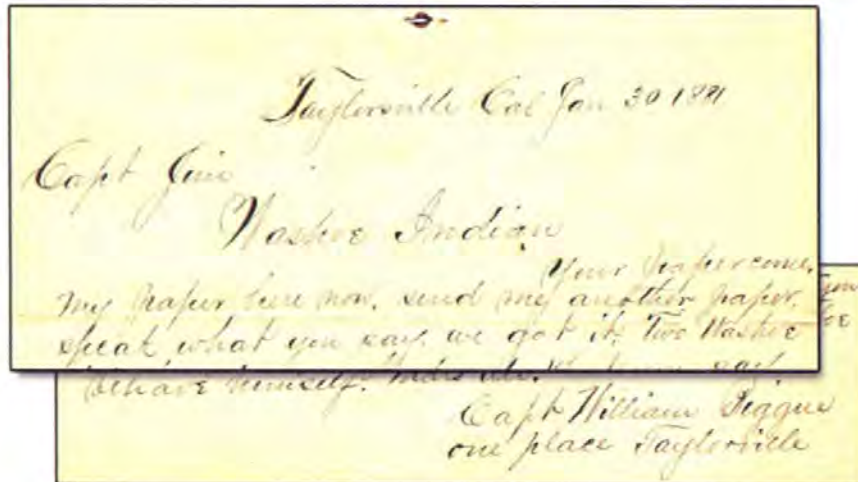




## Rare Indian Letter Acquired By Museum

Our Fundraising Campaign was successful and the 1881 Captain William Biggie Letter Arrives at Museum



On Monday, April 25, 2016, the local PBS station aired a new episode of the television program, *Antiques Roadshow* that had been filmed in Omaha, Nebraska in June 2015. One segment of that episode featured the appraisal of an 1881 Indian Chief letter that had been brought in by a guest who said she had rescued the letter from a dumpster some eight years earlier.

The letter, from Captain [chief] William Biggie of Taylorsville to a Washoe War Chief, Captain Jim of Nevada, discusses the potential

killing of a Washoe woman named Annie, then at Taylorsville, by Capt. Joe of the Paiute. Biggie addresses Capt. Jim and Capt. Joe about their behavior and about the rumors that Captain Joe wants to kill Annie. In the letter, Capt. Biggie tries to act as a peacekeeper and keep the woman from harm while also reminding the two chiefs that they all have gotten along on friendly terms and they know him to be a peace chief. Biggie reminds Capt. Jim that the Washoes already owe monetary reparations for killing 12 members of American Valley Indian Sam's family (which Biggie hasn't been pushy about collecting), and would owe even more if they killed Annie. Captain Biggie ends by urging Captain Joe to "behave yourself", drop the matter, or in the very least, stop talking about killing Annie so she can go see her family in Reno, and write back the truth about his intentions. In the course of the letter Biggie mentions several Plumas County locations including American Valley, Beckwith Valley, and Grizzly Valley.

Appraiser and rare book dealer, Ken Gloss, told the woman that "letters like this are incredibly rare. One Indian chief to another Indian chief is very rare. But actually talking about negotiations, killings, reparations, payments, they just don't show up" and went on to make a conservative estimate of the letter at \$2,000 to \$3,000. Gloss further went on to say, "But it would not surprise me in the right setting that this might sell, retail, \$5,000 to \$10,000. Wouldn't shock me at all."

Shortly after the show aired, James Magill of Cromberg contacted the Museum and alerted Director, Scott Lawson about the letter, its appraisal, and its ties to Plumas County. Seeing the cultural and historical importance of the letter, Lawson contacted Mr. Gloss at the Brattle Book Shop in Boston, Massachusetts, to see if he could shed more light on the owner of the letter. Gloss informed Lawson that he had purchased the letter several months after the appraisal and now owned it himself. Lawson expressed interest in

obtaining the letter and Gloss agreed to contact him in a few days to "see what we can do."

Subsequently, Gloss informed Lawson that he wanted \$5,000 for the letter but would take \$4,000, and soon the wheels were set in motion to raise the needed funds - with Chuck James spearheading the campaign. Contacted in early June, Gloss agreed to hold the letter until June 27th, and by the beginning of June fundraising letters were sent out, Corky Lazzarino had set up an on-line appeal on the fundraising site, *Chuffed.com*, and word was spread on the Museum's Facebook page.

As the deadline approached, nearly half of the purchase price had been committed to, and Gloss graciously agreed to extend the deadline to the end of July. With a story by Delaine Fragnoli appearing in the Feather River Bulletin in mid-July, the donations started pouring in, and soon we had reached our fundraising goal, and the letter was bought and paid for. On July 28th the three-page handwritten letter arrived at its new home at the Museum. Here it will be conserved, framed, and put on exhibition. Copies of the letter will go to our major donors of this fundraiser as well as other appropriate institutions and will be available to historians and researchers at the Museum.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to everyone who donated toward the acquisition of this culturally significant letter. Thank you for helping preserve this bit of Plumas County history - it was all made possible through your generous donations and help.

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## Museum Exhumes Local History With The Grave Occasion Cemetery Tour



Our 7th Annual Grave Occasion is about to kick off. Rise to the occasion and join us on September 17th from 3:00PM until dusk for an evening of drinking, feasting, cemetery creeping and other graveyard fun. Back by popular demand, we are once again haunting the historic Meadow Valley Cemetery where we will be honoring the many German pioneers who resided here and who gave rise to the area being nicknamed Sauerkraut Flats.

The evening starts with wine and hors d'oeuvres followed by a cemetery tour and dinner. This year we will be dining by the

ornate cemetery gates of this lovely little hilltop cemetery with grilled German sausage, sauerkraut, Bavarian style bread, German potato salad, and many delicious desserts from the hinterlands all on the evening's bill of fare. Musical entertainment by the Quincy Oompah Band under the direction of Al Herndon and other instrumental interludes by minstrel players, Nathan and Kim Rettallack will join the evening's twilight serenade, while you peruse the ever popular silent auction for those to-die-for items.

Spirits present at this year's graveyard tour and close-to-real-life characterizations include early pioneer and proprietress of the Mountain House Hotel and the Spanish Ranch Hotel, Sarah Heckle Atwood; Elias and Minnie Jacks, owners of the Badger Hill Placer Mine and other mining interests; Maidu schoolteacher, patriarch, and basketweaver, Sarah Kennedy; Mathias Kniewel, Spanish Ranch "drift" (tunnel) placer miner and carpenter; Justice of the Peace and optimistic Gopher Hill miner, Edward H. Metcalf; and Phillip and Elizabeth Miller, carpenter, soldier, Golden Ancient Mine worker and his wife, mother of eleven.

Tickets can be purchased at the Museum (283-6320), on our website: [www.plumasmuseum.org](http://www.plumasmuseum.org), or by contacting one of our trustees (see list on back of this publication) and are priced at \$40 for Museum members and \$50 for non-members. This popular evening of food, phantasms, and fundraising sells out quickly every year, so do yourself a favor and dig up your tickets today.

## A Thank You To Our Volunteers



Our eighth grade volunteers

Our volunteers have been busy at the Museum this season. Our Variel Home gardens have gotten a thorough going over by Sally Nichol, Toni Ryan, Jane Wair, and Linda Wallace along with helpers Elsa & Jerry Thomas. The gardens have been weeded, thinned, trimmed, mulched, landscaped, and beautified - including new edging around the front circle garden, courtesy of Linda Wallace. The ongoing work our garden volunteers do is greatly appreciated as is the hard work of Mike Woodlee and the 8th graders of Quincy Jr. High School who came over to do some major weed cleanup during the last week of school.

Summer tours of the Variel Home this year have been covered by Ann Castaldini and Denise Russell and even former

volunteer Melissa Kroeker popped in for a visit and was gracious enough to give a tour. These tours are a highlight of our weekend visitors and we could always use more tour guides - contact us if you would like to become one.

Volunteers Lisa Hopman, and Nancy & Keith Nicoles, have been working on organizing historic probate and court records, reorganizing, accessioning and exhibiting our doll collection, and creating new and updated photo panels respectively, while Rich Knoettgen has been diligently measuring twice and cutting once while working on adding a wooden chute & trestle and ore car track to the stamp mill in our exhibit yard. Sam Lawson got into the volunteering act by helping clean out the Gifford Cabin and raking up the bumper crop of crabapples littering the lawn between the law office and the Museum.

A big thank you goes to Lindsay Vert and all the volunteers who made this year's 4th Grade Pioneer Days Living History event a success - it was a great way to celebrate 20 years of this program, and we also want to thank Ann Castaldini, Eldora Duniphin, David Popp, Paul & Denise Russell, and Linda Wallace for staffing the Peppard Cabin at this year's Plumas-Sierra County Fair. Thank you volunteers!



The hammer swinging man

## Plumas Eureka On Glass



On Friday evening July 15, the Museum was filled to a nearly standing-room only crowd for a presentation by author and historian, Bruce MacGregor. Despite early malfunctions of the technological kind, the show proceeded with MacGregor enthraling the assembled crowd with tales of the Plumas Eureka Mine and the people who worked there. Recounting the history of the sixth largest gold mine in California came easy to MacGregor who has ancestral ties to families that worked the mine and who recently published his painstakingly researched, *Plumas Eureka on Glass: A Cultural History of the Plumas Eureka Mine*. Accompanied by images taken from nineteenth-century plate glass negatives, MacGregor also introduced several special guests, descendants of the Mine Superintendent, who brought several gold artifacts to share with the crowd. A lively and entertaining speaker, and an engaging writer, MacGregor's book, both in hard and soft cover, can be purchased at the Museum.

## Museum Gets New Roof!

After some 48 years, the Museum finally has a new roof. Over several weeks this summer, workers from Skyline Home Improvements were scrambling atop the Museum, putting the finishing touches on a two-year re-roofing project by covering our old roof with new *Tropical Forest* green shingles. The old roof had been losing shingles for the past three or four years, and what a difference the new ones make! By working with local contractors and keeping the work local, the County was able to save a whopping \$20,000.00 from what they had originally budgeted for the project.



## From The Museum's Past



*Newspaper article from the Chester Progressive, Thursday, September 19th, 1968*  
*The stamp mill ended up at the Fairgrounds where it sat for years, and then in 2000 it was rescued from destruction and brought to the Museum, where it was restored, without the help from any supervisors.*

## Trustees:

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Scott Lawson,  
 Last Man Standing

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**Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 4:00 - Sunday 11:00 - 3:00**  
**closed Monday & Holidays**

Please call 283-6320 to confirm

*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](http://www.plumasmuseum.org)