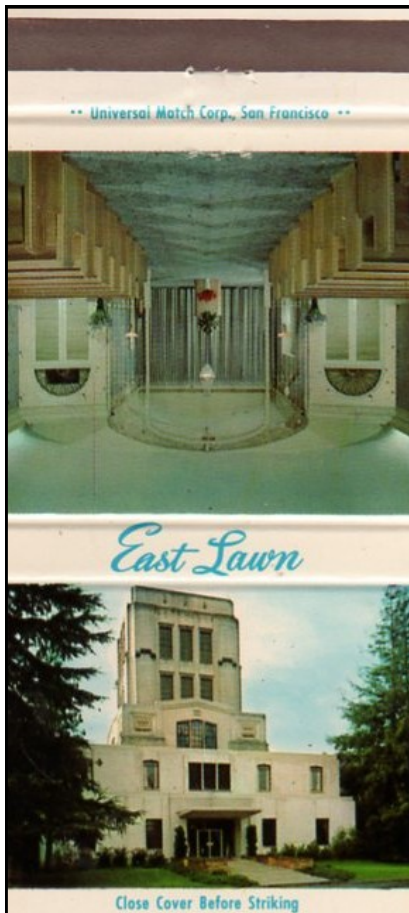


Sacramento's East Lawn

by
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An odd topic, perhaps, but it seems to me that every community of any size seems to have its 'upper tier' cemetery, and East Lawn has been Sacramento's for decades. The East Lawn Family of Cemeteries and funeral homes began in Sacramento. The original East Lawn Memorial Park, comprising forty acres and containing an historic and lovely chapel, was dedicated in 1904 at Folsom Boulevard and 43rd Street.



From a country farm at the turn of the century, originally called Twin Oaks Farm, to a thriving business of more than nine decades, East Lawn's development as an outstanding Sacramento business can easily be traced, as the establishment is quite proud of its years of service the area.

In 1912, when the first Sacramento streetcar was to replace the customary horse and buggy, East Lawn donated the rail property to the system and gave permission for a turn-out to be placed in the front of its flower shop. Street cars served the midtown area until the 1950s.

The familiar mausoleum and administration buildings were built in 1926. Every worker hired for the construction was eventually given permanent employment by the company. At that time, all repair and mechanical work was done on the property. East Lawn had its own water tower, gravel pit, and an irrigation system for the grounds. It also grew its own fields of flowers, which were being grown for cut flower bouquets.

East Lawn received praise from the City of Sacramento in 1989 for its donation of property for the establishment of the East Lawn Children's Park located at 42nd Street and Folsom Boulevard. In 1990, East Lawn added the beautiful, new El Dorado Mausoleum addition.

Today, the original East Lawn in Sacramento has grown to include four other different sites:

- East Lawn Sierra Hills Memorial Park and East Lawn Mortuary, 5757 Greenback Lane, Sacramento, has 77 beautiful acres and was founded in the 1950s.
- South East Lawn Memorial Park and Mortuary, 9189 East Stockton Boulevard, serves the South Area, including Elk Grove. The 140 acres have indoor and outdoor mausoleums and grave spaces. The cemetery was opened in the 1950s, and a mortuary was added in the 1980s. A beautiful new, full service mortuary was constructed at the location in 1994. The most recent project at the facility is the Mountain View Mausoleum completed in the fall of 1999.
- East Lawn's Rancho Cordova Mortuary was opened in 1989 and serves a wide region, including Rancho Murieta. East Lawn also owns and operates Andrews and Greilich Funeral Home at 3939 Fruitridge Road in Sacramento, and the prestigious Albert Brown Mortuary in Oakland.
- In addition, East Lawn celebrated its grand opening of the new Sierra Hills Pet Cemetery, 6700 Verner Avenue, in Sacramento, adjacent to Sierra Hills Memorial Park, in the spring of 1992. This endowment care facility of six dedicated acres overlooks the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Although this may seem to be a morbid subject to some, there are a number of collectors who collect cemetery and funeral home covers. I recently began to collect that latter, myself, in fact. I don't have any separate stats on cemetery covers, alone, but Sid Barlow, England, reported having 2,782 Funeral covers in January; some of the, at least, must also be cemetery covers.

Where does this interest come from, anyway. Well, let me speculate...The covers in this category have a higher proportion of "Fancies"...Matchorama, Cameo, Foilite, etc. That's bound to attract some collectors in itself. If you throw in Funeral covers, then you have a pretty big category, so that adds variety, availability, and the ever-present challenge to the mix.

And, on the more abstract side of the voucher, I've normally found that cemeteries is a topic that most people have definite feelings about...totally apathetic on the one hand ("I don't care what happens to me after the Big Shucking") or very concerned on the other ("I want to be buried on the far west end, in plot # 635, right next to my pet pit bull, Spanky. You know the section, "Elysian Fields," the one with the running stream and the plastic owl in the tree."). Frankly, I don't know if that has anything to do with making the category attractive to a collector...but it might.

[I still have a little room left, so...] On the Anthropological side, you know, the functions of burial ceremonies, cemeteries, etc. are mainly for the relatives and friends left behind, not for the deceased at all. When I was in college, I had a job once as a *sleep-in* night watchman in a mortuary here in Sacramento. I learned quite a bit! Did you know, for example, that you can buy caskets with spring mattresses? *[think about it!]*. The occupations of mortician, funeral director, and cemetery administrator are old and honorable ones, though, in every society that has those jobs. We may arch an eyebrow when someone introduces himself or herself as such a person, but, at the same time, think how sensitive we are to the upkeep of our cemeteries, the proper disposition of someone's ashes, etc. Not to demean these occupations, but it's something similar to garbage disposal...we know it's a necessary job, but we'd rather someone else do it!