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THE SPANISH FLU

In Plumas County

On Thursday, October 17, 1918, buried on page five of the *Plumas National Bulletin*, a short three paragraph article entitled, “Spanish Flu Visits Plumas,” announced, “Sloat, Portola and Indian Mission Attacked by Foreign Disease,” and went on to report that the disease known as Spanish Influenza had been brought to Sloat by a man who came in from San Francisco. Thus was the first appearance in Plumas County of what would become the deadliest disease outbreak in human history.

A few pages later, nearly one whole page was devoted to “Uncle Sam’s Advice on the Flu.” In this “Official Health Bulletin on Influenza” issued by the “U.S. Public Health Service,” a question-and-answer format went on to describe the flu and its supposed origins – which they suggested were not Spanish (although there are several origin theories, a leading historian on the Spanish Influenza believes it most likely originated in

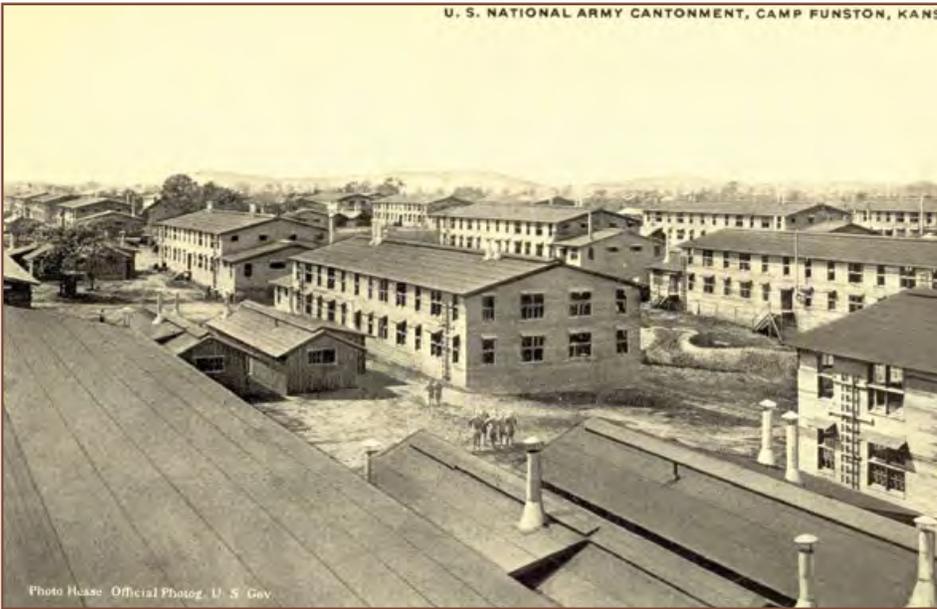
Haskell, Kansas in early 1918 before infecting soldiers at Camp Funston, a U.S. Army training camp on the Fort Riley reservation in Central Kansas. Camp Funston experienced an outbreak on March 4, 1918 and within two weeks 1,100 soldiers were sick, overwhelming the camp’s medical facilities. From there, the virus spread to other military camps around the nation – sickening tens of thousands, before it was carried overseas and into the trenches of World War I with the arrival of American troops in France before being brought back again. Meanwhile, the disease also spread into U.S. civilian communities), the symptoms of the flu (weakness, pain in the eyes, ears, head, or back, soreness all over, chills, fever, cough, and in some cases dizziness, vomiting, and bloodshot eyes) which come on quite suddenly, unlike normal flu or colds, and how to protect oneself from the virus. Citizens were urged to stay home if feeling sick, warned to avoid overcrowding at home or

while out, and told to stay out of crowds, to keep their bodies healthy and strong by eating a good diet, getting out of doors, and to “make every possible effort to breathe as much pure air as possible.”

The article advised those who might be around sick people to wear masks to protect themselves from the droplets of mucus expelled by coughing, sneezing, or forceful talking, warned to avoid dust that might contain dried mucus “from careless people who spit on the floor and on the sidewalk,” and concluded with the couplet:

*Cover up each cough and sneeze,
If you don’t you’ll spread disease.*

As if to drive home the message that the illness should be taken seriously by the citizens of Plumas County, the same newspaper issue also reported the death of Meadow Valley native son, Dewey McElroy, 20, who died on October 11th from the virus while serving at Wilbur Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.



U.S. National Army Cantonment, Camp Funston, Kansas.

With World War I raging in Europe (the end of hostilities was still nearly a month away), rhetoric about the disease took on a decidedly militaristic tone even from the beginning, with one cartoon equating the flu's deadliness to that of poison gas shells. Just a week after its first mention in Plumas County, one headline screamed, "Spanish Flu Invades Plumas County Towns," and called the disease the "foreign invader."

Yet, even while newspapers were reporting the disease as striking Portola, Sloat, Engelmine, Crescent Mills, and other points throughout the county, and describing County health officers and physicians as "battling" the disease and "waging a relentless fight" against the further spread of the disease, they also reassured the public (somewhat falsely), "serious as the situation is, it is not so bad as many would believe," and "in all probability

it will be eradicated from the community within the next two weeks."

Acting County Health Officer, Dr. M. B. Bolton, further reported that precautionary measures "to keep the enemy on the run" were continuing, and noted that in Quincy, all public gatherings had been forbidden, the Quincy Theater was closed, and the Methodist Episcopal Church had discontinued all services, while trials and public hearings had either been postponed or temporarily cancelled. The doctor advised other towns throughout the county to take the same precautions, and warned all citizens to avoid large groups and, if feeling sick themselves, to "immediately retire to home, and all cases at home should be isolated," as preventative measures against the spreading of the Spanish Influenza.

Yet, even among the stories reporting the grim news of spreading disease, sickness, and death, the closures of businesses, and the prominent display ads for Quincy's "Funeral Director and Embalmer," John F. Moody, and John Donnenwirth's Portola "Undertaking and Embalming" business, and news from Taylorsville hoping that the community would "escape a visit from the enemy," and Beckwith where "everyone is wearing a gauze mask" to avoid the disease, there were snippets of humor, such as "some of the 'flu' masks worn by Quincy citizens make them appear as though they



Emergency Hospital, Camp Funston, Kansas, 1918.

were costumed for a masked ball,” and:

Grandma always insisted that onion syrup was the real cure for all ills and now comes forth a modern advocate of onions as a cure for Spanish Flu. Young ladies may now indulge their taste for onions and have a legitimate excuse to offer when 'sweety' kicks on the scent.

By October 29th, the disease was prevalent in Plumas County, and Dr. Bolton issued an Influenza Order mandating that gauze (or other suitable material) masks at least 5” x7” be worn by all persons engaged in public or business places, specifically targeting hotels, barber shops, saloons, mercantile stores, bakeries, restaurants, and the like, while also mandating their use by all customers who frequented those places as well. On the heels of this mandate came an order for all pool rooms, saloons, and other places of congregation, to close. That same week several public schools in Plumas County were also closed, including the grammar school in Quincy, and faculty and staff at Plumas County High School were told not to leave Quincy “while the present epidemic exists.”

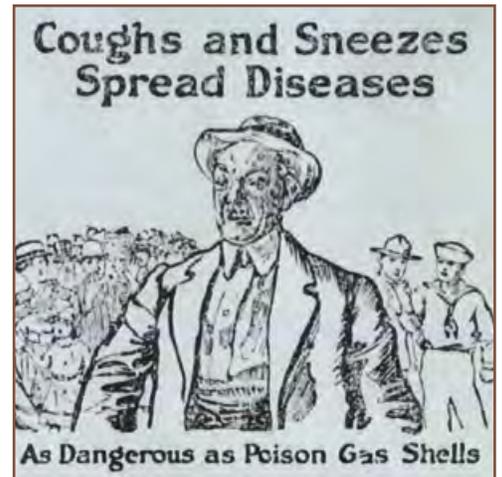
Reports of deaths attributed to the Spanish Flu continued to be documented in the *Plumas National Bulletin* into November, with headline still reporting that, despite physicians and nurses fighting the “Deadly Invader with Grim Determination – Many Die.” The disease continued to spread throughout the county, and where it once had been confined to points along

the railroad, it had, by early November, eaten its way into the interior. Yet, precaution was still the best method for checking this spread, and the message of personal prevention was strongly endorsed:

No risk should be run by anyone. All possible risk should be avoided and every effort made to stamp out the disease. Each and every person should make it a personal matter to see that no suspect is permitted at large. Carelessness may mean additional loss of life.

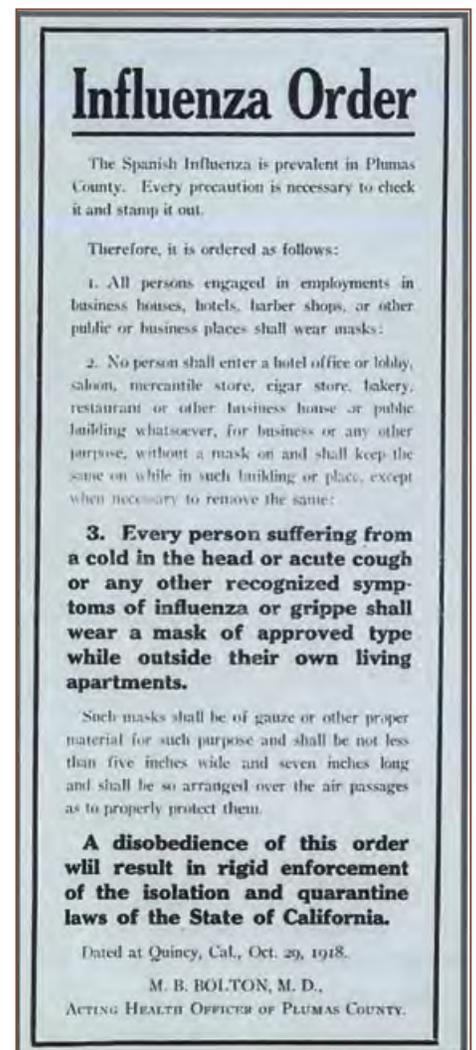
Portola, especially hit hard by the Spanish Flu (with over 150 cases at this time), wholeheartedly adopted the mandatory mask and business closure orders, and when visited by Dr. Bolton, it was found that “not a soul was to be seen without the ‘99 percent preventative,’” and thus far the town’s flu death rate was relatively low even though there were so many patients that it became necessary to convert the schoolhouse and one of the local churches into temporary hospitals.

While the same article noted that Portola residents were battling the epidemic with vigor with the hope that the advent of colder weather would help their fight against the flu and result in “the total elimination of the malady,” other parts of the paper carried stories of at least nine deaths throughout the county attributed to Spanish Influenza – including both men and women ranging in age from 21 to 48 years old and leaving at least eight children without one of their parents.



*Plumas National Bulletin,
October 17, 1918.*

A week later, on November 14th, news of Germany’s defeat made the headlines, and Plumas County citizens temporarily disregarded



*Influenza Order Plumas National Bulletin,
October 31, 1918.*

the “no overcrowding or congregating” directives, as people flocked to the streets of both Quincy and Portola to celebrate, overjoyed at the Allied victories. Yet even as the headlines announced, “Spanish Flu Gradually Being Checked In Plumas,” and reported that quarantines of Crescent Mills and Spring Garden had been lifted, that conditions in Portola were improving, that Quincy only had a few cases, that Taylorsville and Greenville seemed to be clean, and that saloons and barbershops were allowed to reopen with the provision that no chairs, games, or crowds be allowed, they also reported that the disease had gained a foothold in Engelmine that would require some time to break loose. On the front page alone, six deaths attributed to the Spanish Flu were reported – the victims ranging in age from infancy to 39 years old, leaving at least fourteen children without one of their parents and several men and women without their spouses. In one case, the victim was the fifth member of his family to die of the disease.

On page five of that same issue, it was noted in an article about the death of Greenville merchant W. W. Hall, that he died some 24 hours after his brother, George Hall of Crescent Mills, had met the same fate – both from Spanish Influenza. W. W. Hall left behind a wife and eight children, while George left behind a wife and two children. Stories like these

continued to fill the papers as did stories about those who had contracted the disease or were recuperating from the disease.

As November progressed, Plumas County High School reopened on the 25th while at the same time, the flu reappeared in Indian Valley and Greenville, and the saloons in that city were forced to close once again.

While deaths throughout the county continued, especially at Engelmine, some people still seemed almost flippant about the seriousness of the situation and the disease. When his three year old son Donald was recovering from an attack of the flu, Postmaster Donald Robertson, “wanted it known that Donald is a ‘chip off the old block’ and therefore a little matter like Spanish Influenza does not worry him.”

Yet many did take the outbreak quite seriously and actively worked to prevent the spread of the flu, including American Red Cross workers and other brave women in Portola, where, it was announced by the *Plumas National Bulletin* in late November, that the flu there had been defeated:

Not, however, before it had taken the lives of some of Portola’s honored citizens. Treated as a joke at the outset, it soon gained a foot-hold here which was not to be laughed at. First confining its victims to their homes, then to their beds, it fought relentlessly until it had succeeded in downing men and women whose future probably held an abundance of prosperity.

Citizens in Portola and Quincy continued to worry that their hard work and precautions would all be undone with a recurrence of the disease due to its re-introduction and spread by travelers, as there were rumors that the flu was prevalent on area trains:

Reports reaching Quincy state that many passengers on Western Pacific railroad trains are afflicted with Spanish Influenza in some form. It is also claimed that masks are seldom seen and that the danger of further outbreaks of the disease is intensified because of this carelessness.

By December 1918, the flu was abating in Plumas County, and two emergency hospitals established in Greenville were discontinued and dismantled, their equipment returned to the County Hospital.

Yet, even as one section of the county was recovering from the flu, another section of the county was being hit hard. From La Porte came the news in early December, “Spanish Influenza has broken out in this place and practically every family in town is afflicted,” with more than 20 cases and one death. That death, of 32 year old Mose Primeau, came only 10 days after he had contracted the disease while at work on the dam at nearby St. Louis. The situation in La Porte was exacerbated by the town being snowbound and only accessible by snow shoes due to recent winter storms.

And then, once again, Spanish Influenza was back in Greenville and the copper-mining camps of Engelmine.

Even Quincy reported that although previous precautions had prevented the disease from entering the town to any great extent, and it was thought that all danger had passed, the flu was now prevalent there as well. The reappearance of the flu in Quincy caused the cancellation of Sunday church services as well as a planned New Year's Eve supper dance at the Plumas House and the closure (once again) of Quincy schools.

As 1919 rolled in, so did more cases of Spanish Influenza. "Practically every family" in Clio came down with the flu, where one of the first victims (and identified in the papers as having brought the disease to the town) was 23 year old Mrs. G. L. Merrick, who left behind her husband and a 5 year old daughter. The flu was also back again in both Greenville and Taylorsville with well over forty cases being reported, but as yet, no deaths.

Then, on February 13th the *Plumas National Bulletin* announced, "Flu Claims First Quincyite" while reporting the death of 65 year old George P. Tyrrell, who had been, for the past six months, in charge of the Sportsman Bar. Mr. Tyrrell had only taken sick on February 5th and was immediately removed to the emergency hospital where he died a mere six days later!

As precautionary measures produced their desired outcomes, and the waves of flu that had hit Plumas County began to subside and become more sporadic in nature, the Spanish Flu seemed to



Plumas County Hospital and Farm, Quincy, c.1918.

disappear as quickly as it had come, and there is little definitive information in the newspapers to track the disease much past May 1919 when there is mention that:

The third wave of influenza which attacked Crescent Mills seems to have subsided. Several very severe cases were reported but none proved fatal. At present there is not a single case in the town.

Although some deaths from Spanish Influenza were recorded as pneumonia, consumption, or even meningitis, only a few such entries appear in the records of the *County Hospital and Farm* for 1919 and beyond. The majority of these cases recovered, and were discharged, with only a handful ending in the death of the patient. On November 13, 1919, the *Plumas National Bulletin* quipped:

The worst feature of the return of the flu is it also means the return of the Plumas County man who says: 'You're getting it' every time someone sneezes.

By February 1920, Spanish Influenza (the qualifier

"Spanish" having been dropped some time ago by the editor of the newspaper) was seemingly gone from Plumas County. The *Plumas National Bulletin* reporting on the 5th that there was little flu in the county:

Investigation by the Plumas National-Bulletin has so far failed to bring to light any cases of true influenza in Plumas County. Reports have been in circulation, from various sections, of a recurrence of 'flu epidemic' but in each instance they have been unfounded. County Health Officer Dr. B. J. Lasswell says there is very little influenza in the county and Dr. M. B. Bolton is authority for the statement that most influenza cases are in reality but the old fashioned la grippe.

With over 500 million people infected and a worldwide death toll of between 50 and 100 million, including 670,000 Americans and thousands of Californians, most Americans knew someone who had suffered or died from Spanish Influenza – 195,000 Americans dying in October 1918 alone.

In Plumas County, there were enough deaths to bring

the great tragedy of the illness into almost everyone's lives, and the fear of the flu's return persisted for several years.

In May 1923, while detailing an epidemic of pink-eye in the schools of Quincy and a wave of "walking flu" among the students and teachers at Plumas County High School, there was hope that the days ahead would forever banish those worries – with the paper reporting, "the coming of the warm weather should wipe out the last memories of the old offender, Spanish flu."

Monetary Donations

Up to \$99: Anonymous; Dotti Arcangeli; Jennifer Ayres; Sonny Bergum; Jean Brennan; Libbie Coleman; Leland & Kathy Cotter; Dorothy Dunn; Bob & Mary Edwards; John Farris; Sandy Fitzpatrick; Paula Foster; Nancy Gambell; John & Diane Giller; Candace Grubbs; Sandra Gunnels; Steve & Mary Habeck; Chris Hopkins; Debbie Hopkins; Deborah Jacobsen; Annmarie Janes; Susan Jackson; Rita Johnson; Scott Lawson; Randy & Kathi Lombardi; Diane McCombs; Judy Johnson & Elliott Smart; Marvin & Gina McGirr; Harold & Gail McGrath; Joan Normington; Thelma Olson; Denise Pyper; Cathy Raymond; Kevin & Kathie Reid; Helen Roberti; Maci Roth; Claude & Gail Saunders; Allan Shields; Lori Simpson; Cindy Steffen; Adrienne Stenson; Jerry & Elsa Thomas; Evelyn & Byron Whisman; Rick & Joyce Whitsell; Helen Yonge.

Call For Donations

With the closure of the Museum to the public, we have seen a dramatic decrease in our day to day donations (and of course, a cessation of entrance fees), but the truth of the matter is, we still have obligations and on-going expenses to operate and maintain the Museum. The Museum Association is asking for your help to raise money to pay these bills.

Although we realize that many of you are in the same boat during this time, we ask you to please think of us and help when and where you can. We sincerely appreciate your continued financial support of the Plumas County Museum.

Museum Store Still Open Online



With a "Stay at Home" order in effect, now is the time to catch up on some of that Plumas County history that you've always meant to read about but just never managed to.

Although no pick-ups are available at the Museum, our online Museum Store has over 100 titles available for purchase as well as offering a selection of used books, maps, gold jewelry, as well as Museum logo mugs, ball caps, and polo shirts, and so much more. Our Museum Store is also where you are able to purchase memberships, renew memberships, give donations, memorials, and even purchase tickets to upcoming events such as our Grave Occasion (when available).

Thank you for supporting the Plumas County Museum through your purchases in our Museum Store. We invite you to see what's available at plumasmuseum.org/store/.

\$100 - \$199: Dorris Beck; Elizabeth Boyle & Family; Arthur Cronin; Grant & Cynthia Edwards; John & Julie Frazier; Michael Hardin & Eileen Kortas; Al & Joan Herndon; Keith & Nancy Nicoles; Toney O'Rourke; Betty Penland; Kathy Peters; Mike & Barbara Price; Brett & Wendy Reid; Michael Rodriguez; Jack Saunders; Zach Stewart; Valerie Vann; David & Lesley Wallace; Jeff Wallace; Linda Wallace; Ralph & Pat Wilburn; Louise Young.

\$200 - \$499: Jerry Pauly; Dave & Christine Peters; Susan Scarlett.

\$500 - \$999: Lawrence Ferderber; Heather Henderson.

Artifact Donations Since November 2019

Don & Nancy Clark: One collection of 20 books and magazines covering Nevada history, one large collection of *California History* magazines, 1984-2013, one stoneware ginger beer bottle, one antique hand-operated bottle capper;

Ben Cunningham: One handmade Maidu elderberry flute, one example of dogbane stalk, dogbane fiber, and finished rolled dogbane string;

John Chiatovich: One unidentified oval piece of iron found in Meadow Valley; **Dan Elliott:** One color photo of the Thomas Cabin at Indian Bar, 1956, one slide of same, one colorized glass lantern slide of "Camp Scene at Three Lake," one colorized glass lantern slide of "Plumas N.F. U.S. Army Air Service Camp, Lakes Basin," 1920s;

Michael Fagan: One advertisement brochure for "Forest Lodge Resort, Greenville, CA" 1946; **Amy Fendley:** Collection of 144 b/w photos of the Hickerson and Hannon families and other Indian Valley and Loyalton families, houses, ranches, logging, sawmills, etc., numerous newspaper clippings of family info, obituaries, and the like;

Joanne Hammond: One magnifying glass used by Robert H.F. Variel, 1880-1920; **Katherine Iglesias:** One Plumas County Bank wall calendar, 1912; **Bob Johns:** One wood and wire Indian Valley Creamery milk crate, c. 1904-1950; **Jennifer Johnson:** One large collection of Lane family photos, negatives, and oral histories,



Boy Scout Neckerchief Slides

covering the Lane, Beatty-Gallagher, Belden, Gould, Orcier, Pavlik, Estes, Fairfield, and Greiner families including numerous framed and loose b/w and colorized photos of the Feather River Canyon and Belden areas, railroad crew camps, people, and the like;

Norman Lamb: Four Western Pacific Railroad Company bonds, 1945, 1948, 1961, four WPRR stock certificates, 1945, 1951, 1970, 1971, one copy of a WPRR stock certificate issued to W.J. Barnett, first president of the WPRR in 1906;

Diane Lawson: One porcelain cup marked, "Taylorsville," one graniteware bucket with tin lid, one ornate iron bracket, one oval, colorized portrait of Sarah Sedonia Williams, in brass frame, all 1890-1910, one basalt arrowhead, one obsidian arrowhead, 1860-1900, one Crescent Mills

Grammar School diploma for Edna Dora Stampfli, 1904, one No.4 ceramic crock from Taylorsville, 1880-1920, one National Defense Service Medal and accompanying service ribbon, one Good Conduct Medal, one Expert Marksmanship Qualification Badge with attached carbine, sharpshooter, and rifle clasps, one metal identification "dog tag," one 1950 Motor Vehicle Operator Permit for ¼ - ¾ ton cargo trucks, all awarded to Alva Dean Lawson during his military service, 1948-1952, one small oval photograph of Harvey William Dolphin, 1926; ten medical, religious, and literature books belonging to Lawson and Bennett/Stampfli families, 1854-1968; one *California Mining Journal*, 1966; **Scott Lawson:** Two clay Chinese soy sauce jugs, 1860-1870, three clay Chinese liquor

(Ng Gah Pay) jugs, 1900-1915, two glass beer bottles, 1905-1915, one Chinese food pot, two Chinese rice or soup bowls, 1860-1900; four canning jars, 1903-1930, one foodstuff bottle, 1905-1910, two snuff crocks, 1900-1910, one stoneware ale bottle, 1870-1900, one glass mucilage jar, 1899, one "Gaston Dairy" milk bottle, 1925-1939, one "Hostetters Stomach Bitters" bottle, 1880-1900, one rum bottle, 1898-1910, two food jars, 1911-1920, one salt shaker, 1911-1920, two ceramic mustard pots, 1895 – 1915, one wine bottle, 1870-1890, one Chinese liquor bottle, 1870-1890, 6 champagne bottles, 1870-



Forest Lodge Brochure.

1890, one "Aromatic Valley Whiskey" bottle, 1866-1882, one "J.T. Daly Clubhouse" gin bottle, 1850-1870, two butter dishes, 1900-1920, one prescription bottle, 1890-1910, one "Foley's Kidney Pills" bottle 1890-1910, one "125th

Anniversary" Plumas County commemorative glass, 1979; **Sandra Lee:** Three copies of book, *Plumas Sketches*, one large collection of index cards, notepads, and photographs (both original and duplicates) filled with handwritten information and notes about Plumas County history gathered by Phil Miller and Barry Bailey, one Plumas National Forest map, 1922; **Judi Madden:** One large collection of 72 antique bottles found throughout the Onion Valley, Richmond Hill, and Four Hills Mine areas of Plumas County, four antique bottles from the Eagleville, Cow Head Lake, and Dorris area of Modoc County, all found and collected by donor's parents in the 1950s, one ceramic Chinese soy sauce jug, one large collection of antique sheet music; **Jack Moore:** five b/w photos of cowboy Melvin Noel at Bucks Ranch, c. 1900, **Brian Newhouse:** One book, *Adam was a Clamper* by Don Perceval, belonging to Willam Dore, XSNGH of E Clampus Vitus Chapter #8; **Marilyn Quadrio:** Two framed b/w photos of Keddie Wye and Hotel Quincy, collection of biographical information on Felix C. Hail, Hanna family, Robert Watt,



Orange Blossom Perfume Set - 1939 World's Fair Souvenir.

and Norton Parker Chipman; **Joyce Scroggs Estate:** One collection of 27 hand-carved Boy Scout neckerchief slides belonging to Ray Balog, ten vintage dolls, one metal trunk filled with doll clothes; **Shirley Shaw:** One "Harrell Motors" chamois polishing cloth in original package, c. 1930s, one 1939 World's Fair souvenir California orange blossom perfume set with three perfume bottles, one set of six infant bath powder accessories including powder containers, hairbrush, comb, etc., 1924/1932; **Rob Shulman:** One Bucks Highlands spiral bound prospective c. 1960s; **Kent Stokes:** Three color photographs of Buck's Lake Lodge, Haskins Valley Resort, 1952, and Egbert Bros. log truck at Haskins Valley Resort, 1949, one schedule of rates for Haskins Valley Resort, c. 1950s, one copy of b/w photo of USFS Experimental Station near Blackhawk Creek, 1930-1952; **Philip Wagner:** One bound report covering the construction of Bucks Creek Hydroelectric Development project (including dam construction) from February 1925 – December 1926; **Robert Will:** One section of trans-continental communication cable dissected to reveal inside wires and workings.

Museum Guests Far and Wide

USA: Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Ohio, Washington, Wyoming.

INTERNATIONAL :
Canada, Thailand, Peru.

New Members

Individual: Jane Proctor, Chandler, AZ.

Family: Martin Anderson, Quincy; Lester & Candy Miller, Quincy.

Patron: Barry & Joan Hollenbeck, Yuba City; L. Curtis Vann, Patton.

Memorials

Memorials have been given in memory of the following individuals since our fall newsletter:

George Becker, Biggs; Don Darrough, Marysville; Ron Giovannetti, Yuba City; Sheila Leonhardt, Quincy; Bob Lowrey, Quincy; Pat Penning, Gridley; Ralph Prater, Clipper Mills; Nancy Ray, Quincy; Jess D. Rhody, Yuba City; Art Scarlett, Quincy; Cheryl Scarlett, Quincy; Morry Smith, Marysville; John Taylor, Quincy.

Volunteer Activities

Throughout the winter our perennial volunteers, Lisa Hopman and Rich Knoettgen kept themselves busy by continuing their projects at the Museum. Lisa resolutely continued cataloging our Inquests and has worked her way up to our 1938-1943 file, while Rich continued his work on portions of the exhibit yard as well as helping out with the early stages and planning of Sam Lawson's high school senior project.

Sally and Ray Nichol once again gave the Museum entrance a spritely holiday makeover with red trim and accessories, while Denise Russell festively decorated the tree inside. Linda Wallace faithfully continues to acknowledge our membership,

donation, and memorial records while keeping them up to date, and John Walker makes sure the Variel Home roses are neatly pruned. Faith and Piers Strailey took the opportunity during recent sunny days to trim, weed, and give the Museum's front flower beds a much needed clean-up!

Remember, volunteer opportunities abound at the Museum, and, as pointed out in other articles within this issue, not only is the Beckwourth Cabin in need of a few volunteers, but we need volunteers for several upcoming events as well.

Please contact the Museum if you are interested in volunteering!

Sam Lawson's Senior Project

During February and March Sam Lawson took advantage of the relatively dry weather to spend time rehabbing a portion of our exhibit yard brick walkway as part of his high school senior project. The pathway has been in need of general repair for some time, having suffered over the years from frost upheave and damaged and missing bricks. After working with Rich Knoettgen earlier in the year to survey the pathway, Sam chose a section by our agricultural exhibits to begin with and tore out the old bricks, refurbished their surfaces, leveled and prepped the old path with a rolled base, and then re-laid

the bricks and leveled and packed them into a new smooth walkway. Thank you Sam for all your hard work!

If you are interested in continuing this project to refurbish our brick pathway, please contact the Museum.



Sam Lawson digging out bricks.



Museum News

On March 19, 2020 in Executive Order N-33-20, California's governor called for the closure of all non-essential businesses and for those non-essential workers throughout California to stay at home due to the growing threat of the novel coronavirus. Although a definite argument could be made that institutions such as museums and libraries are essential to civilizations, societies, and communities, with the call for limiting group gatherings and social distancing, it was both prudent and appropriate that the Museum close its doors to the public.

Thus, per guidance from Plumas County Public Health in coordination with the Department of Public Health, the Museum will be closed to the public until further notice to facilitate social distancing in an effort to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Being closed to the public, we are currently not accepting any on-site artifact donations until we re-open. However, we are still able to receive and process monetary donations, memorials, and memberships via either the mail or our online store at www.plumasmuseum.org. Likewise, you may still take advantage of our research and visitor information services

by contacting us by phone at (530) 283-6320 or email at pcmuseum@psln.com or pcmresearch@psln.com.

Throughout this closure, the Museum will also be offering several short virtual tours of the Museum and its exhibits on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/plumascountymuseum where you will also find an array of postings featuring historic photographs of Plumas County from our vast and diverse collection. We invite you to check out our Facebook page frequently, not only to view the posts, but to also continue to learn about the history of Plumas County and to stay informed about what is happening at the Museum.

So too, a visit to the Museum's website at www.plumasmuseum.org, will inform you about Plumas County history, Museum history, give you access to our Museum Store, and let you peruse back issues of our "Las Plumas" quarterly newsletter.

We look forward to reopening the Museum as soon as we are allowed, but in the meantime, we thank you for your continuing support and consideration, and our thoughts are with you in the hopes that everyone stay safe and healthy during these trying times.

Upcoming Events

While the Museum is now closed to the public, we continue planning for our eventual return to normal. How the stay at home order will affect our long-term planning and events has yet to be determined.

As of this writing, Plumas County schools are closed to on-site classes and are participating in at-home distance learning until at least May 1st. A planned Plumas Charter School art show scheduled for May 1- May 8 will most likely be postponed to later in the school year, if not cancelled altogether.

Another event currently on hold for the time being is a springtime tea, tour, and talk about the history of aprons to be held in the Variel Home yard.

We are tentatively still planning to host our annual 4th grade Pioneer Living History Days which take place near the end of May and which sees nearly every 4th grader in Plumas County visiting the Museum to learn about and participate in hands-on activities such things as candle making, biscuit making, butter making, gold panning, and the like. Volunteers are needed to make this event a success, so if you are interested please let us know!

The Plumas-Sierra County Fair is scheduled for mid-August, and Museum volunteers usually staff the Peppard Cabin and (if numbers permit) the Pioneer Schoolhouse. Volunteers are also always greatly needed and appreciated for this adventure!

Also still in the planning stages is our annual *Grave Occasion Cemetery Tour & Dinner*. This year's event

is scheduled to be held on Sunday, September 13th at the Prattville Cemetery on the shores of Lake Almanor and will once again feature in-the-flesh representations of several colorful characters from Plumas County's historic past. More information will be available as

plans progress, but please save the date for this – you don't want to miss it!

And, as always, our exhibit yard and garden is available during this shutdown for volunteers who may need to get out a little, enjoy the fresh air, and perhaps help us with a little

sprucing up and maintenance of these beautiful spaces.

We look forward to seeing you at some of our events once our world returns to normal. Thank you for supporting the Plumas County Museum.

Beckwourth Cabin News

By Richard Arnold

Weekend visitors continue to arrive from hither and yon, mostly Reno. Some are surprisingly knowledgeable about aspects of western migration and its famous personalities, and others are novices. I fail to ask how they happened to know of the Beckwourth Museum in the first place, but it seems to be general knowledge in Nevada. Some of our local vacation rentals have old pamphlets that mention the museum, but are otherwise out of date. I guess we should canvass such rentals and update their visitor literature. I've tried to keep the Plumas County visitor guide information up-to-date.

My responsibilities in the Bay Area have not diminished as I'd hoped by now, so I continue to have to commute from Richmond each weekend to be a docent. As a consequence, I haven't been able to upgrade our Beckwourth information or displays in several years. The biggest need this spring will be to replace the faded 4'x8' sign that Betty Folchi had painted and installed on the Hebert property just east of Rocky Point Road. It's the

only sign that announces the Beckwourth Cabin Museum and suggests turning off Hwy 70 to see the cabin. Revenue has been accumulating for the sign so we just need some design and expertise.

The BCM is no longer under threat of attack from the large cottonwood to the north that suddenly perished last year, and through the efforts of our fearless leader, Scott Lawson, it was very promptly dismantled by our vigilant local electric cooperative. Not a single board of our decrepit two-hole Willow Glen outhouse was harmed in the process (praise be!) but time is doing to it what the ghost tree failed to do. The Beckwourth Cabin is going to outlive the remains of Willow Glen thanks to our Clamper friends of yore.

Otherwise, the only attention the cabin could use is some tall ladders and volunteers and bunches of wadded up screen to plug holes that permit birds and bats to enter and die in the cabin attic over the winter. There is a bit of wayward roof flashing near the chimney that seems to need bending down and

refastening to the roof and chimney, but there isn't any water penetration visible in the cabin's first floor.

Part-time docents would certainly be welcome, and I promise to not retire as soon as we get another one, as Betty did when I came on board. In the middle of summer, visitation can be so light that, besides reading and snoozing, all there is to do is weed the entry way to favor the lupine and golden poppies. It's not a hard job at all, although it does require re-familiarizing oneself with the Beckwourth story each year so you can sound knowledgeable and entertaining. Many of our visitors do enjoy talking about Beckwourth and the emigrant story, and some will stay for an hour for the chat. Then learning can flow both ways.



Beckwourth Museum

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