



Downtown Quincy, 1935.

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QUINCY Q TURNS 85

On June 8, 2020 the large white Q overlooking the town of Quincy, California quietly turned eighty-five. This is the story of how it came to be.

On Tuesday, November 8, 1934 at the third regular meeting of the then, Plumas County High School, student body president Charles Engstrom of Keddie appointed a committee of six students – Chester Egbert, Dan Baldwin, Bill Hamblin, Bob Thompson, Bob Peckinpah, and Kermit Myers – to clear the land on the hill behind the school so that a Q might be built.

Although the high school at this time was officially known as Plumas County High School, it was generally known by the students and community as “Quincy High,” and by the time of publication of the 1936 yearbook, the name Quincy High School had become the official moniker of the school.

Soon after the November meeting, the boys packed axes, shovels, and a wheelbarrow up the hill and began work clearing the location of stumps and manzanita. However, on

December 6th, the weekly high school report in the Feather River Bulletin stated that work on the large Q was progressing slowly due to very little help from the boys and chided the students, writing:

There doesn't seem to be much school spirit behind this project, and if it is to be completed we will have to have a little more co-operation. Let's show a little more school spirit and get behind this project. The work is hard and perhaps they are afraid of it.

With those fighting words ringing in their ears, the boys obtained a “cat” and on Saturday, December 8th drove it up the hill and accomplished a considerable amount of work on the Q – going so far as to declare that if they had the “cat” for a full day, they could finish the job, which they nearly did. The boys also went on to opine the lack of support from their fellow students, and that “more would be appreciated.”

Work on the Q was nearly nonexistent over the harsh winter but resumed in March

and continued sporadically through spring. In April, the boys announced:

Work on the 'Q' is still progressing and it will be completed soon. Not, however, if the grammar school boys keep on taking rocks from the completed part to build fireplaces.

Finally, on June 8, 1935 (the day after graduation), several of the boys, feeling industrious, climbed up to the Q carrying back-pumps filled with whitewash to put the finishing touches on the Q and give it a good coat of paint!

On the 13th of June, the boys, justifiably proud of their effort to designate the location of Quincy High School, officially announced through the local paper, “The ‘Q’ is finished.”

Although a caterpillar was used to haul rocks up the hill, most of the work was done by hand and completed by only 10 boys (mostly sophomores and all fellow basketball athletes) who further reported:



Bob Peckinpah, Bob Thompson, Kermit Myers, and Dan Baldwin take a break while working on the Quincy Q, 1935.

Many boys who said they would help, failed to show up when work was to be done.

So hats off to Dan Baldwin ('36), Franklin Beard ('37), Bill Dory ('35), Chester Egbert ('37), Charles Engstrom ('35), Bill Hamblin ('35), Kermit Myers ('37), Bob Peckinpah (sophomore), Bob Thompson ('34), and Bill Werner ('32), for giving Quincy its distinctive Q!

By the 1940s, an annual whitewashing of the Q by the outgoing freshman class had become a tradition, and the rough rocks originally placed by the boys in 1935 served as the Q until 2018 when a major remodel was finished by alumni of the Class of 1966.

Through the effort, support, and work of numerous

volunteers and members of the community, during a three year project, the old Q was re-designed, framed, filled in with the original rocks, and a new, permanent, concrete Q was poured in May 2018.

The Q has stood the test of time and 85 years later still shines as a symbol of Quincy High School and the community of Quincy itself.



The Q June 8, 2019.

Museum Reopens – and Closes Again!

Exhibit Yard Remains Open



Exhibit Yard Entrance.

Like thousands of businesses across California, the Museum closed to the public on March 19, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On June 12th we were allowed to reopen our doors to the public, and just as we

saw an increase in visitation as families began to travel, another state-wide closure of businesses, including museums, went into effect, and the Museum was closed once again on July 13, 2020.

However, we are pleased to announce that our outdoor Exhibit Yard remains open to the public during our normal business hours, Tuesday – Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM.

Here, guests can wander the yard and gardens of the 1878 Variel Home and glimpse into the abode of an early pioneer family, visit a rustic miner's cabin, and an authentic blacksmith shop, and view a multitude of historic agricultural, ranching, mining, and logging equipment, including several hydraulic monitors used to wash mountains of dirt during the gold rush, an historic 19th

century horse-drawn hearse, and a stamp mill that was once used to crush gold ore.

An informational table laden with brochures, maps, and other Plumas County and Museum information has been set up for the convenience of our visitors, and if guests require help in purchasing items from our Museum Store or have questions about the outdoor exhibits, they need only ring the provided desk bell.

We encourage everyone to visit responsibly and abide by all precautionary measures while visiting our outdoor Exhibit Yard. During this time, our regular admission fees have been waived, but donations are greatly welcomed and appreciated.

For more information, please contact the Museum at (530) 283-6320.

Grave Occasion 2020 Bites The Dust

This year's *Grave Occasion Cemetery Tour & Dinner* has been temporarily laid to rest. After long and thoughtful discussion and a review of events during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Museum Association Board of Trustees has regretfully decided to cancel this year's event.

Although much pre-planning has gone into the occasion already (huge thanks go out to Steve Fleming for his extensive contacts and ground-work), the Trustees thought

it best to err on the side of caution for the health and safety of our guests and to wait until the county is given the all clear before resuming this popular fundraiser.

Rest in peace, for although this year's *Grave Occasion* is no more, it is not a goner. The Trustees have pledged to resurrect this popular gathering in 2021 beneath the pine boughs of the historic Prattville Pioneer Cemetery on the western shores of Lake Almanor.

We thank you for your support and understanding in these uncertain times and look forward to seeing you live and in person at one of our events in the (hopefully) near future.



Prattville Pioneer Cemetery

Growing our Membership

As we look to the future of the Museum, we realize that there are many people who want to share in our mission of protecting, preserving, and presenting Plumas County history, but aren't yet members of our Museum Association.

Over the past several years, the Plumas County Museum Association membership has consistently hovered around 450 – 500 members. We would like to see this number grow to 600 members and ask each and every one of our current members to help us get there.

If you know someone who is new to Plumas County, spends vacation or other recreation time here, perhaps was born

here and moved away, shares your love of local history, or just has an interest or fondness for the area, please share a newsletter with them, give them a membership envelope, or even direct them to our website at www.plumasmuseum.org where they can peruse past issues of our newsletter, or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/plumascountymuseum where they can find an array of postings featuring historic photographs of Plumas County as well as other relevant information.

Membership in the Plumas County Museum Association brings with it free admission

to the Museum and the 1878 Variel Home, 10% off Museum Store purchases, advance notice of Museum programs and events, a quarterly newsletter with historical articles and Museum updates, and the satisfaction of helping protect, preserve, and promote Plumas County History.

Thank you for sharing your love of Plumas County history and helping us grow the membership of YOUR Plumas County Museum. A little encouragement to join the Museum Association is sometimes all it takes!

BECOME A MEMBER AT
www.plumasmuseum.org/store/

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Please check your mailing label for your membership EXPIRATION DATE. Due to increased printing and postage costs, we cannot send newsletters to non-renewing members.

Individual Membership \$25.00 - Family \$35.00 - Patron \$100.00 - Sustaining \$1000.00 - Corporate \$150.00 Please mail your check to **Plumas County Museum, 500 Jackson Street, Quincy, CA 95971** or pay online at the Museum e-store: www.plumasmuseum.org.

Hours: Tue-Sat • 10:00 - 4:00

Closed Monday & Holidays

Call (530) 283-6320 to confirm.