

## HISTORY OF PARKFIELD

Parkfield, population 18, the V6 Ranch and surrounding areas offer birds and grasses, trees and critters, blue skies and gorgeous sunsets all in their natural setting.

Parkfield is located in the coastal mountain range of Central California surrounded by rolling hills covered with oak trees and prominent mountains. The first settlers of this land were the Yokut Indians. They came here to hunt and gather acorns, naming the valley in which Parkfield sits the "Cholame", meaning "the beautiful one". The first white settlers arrived in the area in 1854 and were followed by a steady stream of homesteaders. By the turn of the century, quicksilver and coal had been discovered, and the hope for oil discovery had transformed Parkfield into a robust town of 900 people.

Parkfield's prosperity was, however, short lived. The quicksilver mines depleted and the coal mines flooded, eventually leaving only the homesteaders behind. They too ended up abandoning the area, unable to yield living off the land. Today, only a handful of ranchers and farmers remain to enjoy a beautiful and tranquil valley boasting four lovely seasons and bountiful wildlife. Thanks to the natural beauty with the help of the Varian family, Parkfield has risen in popularity once again.

Parkfield's claim to fame as "The Earthquake Capital of the World" has attracted geologists and earthquake enthusiasts for years. As you enter Parkfield, you will cross the San Andreas Fault. There are ongoing studies of what it takes to have an earthquake, carried by the United States Geological Survey, than any other place in the world.

The United States Geological Survey has been keeping a watchful eye on Parkfield since the last big earthquake in 1966, in hopes of using data gathered in the area to predict earthquakes. Parkfield has traditionally had a fairly large earthquake (approximately 6.0 Richter scale) every 22 years. Scientists saw this pattern and flocked to the area in hopes of gathering data from an earthquake of this magnitude. Since no one knows when and where an earthquake will occur, Parkfield gave the scientists at least a little bit of a start.

1989, Parkfield had a rebirth. Parkfield's name came to be due to its park like setting, a setting which had since weathered away. Jack Varian decided to change all of that. Jack's son John had recently graduated from Cal Poly and had returned home. Together they set out to rebuild Parkfield. "We decided we needed a restaurant first and started with the Parkfield Cafe. It was built without a kitchen and we would just barbeque right in front of the guest outside on a pit. We started with a log cabin cafe because that was the only thing we knew how to build. For the décor we just used everything from old metal junk to mom's ribbons from horse shows, to branding irons from old friends and reclaimed building materials. It all came together so well people always think it has been here for 100 years."

Due to the success of Parkfield Cafe as a destination, the concept of building a lodge came to be. In 1991, Parkfield Lodge was established. Another log cabin building, this intricately designed structure houses 9 guest bedrooms and a gathering room boasting a beautiful rock fireplace as its centerpiece. They also converted a Shell water Tower into a two story suite and a local post office into a two bedroom suite.

Parkfield also has a one room school house that is thriving to this day. Our community hall acts as a hub for the people of the community. Thanks to the Varian's work, Parkfield is once again living up to the name the settlers gave it so long ago. We are blessed to call it home and would love to share our home with you!