las Plumas

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PORTOLA CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL!

Portola has sported five different names, the first four within three years: 1905, Mormon; 1907, Headquarters; 1908, Imola and Reposa, and from 1909 on, Portola. Reposa was rejected by the U.S. Post Office because it was too similar to Repressa, located at Folsom State Prison. With the 140th anniversary of the discovery of San Francisco Bay by Gaspar de Portola, Virgilia Bogue, daughter of Western Pacific survey engineer, Virgil Bogue, suggested "Portola." This name was enthusiastically accepted.

The north side of Commercial Street, Portola, about 1912, view to west.

Lying at the east end of Humbug Valley, beautiful stands of pine timber once stood where the city of Portola now sits. According to early resident Uldena Long Fonda, the trees were logged off around 1906, sawn at the Turner Mill and hauled to Loyalton on the Boca & Loyalton Railroad. The Boca & Loyalton was built about 1902 across Sierra Valley to the future site of Portola to tap the bountiful timber. Totten, Gibson & Scanlon also had a mill a few miles west, when Portola was known as Mormon. In its life, Portola has had five railroads: Sierra Valleys Railroad; The Boca & Loyalton; the Nevada, California & Oregon (the N.C.O. bought out the Sierra Valleys Railroad and later extended it as far as Clio); the Western Pacific, and now, the Union Pacific.

Baxter, Straw & Storrs Construction Company was awarded the contract to build the Western Pacific Railroad through Portola about 1906. From that date on, Portola continued to grow. In 1909, Charles Gulling's Reno Mill & Lumber Company platted a town site and laid out named streets. On August 14, 1909, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors adopted Gulling's map of the proposed town, giving official birth to Portola.

Commercial Street, Portola, viewed to the east in 1910.

Roberts Lumber Company plunked down on the north side of the river in 1910 and attempted to lay out a different town in competition with Reno Mill & Lumber Company. They hoped to draw construction to Main Street near the Durham Hotel.

During the 1910s there were many itinerant laborers, therefore, there were many saloons, a number of bordellos and many brawls, some ending in mayhem. Several notable murders also occurred during this tumultuous time period. According to one old timer, "No lady ever walked on the north side of Commercial Street." During this period, the young, raw, frontier-appearing town flourished. All manner of stores and services were available.

The first water supply to the town was from a creek near a blacksmith shop. Archie Davis started delivering water in barrels in 1908 on a horse-drawn sled. In 1910, Ed Lane formed the Portola Water Company and piped in water to businesses and residences.

The Grizzly Electric Company, owned by R.B. Young, began business in 1915 at a cost of $9,900. A complaint was filed by a group of Portola citizens in 1917 charging that electric rates were discriminatory. Not wanting to be discriminatory themselves, they also filed a complaint with the State Railroad Commission against the Portola Water Company. As late as 1928, electricity was only available to Portola at night. A "washing machine campaign" was put on by the electric company to get a certain number of people to buy electric washing machines. Afterwards, electricity was available on Monday and Tuesday mornings for washing and ironing. The first telephone exchange was established in 1911. In 1918 the exchange had eighteen subscribers.

The Portola Baseball team, organized about 1911, played Quincy, Greenville, Loyalton and many other towns in Plumas and Sierra counties, besides the Celtic Athletic Ball Club of Sacramento. In 1919 the Portola Chapter of the American Red Cross set up to serve all the soldiers passing through on Western Pacific trains. In one week alone they cared for over 1,000 soldiers. This service was kept up all summer.

Portola Water Works, about 1909.

The first newspaper in Portola began publication on May 12, 1910 as the Portola Gazette. This was a tiny four-column, four-page sheet with completely hand set type. In 1912 it suspended operations due to lack of advertisers. After the Gazette folded, the Portola Headlight came on the scene. Only three issues later, it too was defunct. The Portola Sentinel began operations in 1916 and after about one year, it too folded. The first volume of the Portola Reporter hit the newsstands in May 1927 and continues publication today.

In 1925, the Portola High School was completed at a cost of $22,000. Unfortunately, on January 21, 1926, it was burned to the ground, the result of a defective flue.

In the early morning hours of August 24, 1928, the town awoke to a large fire. Twenty-six homes and businesses

were destroyed. Among the businesses lost were the Portola Laundry, Jones McGowan's Pool Hall, Esterby Cafe, Grizzly Electric Company, and the Golden Hotel. Because the water system was down due to the installation of new water and sewage facilities, a 400-man bucket brigade was formed to quench the conflagration. By 9 a.m. it was all over. The same year, wood boardwalks were replaced with cement sidewalks.

Remains of the south side of Commercial Street on August 24, 1928.

In the early 1930s, there were thirteen saloons on Commercial Street with all kinds of gambling: dice, Chinese Lottery, blackjack, poker, and slot machines. Three restaurants were open twenty-four hours a day and dances were held every Saturday night. Loggers, lumbermen, railroaders, Grizzly Creek Ice Company employees, Walkermine miners, highway workers and prison guards to watch the prison road laborers were all disposed to come to town on Saturday nights to blow off steam.

The road to Reno until the 1930s was graveled and took two and one-half hours to travel, even if you didn't get a flat tire. During the big snowstorm of 1911, snow-bound residents received their mail the old fashioned way; by skis.

Beckwith Street grade crossing before construction of the Gulling Street Overpass in 1954.

Plumas County Free Library was established in 1915 and in 1922, Portolans read 5,516 county library books. As a consequence, a room was found in the business section of town in October 1924, cleaned, painted, and equipped with a custodian. Twenty-five years later a branch library was built with its dedication on March 17th 1950. The library continued at this spot until the completion of the new library in 1993.

On May 16, 1946, Portola citizens voted to incorporate, making Portola Plumas County's first and only city. In 1954, the Gulling Street Overpass was completed, easing the previous congestion of the railroad grade crossing.

Today, many travelers on Highway 70 pass by the historic downtown section of Portola, not realizing the city center is across the river. Despite this, Commercial Street and its side streets make a worthwhile visit, with numerous shops, historic buildings, and of course, the Western Pacific Railroad Museum located at the old Portola Depot.

With the construction of a dam to form Frenchman Lake, the flooding of Grizzly Valley creating Lake Davis and the expansion of the golf resorts to the west, Portola was given a boost in the form of tourism. Now third in Plumas County population, Portola also serves as a bedroom community to Reno, Nevada.

The Plumas County Museum, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year as well, joins the rest of Plumas County

Commercial Street during the winter of 1952, view to west.

The Portola Brass Band is shown ready to play at a baseball game about 1912.

in wishing Portola a happy and prosperous Centennial!

Be sure to drop by the Portola Library to view the artifacts displayed by the Plumas County Museum in honor of the centennial and don't forget to visit the Williams House Museum on East Sierra Street at the east edge of Portola and the Plumas County Museum, behind the courthouse in Quincy.

Portola High School senior Amy Half's 2009 rendition of a 1917 Portola town logo.

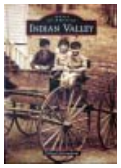
William's home and Shell Station, now the Williams House Museum and Portola Visitor Center, East Sierra Street.

12 Years of Living History

Our 12th Annual 4th Grade Living History Program was a success due to the efforts of Ginger Gramm and Supervisor Lori Simpson and a number of others. Their super organization and delivery of this program and the cooperation of the Plumas County Fair staff and our docents made it a wonderful experience for everyone. Plus, it is a favorite of the kids! Thanks go to Frank Augugliaro, Linda Batson, Mary Bird, Marilyn Britton, Ann Castaldini, JoAnn Filippi, Laure Gage, Ginger Gramm, Julia Hungerford, Samuel Lawson, Bob Lowrey, Gaye Porter, Vickie Robbennolt, Norberta Schmidt, Dave Simms for gold panning material, and Karen Hicks and the QHS "S" Club for help with Living History.

From the Plumas County Museum Bookstore

A partial list of regional publications available from the Museum. Call 530-283-6320 to place an order. Checks, credit cards accepted. All orders must pay sales tax and shipping. Check our website at www.plumasmuseum.org to purchase these and other titles. Be sure to tell us if you are a Museum member to receive your 10% discount.



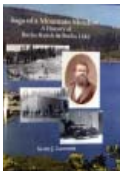
Indian Valley, by Richard McCutcheon. $19.99

The Chinese in Northern California, by Barbara Pricer. $9.95

Plumas County Historical Cookbook. $5.00

Fariss & Smith's 1882 History of Plumas County. $19.95 (HC)

Destruction of the People, by Coyote Man. $11.95



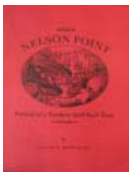
Saga of a Mountain Meadow: Bucks Ranch & Bucks Lake, by Scott Lawson. $19.99

La Porte Scrapbook, by Helen Gould. $12.00

Trails of the Feather & Yuba River Regions, by Scott Lawson. $19.99

Indians of the Feather River Region, by Donald Jewell. $13.95

What Grows Here, by Carol Young. $24.95



Nelson Point, by David Matuszak. $19.95

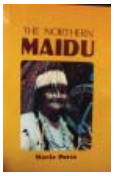
California's Beautiful Mohawk Valley, by Ruth Martin & Jane Long. $6.95

The Giant's Roar, History of Badger Hill Mine, by Scott Lawson. $7.95

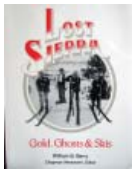
Original Patriots, Native American Veterans, by Chag Lowry. $40.00

Too Many Irons in the Fire, by Cheryl Conard Haase. $34.95

Lake Almanor Story, by Tim I. Purdy. $24.95 (HC)



The Northern Maidu, by Marie Potts. $7.95



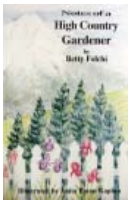
Lost Sierra, Gold, Ghosts & Skis, by Bill Berry. $25.00

NEW!!!!

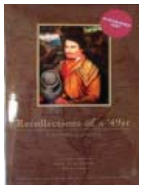
The Look of the Elephant, by Andy & Joanne Hammond. $18.95

Following the Beckwourth Trail, by Andy & Joanne Hammond. $9.95

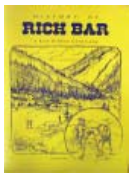
Diary of Sarah Dean, 1864-1865, by Sarah Dean. $14.95



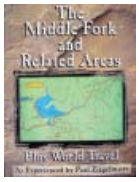
Notes of a High Country Gardener, by Betty Folchi. $15.00



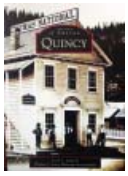
Recollections of a '49er, by Edward Washington McIlhany. $36.95 (HC)



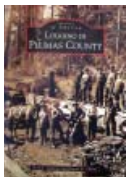
Rich Bar, A Blue Ribbon Gold Camp, by Jim Young. $12.00



The Middle Fork & Related Areas, by Paul Ziegelmaier. $17.95



Quincy, by Scott Lawson. $19.99



Logging in Plumas County, by Daniel Elliott & Scott Lawson. $19.99

Above: Taylorsville & Greenville students make candles during Living History.
Below: Mrs. Dovi's Quincy kindergartners enjoy a museum tour this spring.

Above: Portola's C. Roy Carmichael's 4th graders enjoy wood stove biscuits and butter they made themselves during Living History Days.
Below: Chester students make lemonade the old-fashioned way.

A group of Pioneer Elementary students from Sweet Home Daycare visited the museum this May.

Right: Several participants on the Cemetery Tour ponder graves at the Stiver Cemetery, near Quincy.

Artifacts Donated

We would like to thank the following people for their generous donations:

Randy Barlow: Election card for John Donnenwirth for County Clerk and Auditor, dated August 28, 1934; Randy Beck: Cookbook published by The Quincy Ladies' Aid Society; circa 1920; Robert & Sally Bowen: Hand-made pine wood sewing trunk on wheels, circa 1929; Linda Brennan: Set of 18 industrial size hand tools for use on the Spanish Peak Lumber Co. Engine No. 2; Marilyn Britton: Glass and marble doorknobs, brass switch plate, brass lamp piece; Ruth Broadwell: Four cookbooks: New Delineator Recipes, A Modern Kitchen Guide, Reliable Recipes from Clovis, and Anyone Can Bake; Millie Burris: One Gestetner mimeograph, one Royal typewriter used by donor while operating the Quincy Credit Bureau 1954-1967; one Southeast Asian glove box circa 1900, given to donor's aunt; Pete Colbert: Double end chain saw bar, used in the 1950s; Ernest J. Curnow: One memory book entitled "Young Idiots and Old Fools," stories from the life of Ernest J. Curnow of Quincy, 1938-1990; Maudie Faure: Two circa 1900 photographs of Beckwourth; Jann Garvis: Plumas Independent October 19, 1904; Plumas National January 26, 1889 and February 2, 1889 newspapers; Leonard Halvorsen: Collection of 185 plumb bobs and various hand tools, some from his father, Lewis Halvorsen, of Norway; Marion Harris: Collection of letters from Edward Henry Metcalf of Spanish Ranch to his cousin Martin Metcalf; also two photographs of Frank Metcalf and Augusta Metcalf, all dated 1864-1871; Pat Henrici: Sterling silver insignia pin awarded to the donor for completion of nurse's special training in flight from the Air Force, 1953; Becky Herrin: Johnson & Johnson Handbook of First Aid, Household and Toilet Needs, 1914; Josefa Higuera Livermore Chapter of D.A.R.: Collection of school related material on William Samuel Firmstone, 1904-1910; Stuart Kirk: One amethyst mustard barrel; Joan Normington: Three postcards and a list of people titled "Teachers;" list of former teachers and students at Quincy High School; Dave & Sandy Norton: Oak tree section that grew around a hay scythe on the old Hambly Ranch three miles west of Quincy; John Probst: Three audio tapes and one VHS tape of musical productions in Plumas County, 1970-1994; Plumas County Facilities: Nine blueprints for the Plumas County Geriatric Hospital and Public Health Center, 1963; Plumas County Recorder: 621 cubic inches of deeds to Plumas County for rights of way, etc., 1876-1953; Tim I. Purdy: One copy photograph of the Spring Garden Terminal of the Walkermine Tramway, 1936; Jeffrey Hays Van Gilder: One silver double-blade razor, one complimentary toiletry box from the Hotel Olympic, S.F., one B&W photograph of Quincy, circa 1923–1935, two volumes of "Picturesque America," 1872 and 1874, one Abstract of Title to the Wormley Lot, Quincy, 1921, Quincy Junior-Senior High School Yearbook 1962, six records pertaining to Abstract of Title to lots in the Goodwin Addition to Quincy, 1905 to 1919; Ron Voss: Three framed B&W photographs of Clover Valley Lumber Co. operations, four VHS tapes of the timber industry in Plumas County, two maps of the timber units belonging to Quincy Lumber Company in the Sloat and Butterfly Valley areas, 1927.

Memorial Donations

When a Memorial Donation is made in a loved one's name, a Museum Memorial card is sent to the family, the person's name and biography is entered into the Perpetual Memorial Volumes, and the donor's name is added to the Memorial. Since the last newsletter, donations have been given to the museum in memory of the following people:

Murl Chamberlain, *Sun City, AZ,* Patricia Crosby, *Quincy,* Tom Curnow, *Quincy,* Loana Gakle, *Greenville,* Ivy Grover, *Quincy/Hawaii,* Barbara Huntington, *Oroville,* Don Johns, *Quincy/Oroville,* Margaret Johns, *Quincy/Oroville,* Catherine Jones, *Quincy,* Lena McMaster, *Quincy,* Darrell Miller, *Quincy,* Zola "Beezy" Stokes, *Quincy,* Wanda Tibbetts, *Quincy,* Ruth Van Gilder, *Quincy,* Linda Wymore, *Quincy.*

New Members

Thank you to all our new and renewing members!

Individuals: Chris W. Skow, *Quincy*; Stephanie McMillan, *Quincy.*
Family: Christopher Bolton, *Quincy*; Chris and Carol Rush, *Quincy*; Susan and Michael Donald, *Quincy.*

Monetary Donations

We can use all the financial support you can muster, and thank these generous people for donating to the Museum's monetary fund:

Mr. & Mrs. Richard G. Anderson, Barry & Peggy Bailey, Linda Batson, Dorrie Beck, Jim & Billie Bequette, Joe & Linda Brennan, Marilyn Britton, Leda Brown, Stanley & Marjorie Chan, Linda Corley, Marc Coventry, Joseph & Nancy Dembosz, Robert & Janice Edwards, John Ellison, Jim & Kay Farris, Gerry & Jo Ann Filippi, Larry & Patricia Fites, Charles & Margaret Goodart, Susan Haren, Norman & Freelene Herring, Marianna English Hoolhorst, Sue Jackson, Jim Morris Flying Service, Elise Kroeber, Pat & Camille Leonhardt, Shirley McLean & Family, B. A. McMillin, Joyce & David Minor, Bobby Jo Monroe & Mom, Marvin & Zona Morgan, Thelma Olsen, Susan H. Payne, Orphie & Kay Pierson, George A. Poole, Gaye Porter, Raymond & Rozanne ReBell, Elmer & Helen Roberti, Chris & Carol Rush, Jack D. Saunders, Kent Stokes, Dorothy P. Stricker, Kathy & Jon Taylor, Geron & Marilyn Thornquist, Hays, Lorin & Heather, Jessica, Jacob, Quin, & Jack Van Gilder, Russ Whipple, Cora White, Linda Wilder, S. A. & Jacqueline Yoacham, Louise & Stanley Young.

Don Johns, Sr. Memorial

As we noted in the last Las Plumas newsletter, one of the Museum's greatest volunteers, Don Johns, Sr., 93, passed away in January. Don was a charter member of the Museum Association, a long-time Museum Board Director, a volunteer on the Variel Home restoration, and was indispensable in cleaning and staffing the Peppard Cabin at the county fair every year. The family held a memorial gathering for Don on Saturday, May 23rd at the Museum that featured a number of Don's photographs of Plumas County scenes and some of his favorite artifact collections. Over 150 of his friends stopped by to pay their respects, reminisce and share stories of their experiences with him. If any one could be called "Mr. Plumas County," it would be Don Johns, Sr. Also, your generous donations have provided a bench in memory of Don and Margaret at the Plumas County Fairgrounds.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Since our newsletter in November 2008 we have had a number of international visitors from India, Italy, South Africa, England, Australia, Canada, and Ireland along with quite an assortment of out-of-state visitors.

George Yeager

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of George Yeager, one of our dedicated docents. George and Nancy Yeager became docents in 1997, with George helping greatly with our Archival Collection inventory. Our sincere condolences go to his family. A memorial will be held July 25 at the Museum, with all his friends invited. Please call for information.

Fairgrounds & Museum Moving Ahead on Railroad Project

The Spanish Peak Lumber Company Railroad crew have been busy at work on the log car donated by the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum. Shown at right are Jay Ricks and Ken Myers as they install the springs on the rear trucks. The fair's new manager, John Steffanic is very excited about the project and is looking forward to a mutually beneficial relationship with the Museum. We hope to have a short section of track laid out this summer so that visitors can see the restored engine chug back and forth!

Judy Dailey "Art on Tile" Exhibit, May - June

We have had some of Plumas County's finest artists showing on the Stella Fay Miller Gallery this year, and a great line up for the remainder. Judy Dailey of Meadow Valley will be wrapping her superb show up in mid-June, after which Elissa Barlow and brother-in-law Gary Barlow will open their exhibition titled "Special Places - Special Faces." Elissa's work is in gouache and mainly of people, while Gary's is watercolors of regional landmarks. Their works will be on both the Main Floor and the Mezzanine for July and August. Pat Holland will show her mixed media for September and October, while John Sheehan and Heather McQuarrie will team up for November and December.

Notes from the Director - Scott Lawson, Museum Director

Greetings to the membership during our 40th year! The Museum was officially dedicated on June 7, 1969, although it has been open since October of 1968. Since the last newsletter some great improvements have been made at the museum. We now have a new back porch, an exhibit shed for our wagons and sleighs, a new paint job on the 1875 Hall Home, and great looking yards and gardens. More improvements are scheduled, but with budgetary constraints, it may be awhile yet before we see them.

The annual Women's History Lunch in March featured Plumas National Forest Supervisor Alice Carlton who spoke on Cornelia Pinchot, social activist and wife of the Forest Service's first Secretary. On May 16 we gave a tour to a group of 24 people to the cemeteries and other historic sites around American Valley. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, along with the great lunch provided by Sweet Lorraine's. A big thank you goes to Linda McDermott for arranging the whole program. Don Dailey gave his always interesting and informative Dinosaur & Fossil program on May 22nd, and we also had a number of school and senior tours, as well as helping out the Quincy History Club with their research on local businesses for the Quincy Wine Walk on June 5.

We are planning three field trips this year utilizing Plumas Transit bus service. Our first tour is to the Chester-Lake Almanor area. The other two will be to the Sierra Valley and La Porte. Be sure to check the newspaper for further information, or call the museum.

I would like to thank volunteers Chris Bolton for all of his work in scanning our photo collection and his great ideas to promote the Museum; Tracy Ball for his store inventorying; Carol Paoli and Stephanie McMillan for researching; Marilyn Tolen, Bob Lowrey, Courtney Browning and Lori Simpson for staffing the Museum on certain Saturdays. Also, Melissa Shelton, Mary Bird, DeAnne Mosley, Ken Green, Karen and Tom Ogelsby and family for Museum yard work.

Thanks also to our "Portola Crew": Jon McKay, Matthew Zazueta, Scott Keogh, Nick Eckenroad, Mario Valadez and Gary Smith for their work on the wagon shed. John provided much of the material and the crew, and Feather River Materials donated gravel.

Be sure to put *YOUR* Museum on your summer planning schedule and stop by for a visit!

P.S. We lost our email list. Please contact us at pcmuseum@digitalpath.net to relist your name for emailings of our newsletter.

2009 Exhibits on the Stella Fay Miller Mezzanine

January – February: **Bill Peters, *Wildlife Art***
March – April: **Marilyn Hoffman, *Retrospect***
May & June: **Judy Dailey, *Multi Media Art on Tile***
July & August: **Elissa Barlow & Gary Barlow, *Special Places - Special Faces***
September & October: **Pat Holland, *Mixed Media***
November & December: **John Sheehan & Heather McQuarrie, *Photos & Mixed Media***

Hours: Monday - Friday 9-4:30, closed Sat., Sun., holidays.

TRUSTEES:

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Don Clark, Graeagle
Patrick Cook, Graeagle
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Ginger Gramm, Greenville
Jerry Holland, Quincy
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Doug Miller, Chester
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www.plumasmuseum.org

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