

AUTHENTIC SCHOOL ITEMS

The Elgin Schoolhouse State Historic Site features half of the house's original items. The rest are authentic to the time period.

SCHEDULE & TOURS

- ◆ Open Thursday through Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm, April 1 through October 15.
- ◆ Donations are accepted.
- ◆ Tours can be scheduled by calling (775) 726-3564.

FACILITIES

- ◆ Primitive restrooms and a picnic table are available.
- ◆ No services are available on the 36 miles of graded gravel road (the Kane Springs Road) from Highway 93 directly to Elgin. Kane Springs road is not suitable for those towing trailers or for motor home.
- ◆ No services are available (gas, food, etc.) in Rainbow Canyon or at Elgin.

REMINDERS

Please make your visit, and that of others, enjoyable by observing the following:

- ◆ Pets are allowed on leashes outside the schoolhouse.
- ◆ Please respect wildlife.
- ◆ All artifacts are protected by state law.
- ◆ Please use trash receptacles.



Elgin Schoolhouse State Historic Site

CALIENTE, NEVADA

C/O Kershaw-Ryan State Park

Post Office Box 985 • Caliente, Nevada 89008

(775) 726-3564

LOCATION

Elgin School House is located in eastern Nevada, 18 miles south of Kershaw Ryan State Park on State Route 317.



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CALIENTE, NEVADA



DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

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The Elgin Schoolhouse

CALIENTE, NEVADA

A HISTORY

Several generations of school children were educated in this little building, which covered grades one through eight from 1922 through 1967. The one-room schoolhouse at Elgin in eastern Nevada was built by Reuben Bradshaw, whose father, James Bradshaw, homesteaded a ranch in 1880 at the lower end of Rainbow Canyon, which is now noted by signs for Highway 317.

During the 1870s, a number of ranches were settled along Meadow Valley Wash, which flowed all the way to Moapa, where it joined with the water from Warm Springs and formed the Muddy River.

There were never any large numbers of children in the area until the Salt Lake, San Pedro and Los Angeles Railroad was built through Rainbow Canyon in 1903. At that time, small communities arose every five miles, where there was a “siding”—a stop for trains and passengers. At some of the larger sidings, a small depot was built where passengers could board or leave the train, or get a hot meal.

THE NEED FOR SCHOOLS

Panaca, about 36 miles north of Elgin, had the closest school to the Rainbow Canyon ranches. With only wagons for transportation, many of the ranches were too far away from Panaca for children to be hauled to school each day. Consequently, children were home-schooled at individual ranches or taken to a neighboring ranch to be home-schooled. In 1890, the “Bullionville” school district was established and a schoolhouse was



built about five miles below Kershaw Canyon (now Kershaw-Ryan State Park). Even this schoolhouse was too far for wagons from the lower end of Rainbow Canyon, and residents petitioned for many years for another school

A Brief History of Sidings

A siding was a railroad stop where steam engines would take on water and get messages that had been delivered from Western Union telegraph lines.

This was prior to the days of radio communication. Sidings were given various names, and many are still shown on maps today, even if there is nothing left at original sites.

When Union Pacific Railroad—which bought out the Salt Lake, San Pedro and Los Angeles Railroad line in the early 1920s—went from steam-powered to diesel-powered engines, and then to radio communications on the trains, sidings were abandoned.

By 1988, the last of the railroad workers’ homes were removed from Nevada’s sidings of Carp, Elgin, Etna, Acoma and Barclay.

district that would provide for a teacher—if not the building.

In 1905 the first school was built in Caliente, north of Elgin, and the Meadow Valley District was established. It would still be a few years before a building was provided, so students met in an out-building on a ranch. In 1921, Lincoln County had funds for a schoolhouse at Elgin, one of the larger sidings along the railroad. James Bradshaw donated seven acres of his ranch across Meadow Valley Wash for the building. His son Reuben built the schoolhouse, which was completed in 1922. Two years later, an addition to the building provided a small apartment for the teacher since there was no housing available at the siding. After this, finding teachers was never a problem, since the teachers were paid well and housing was provided—but every few years, a new teacher would have to be recruited since the young female teachers often were persuaded to marry local ranchers’ sons.

The last year the schoolhouse was used was about 1967, when the last student reached eighth grade. By that time, school buses had been picking up children and transporting them to schools in Caliente and Panaca. The building reverted to private ownership and became a personal residence for a Bradshaw family member.

After he moved out in the 1980s, the building stood vacant for many years. In 1998, family members pooled resources and the building was restored to its original appearance. Volunteers opened the building for tours by request, but the Bradshaw family knew that more people could visit the building if it became a public facility. They offered it to the Nevada Division of State Parks in 2005, and the State Legislature approved its acquisition. It became a State Historic Site in July 2005. ■