakup and instead focus on 1959-72. I want to show that these four young guys really embodied and experienced the whole scope of 1960s music, from doo-wop to the British Invasion to the Haight/Fillmore/Woodstock era and into the growth of 'album rock' and FM radio.

"To that end, I want to really understand and convey who they were as people. I'm already in touch with Doug and Stu and have their participation as interviewees. I certainly intend to make at least one significant research trip to El Cerrito, likely early 2020.

"Right now, I'm trying to line up as many interviews with people who knew the group in their early days, especially anyone who knew Tom, since he's a fascinating character in his own right and his story hasn't been told as the others' have.

"Anyone who played music with them, who knew them as the Visions or the Blue Velvets, who worked or partied with them in high school, or who can connect me with members of the Fogerty family--these are the people I'm trying to reach. My contact info and full publication history is available on my website, www.johnlingan.com."

The El Cerrito Historical Society produces two publications, the Forge, which is a print publication, which we aim to produce four times a year, and Sparks (from the Anvil), an email publication which we aim to produce monthly. Both hark back to one of El Cerrito's original settlers, William Rust, a blacksmith who worked at his anvil producing, among other things, sparks.