

Dedication of
**Alexander Hamilton
Willard Park**

**Dedication Program &
Schedule of Events**

- 11:00 am -

Welcome... Elaine Wright

EGCSD Board President

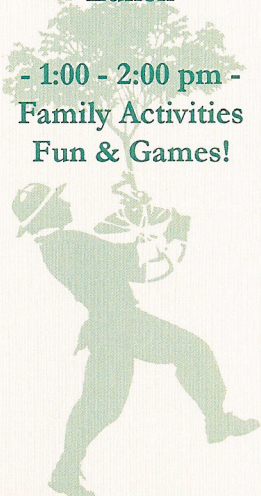
**Introduction of EGCSD
Board of Directors and Staff**

Special Presentations

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

- 12:00 - 1:00 pm -
Lunch

- 1:00 - 2:00 pm -
**Family Activities
Fun & Games!**



Alexander Hamilton Willard • 1778-1865

An element of lasting national history found its way to the Franklin area when Private Alexander Hamilton Willard, one of the last surviving members of the Lewis and Clark expedition, settled there with his family.

Mr. Willard's relocation to California came after a lengthy career as a private in the Corps of Discovery, the official name of the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Willard joined the Corps in 1803 and became one of nearly 50 to join Captains Lewis and Clark in their mission to map the West in 1804.

Not much is known about Willard's upbringing. What is known is he was born in Charleston, New Hampshire on August 24, 1778. He left his hometown sometime in the 1790s, served time in the army, and was intrigued by the prospect of heading west with the Corps in 1804.

Willard was a large man, referred to as "the giant from New Hampshire," physically fit, strong, and a talented blacksmith. His service career included several life-threatening experiences – the most documented of which was his court-martial and conviction for falling asleep while on sentry duty during the first month of the infamous journey. It was an offense that could have been punishable by death, but instead he received 100 lashes, leaving scars on his body for his life.

When the expedition ended, Willard was chosen as the government blacksmith for the Sauk and Fox Indian tribes. Later, Willard married and moved to Platteville, Wisconsin. His family grew to include seven sons and five daughters. Two of his sons were named for his friends, Meriweather Lewis and William Clark.

In 1832, Willard, at the age of 54, fought alongside four of his sons in the Blackhawk War. Even at that age, he was considered a robust and formidable soldier.

In 1849, Willard's eldest son headed west to explore the gold fields of California. He wrote home about the lush valley of Sacramento. In 1851, at age 71, lured by the memories of his experiences out West, Alexander Willard moved his family to California. They settled in the area south of Sacramento, on lower Stockton Road, then known as Georgetown. The town later came to be known as Franklin.

Alexander Willard lived out the remainder of his life in Franklin, dying on March 6, 1865. His grave remains at the Franklin cemetery at Franklin Boulevard and Hood-Franklin Road. A plaque placed there by the Daughters of the Founders and Patriots of America recognizes him as the "Giant of Georgetown."

In a nod to our community's past and the nation's history, the Board of Directors and staff of the Elk Grove Community Services District (CSD) are pleased to dedicate a park in honor of Alexander Hamilton Willard.** 🇺🇸 🇨🇦 🇺🇸

** Portions of this profile come from the files of Elizabeth Pinkerton and "The Giant of Georgetown," published March 14, 1984 in the Elk Grove Citizen.