

Las Plumas

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Taylorsville School and combination wood shed, stable, and outhouses, circa 1890.

Courtesy Plumas County Museum

TAYLORSVILLE SCHOOL

The Indian Valley is located about 150 miles northeast of Sacramento and twenty-two miles north of Quincy. Lying between American Valley and the Big Meadows, now Lake Almanor, its elevation is about 3,545 feet. Second to the Sierra Valley, it is the largest valley in Plumas County. Indian Creek, the largest watershed in the county, enters the valley from the east and winds through for many miles before finding its way out in a rugged canyon on the south.

The Danish-born explorer, Peter Lassen,

first named the valley as Cache Valley in 1850. A year later it was renamed Indian Valley by Noble's Party, a group of gold miners who were impressed by the number of Mountain Maidu Indians they encountered in the valley. These people had lived for centuries in the valley, but would soon find their lifestyle drastically changed.

Jobe Taylor was an emigrant from Pennsylvania and also a member of the Noble's Party. Attracted to the valley's rich soil, he soon returned and founded his ranch and the town of

Taylorsville on February 12th 1852. The town sits nestled at the southeast edge of Indian Valley against the base of the heavily timbered hillsides of Mt. Jura. The rich valley land stretching out from the town site attracted a number of other like-minded farmers, and soon houses and barns began to appear. Most of the farmers were family men and either brought their families with them, or soon sent for them.

Families typically mean children, and children typically mean schools. But it still took seven years for the first school to organize in Taylorsville. From 1859 through 1861 a private school was conducted in a building located where the Taylorsville Creamery now stands. In 1863, the first public school was taught, presumably at the same location.

In August 1863, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors formed the Taylor School District, which

included all of Indian Valley and the areas drained by Indian Creek, excepting Clover Valley.

Apparently, almost immediately following this action, and in the spirit of community, Jobe Taylor donated an acre of land at the north end of Thompson Street for a schoolhouse. As was common practice in those times, a public subscription was held to raise the funds for construction. Within a short time, Mr. O. Madden made the brick for the school at his ranch, located about one-quarter mile northeast. The work appears to have gone quickly and smoothly, and the residents and students of Indian Valley had a new public schoolhouse in a very short time.

This simple one-room building, although appearing square, is actually 32 feet by 36 feet. It has a hip roof, nine windows, an entry door, and a



Taylorsville School and the Classes of 1889 - 1891.

Courtesy Plumas County Museum



Taylorsville School, 1964.

Courtesy Indian Valley Museum

wooden porch that extends the front another six feet. Originally, there were two entry doors, but one has since been converted to access a small kitchen built into the front porch. One door was for boys, the other for girls. The school bell originally sat at the very apex of the roof, but in later years a belfry was constructed just above the front porch to house it.

A combination woodshed and stable was built about fifty feet south of the school, near the line of present-day locust and maple trees. This also served the function of an outhouse for the students.

On Thursday evening, March 10th 1864, a public exhibition was held in honor of the opening of the new school. An admission fee of fifty cents was charged to enable deserving scholars to receive presents, and to pay the necessary expenses of the exhibition. Children from all over the valley participated in the event. Eighteen members of the first classes to be held there performed thirty-two pieces of drama, poetry, and song.

For 50 years, kerosene lamps provided light. In 1917, electricity found its way to Taylorsville, and the school was wired for incandescent lights. From 1915 to 1922, approximately 40 children, grades one through eight, were stuffed into the one room. According to Bob Cooke, from the Class of 1922, the strict teachers were the most remembered, along with the willow switches cut from nearby bushes to provide corporal punishment. A wood

burning pot-bellied stove supplied heat until the last heating system was installed, a smoke belching oil stove. In 1933, grades one through five were moved to the Taylorsville Hotel and the old library.

Many old families in the Indian Valley have had multiple generations attend the little brick school. Lila Clary Hinz, a life-long resident of Taylorsville,



Taylorsville School, April 2006.

Photo by Scott Lawson

can count herself and four generations of her family among the students. Diane Fisher Lawson, also a student there, is a descendant of members of the first class to attend the school.

The 1933 Field Act required all public schools to be earthquake resistant. In March of 1949 the old Taylorsville School, which had also become too small to accommodate the larger population was closed. Prior to that, wood support columns with connecting iron rods were placed on the south and north sides.

With the school's closure, the Veterans of Foreign Wars took it over, but then sold it on February 17th 1953 to the Native Sons of the Golden West, for \$100. For a number of years up into the late 1960s, the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts held their activities in the old school, as well as square dancing, and a few other community events. However, by the 1970s the old school had fallen into disuse and grave disrepair.

In 1979, the late Bob Cooke noted that vandals had torn a hole in the brick wall, breaking through to the inside. Efforts were begun in the late 1980s to preserve the school, and in 1991, due to the

efforts of Susan Wilson and other locals, the State of California granted the old school "Point of Historical Interest" status.

However, as is common with historic structures, planned restoration work did not occur and the building has been deteriorating at an accelerated rate. In 1996, the County of Plumas agreed to purchase the school in an effort to save it from utter destruction. In reasoning the purchase of the school and land, Supervisor Robert Meacher stated, "It has always been the policy of the Board of Supervisors to preserve our local heritage whenever possible, therefore, I recommended to the board that the county purchase the property in the amount of \$5,000, which is considerably less than the asking price of \$35,000." Meacher also stated that one goal would be to "... establish the schoolhouse as a state-registered historical site."

In 1998, the county graciously deeded almost 14,000 square feet of the property to an adjoining neighbor, with the resulting \$5,500 being deposited in a trust fund for the preservation of the school.

On March 14th 2005, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors turned over stewardship of



Taylorsville Library, January 1st 1952. View to the southwest.

Courtesy Mrs. Barbara Buckner.



Taylorsville School and outbuildings from the south, circa 1878.

Courtesy Indian Valley Museum

the 1864 Taylorsville School to the Plumas County Museum. It is now hoped that with public support, we can begin restoration and ultimate reuse of the historic building for the benefit of the community. It is now almost certain that the Taylorsville School is the oldest one-room brick schoolhouse on its original site in the state of California. The museum is currently working on National Register Landmark status for the school.

It is hoped that the community of Taylorsville and the county at large will actively assist in the rehabilitation efforts of this valuable historic resource. Much like the days when the school was constructed, a private subscription will no doubt be needed to pursue this worthwhile project.

Any background information, recollections, artifacts, photographs, or other items associated with the school that can be shared with the museum will be gratefully accepted.

If you would like to contribute to the restoration of the 1864 Taylorsville School, please contact the museum at 530-283-6320, or send your contribution to:

On a somewhat related note, this interesting postcard dated "Greenville, Sept. 11, 1910" came into the museum recently:

"Dear Sis, Now what do you think of this? Here am I way up in Greenville, and already so captivated by the beautiful scenery and fine climate and charming Sleepy Hollow people, that I'm thinking of making a stay of it. I have two very cosy rooms at the rambling old hotel, with a stove & electric light. I have a regular stand in with the old Chinese cook, too - I've only been here 10 days, and he sends me his choicest steaks, hot apple pie, etc. We have all the nice cream we want & A No.1 milk. You'd better come & try it. I'm glad the people are so lovely, for the other woman teacher is 20 years older than I &, well, hopeless! Am having a "high" time (about 4000 ft. elevation). Some of the "stage settings" are just like Bret Harte or Ralph Conner stories. One stage driver is Angus MacKenzie. Plumas Co. went dry the day I came, quite a celebration. Mrs. Page, the principal's wife, is coming soon. We teachers are all in the hotel.

FEATHER RIVER POWER TRIPS

The Museum is offering three one-day excursions to local hydroelectric facilities this summer. The trips will be guided by Norman Shelton, retired P.G. & E. executive, who will impart his vast knowledge of the hydroelectric projects on the Feather River. Each bus trip is limited to the first 25 people. Participants are to bring their own sack lunch. Water and snacks will be provided. Cost for each trip is \$35. Advance registration is required. All trips leave Quincy at 9 a.m. and return by 5 p.m. Call for details.

SCHEDULE

May 20 - Oroville Dam Visitor Center Overlook and Table Mountain wildflowers.

July 15 - Lake Almanor Dam and Intake, original Chester Jail, wildlife viewing, 'round the Lake trip, Indian Valley Museum.

Sept. 23 - Caribou, a classic vintage Craftsman-style town, Caribou Powerhouse

New Members

Thank you to all our new and renewing members!

Individuals: Susan Haren, *Sierraville*; Jay D. Jones, *Pleasanton*; Craig McDonald, *Huntington Beach*; Susan Payne, *Meadow Valley*.

Couples: Hazel & Ramon Cayot, *Quincy*; Dorothy & Richard Eck, *Quincy*; Nancy & Karl Ehat, *Redwood City*; Sharon & Bill Lahey, *Redwood City*; Sam & Susie Lahey, *Burlingame*; Joe & Sharon McIntyre, *Quincy*; Cheryl & Gary Porter, *Alamo*; Renee & John Zimmerman, *Redwood City*. **Patron:** Oradelle Lizer, *Riverside*. **Corporate:** Joe Smailes, *Cedar City, UT*.

Artifacts Donat-



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

Carol Bordeaux: Mt. Lassen brand beverage bottle; **Jerry DeVore:** “Humphrey Meat Market” archives from Beckwourth, dated 1907 – 1909; **Dana Eliason:** One blacksmith’s air-powered forge basin, found in Boyle Creek Watershed; **Dan Elliott:** B&W postcard of “Feather River Highway at Quincy, Calif.”; **Charles M. Ellwood:** Liberty magazine, Oct. 12, 1929, two pairs of spats, one leather “flyers” cap, leather shoulder bag, silk blouse; **Beth Gilman:** Seven books: Auld Lang Syne Birthday, Progressive Intellectual Arithmetic 1858, American Intellectual Arithmetic 1840, Elements of Arithmetic 1877, Progressive Higher Arithmetic 1860, Wind Blown and Dripping 1945, and Drifters Gold 1939; **Jack Greenspan:** Hand-carved sign from Camp Wallace-Alexander, wooden nickel token from Maple Leaf Station, Belden; **Susan Haren:** “Motorland” magazine, May-June 1957, newspaper: “Feather River Life,” Sierra Valley postcards; **Sid Kahre:** Stuffed red-tailed hawk, mounted on a piece of tree; **Bob Lowrey:** Two hats: purple Plumas No. 63 Shriner’s, Quincy Band hat worn by donor’s father, clipboard, ticket punch, Greyhound Lines patch, ID card titled “Operator in Charge - N. R. Lowrey,” notebook with newspaper cartoons glued to pages by donor’s mother, “Sacramento Freight Lines” model truck, Torrey straight razor, “Durham” and “Domino” hair trimmer, travel razor, Roy Rogers Deputy Sheriff Badge, three patches: CHP, Civil Air Patrol, cloisonné pendant and gold ring from the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, four Quincy Fire Department badges, wooden child’s bubble pipe used by the donor, I.O.O.F. pins, ring, and a gold pen and pencil set, five men’s tie clips, four corsage pins, Grange pendant, 1897 PTA pin, Meerschaum and gold cigar holder and small case belonging to donor’s maternal great-grandfather, who rode with the 7th Calvary, hand-made crochet bedspread made by donor’s mother, 133 California license plates dated 1920 - 1963, three ball point pens: Reid’s Western Auto, Quincy, Bob Barker’s Chevron Service station, Quincy, The Power House, Addison and Dupont, tin cigarette rolling machine; **Wilbert Miller:** Profile of President Grover Cleveland, brass relief mounted on a small piece of wood; **Len Mosely:** Three 8 x 10 B&W photos, one of Gansner Ranch house west of Quincy, one of unidentified ranch house, one of Quincy Main St. December 1893, four 4x5 black and white negatives; **David Myrick:** One map of Clover Valley Logging Chance, Plumas County, one 1892 Keddie map of Plumas County; **Bruce Robbins:** One yellow ribbon for 46th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America window display, one wooden plaque “Wallagazoo - Graeagle, 1949, Winner, Troop 50, Quincy,” one metal plaque from the Plumas County Nursing Home (late the County Annex); **Steve and Hope Smith:** One State of California Shaft Bell Signals sign, one Arizona State Code of Mine Bell Signals metal sign, front of metal sign is blue enamel with white lettering. Both were used at mines to signal for hoisting or lowering workers and to warn of blasting; **Zola Stokes for Janet McClard:** One Rhodera cookbook, one basket with handle made by Janet McClard; **Cora B. White:** Four documents: Keddie’s

About the Museum...

The **13th Annual History Archaeology Night** programs held in Quincy and Portola on May 17th and 18th were attended by large crowds of county residents eager to learn about the history of this trans-county highway. Daniel Elliott, PNF Beckwourth District Archaeologist, and Scott Lawson, Museum Director, compiled hundreds of vintage and current images to depict the development, and the changes since the construction of the highway. Docents and volunteers served ice cream and delicious homemade fruit cobblers at the intermission. Similar showings are planned for the Chester-Lake Almanor and Indian Valley areas later this summer. A great deal of effort went into this presentation, and our sincere thanks go to Diana Beatley for her computer media expertise, Dr. Jeff Kepple for the generous use of his sound recording system, and all our docents and volunteers for their help.

The **9th Annual 4th Grade Living History Days** are one of our most popular programs. This year's line up saw almost every 4th grade class in the county having a try at candle making, gold panning, laundering clothes with a washboard, and baking biscuits on a wood-fired cookstove. These heritage crafts were held at the 1875 Hall-Lawry Home, the 1878 Variel Home, the 1890 Gifford Cabin, the 1888 Peppard Cabin and the 1857 Pioneer School, the latter two being at the county fairgrounds. Museum Trustee Ginger Gramm, Museum Assistant Director Lori Simpson, and Registrar Laure Gage developed the program with lots of help from docents Frank Augugliara, Mary Bird, Marilyn Britton, Ann Castaldini, Don Hubbell, Diane Lawson, Nancy Pierson, and Norberta Schmidt. Bob Lowrey also did a great job of rebuilding our six picnic tables that were going to pieces.



A young visitor examines firemen's artifacts at the Museum.

Progress on our book, *Recollections of a '49er* is coming along, although it looks like it will be around Thanksgiving or Christmas before it comes off the press. Initially, the book will be available only through the museum, so be sure to put your name in for a copy of this exciting work on Gold Rush Plumas County.

We are trying to build a set of wagon sheds on our new lot behind the 1878 Variel Home. These are needed to provide protection for our sleigh, water wagon, and hearse, as well as a number of ranching and farming artifacts. Any donations of sound lumber, timbers, plywood, or cash will be greatly appreciated. The plan for the new lot will allow visitors to enter the sheds, as well as walk a pleasant pathway around the buildings. Picnic tables will be

available for lunches and other functions.

We would like to thank these generous people for donating to the Museum's monetary fund:



Lois Alexander, Claudia Barnes, Linda Batson & George McNett, Dorrie Beck, Nick Becker, George Bishop & Judy Buck, Mildred Bloom, Marilyn Bustillos, Patsy Carpenter, Dick Carson, Pat & Jan Cook, Evert & Lola Dale, Jay & Nancy Dembosz, Ray & Martha Donnenwirth, Eugene & Beverly Duvall, Bob & Mary Edwards, John S. Ellison, Tati Erickson, Wallace B. Eshleman, Ruth Gage, Ben & Patti Garfield, Steve & Mary Habeck, Stephen T. Harding, Dick & Carolyn Henrici, Norman & Frelene Herring, Ted & Betty Hoskins, Anne M. Huskinson, Lois Jones, Jewel Lawry & Bobby Monroe, Linda L. Leimbach, Patrick & Camille Leonhardt, Rita Marshall, Diane McCombs & Jim Wilcox, William & Judy Michelson, John & Marge Murray, Vadney & Jean Murray, David Myrick, Joan Normington, Loren & Pat Paule, Orphie & Kay Pierson, William & Kathryn Peters, Dr. George A. Poole, Phil Rees, Ruth Reid, Elmer & Helen Roberti, Zeph D. Rose, Robert & Jean Schoensee, Norman Shelton, Kendall & Grace Smith, Zola Stokes, Fred & Sharon Thon, Geron & Marilyn Thornquist, Thomas & Diane Uchtyl, Valerie Vann, John & Mary Weddle, Cora B. White, Lloyd & Beverly Woods, S. A. & Jacqueline Yoacham.

Won't you join these wonderful people by sending your donation today? Thanks!

Memorial Donations

These are the foundation of the museum's archives. Whenever 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:

Sally Alexander, **Quincy**; Shaina Belot, **Meadow Valley**; Jim Brock, **Quincy**; Delton H. Clifton, **Taylorville**; Len Frantz, **Canyon Dam**; John D. Frazier, Sr., **Quincy**; Robert Goff, **Graeagle**; Bea Hundertmark, **Quincy**; Greg Hockenson, **Reno, NV**; David Kennedy, **Fremont**; Merlin Kohler, **Quincy**; Glynn B. Lee, **Portola**; Jeannette Lombardi, **Quincy**; Jeanne McClard, **Quincy**; Bill Mikesell, **Quincy**; Hazel Mitchem, **El Dorado Hills**; Barbara Norman, **Quincy**; Bob Poetzsch, **Quincy**; Kennon Shea, **Quincy**; Elinor Shelton, **Quincy**; Ed Smith, **Grass Valley**; Jesse R. Wallace, **Quincy**; Dr. David Whitney, **Twain**.

Director's Dialogue

Spring is finally here, and all of us at the museum are working hard to make our various public programs and presentations possible. As usual, we must do it on a very small budget. I realize those of you who read this are probably tired of hearing about our budget woes, and as well, I am tired of speaking of them, but they are a reality we have to deal with everyday. Memberships and donations make up the largest share of the Association's income, so all the help from those of you who have joined or donated is greatly appreciated. Our last program, focusing on *March is Women's History Month*, featured Quincy's Margaret Goodart speaking on Women's Liberation and Crossing the Plains. Her presentation sold out to over 70 people, and a wonderful lunch prepared by Le Coq Cafe was enjoyed by all. We have a number of other upcoming programs this summer and fall, so keep in touch with the museum so that you don't miss them. On a sad note, you will see below the loss of Dr. David Whitney, the Association's treasurer. Mr. Dennis Clemens of Quincy has generously offered to take over the book keeping aspects of the position for us. His volunteerism is greatly appreciated. As usual, we are relying on our small pool of docents to staff the museum on Sundays. Because only a few are doing this, it becomes somewhat of a hardship on them. If you would like to help keep the museum open to visitors this summer, please give us a call. I would also like to welcome our newest members to the Museum and encourage all of you a to drop by for a visit to YOUR Museum! Have a great summer.

Scott J. Lawson, Director

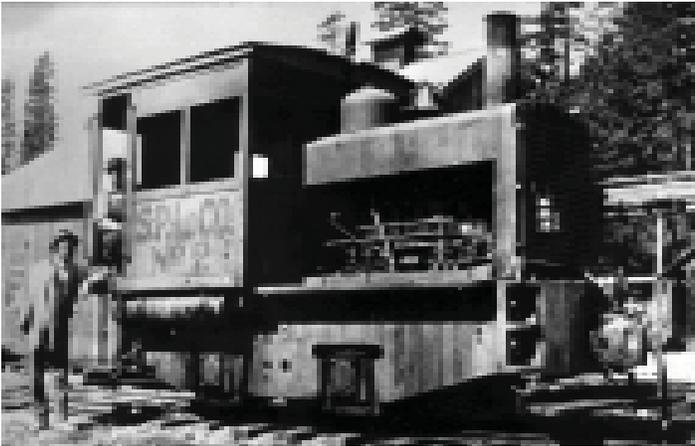
TREASURER'S NOTES

Due to the untimely passing of Museum Trustee and Treasurer Dr. David Whitney, we will not be running the Treasurer's Report at this time. David was dedicated to bringing the Association's books in order and developing a fine working budget. He was a railfan, a history buff (particularly on the Feather River Canyon), and a great treasurer. Our sincerest sympathies go out to his wife

Dr. David Whitney
May 30, 1937 - March 15, 2006



Plumas County's Newest and Narrowest Railroad Chugs Along!



The Spanish Peak Lumber Company locomotive restoration project has been coming along thanks to the generous efforts of a dedicated volunteer group. Sandy Coots, Ken Myers, Jay Ricks, Len Mosley, Forrest Prince, Sam Self, Ray Evans, Clay Johnson, Jim Boyer, John Kolb, John Schmidt, Rich Knoettgen, and Greg Jewers have put in over 5,000 volunteer hours in 2005 alone!

THE VARIEL HOME STILL NEEDS DOCENTS!

The 1878 Variel Home continues to be one of the main attractions at the museum, with most visitors interested in touring it. Assistant Director Lori Simpson noted this past summer we were able to provide tours on most Saturdays, and a few Sundays with the expert volunteering of the following docents: Millie Burris, Ann Castaldini, Don Johns, Cheryl Roberts & Norberta Schmidt.

In the fall months, we were unable to provide steady docent tours of the Variel Home due to a lack of docents, so tours fell upon the staff when it was possible for them to leave the front desk, according to Simpson. Due to this situation strategic planning for the next year is in order to provide a stable and consistent schedule



of tours on the weekends and possibly some days and hours during the week. This will require commitment on the part of our current docents and recruitment of new docents to help us achieve this goal. Anyone interested in volunteering to keep the Variel Home open for visitation during the upcoming 2006 season, please contact Lori at 283-6320. Variel Home Docent training will be provided. We want to thank all our Variel Home Docents for all their dedication throughout

2006 EXHIBITS on the Mezzanine

May: Dorothy Mitchell, Mixed Media

June: Historic Plumas County Ranching Exhibit

July - Aug: Michael Kerby, Watercolor

Sept - Oct: Carol & Robert Canby, Mixed Media

Nov: Grace McManus, Mixed Media

Dec: Ken Casaday, Photography

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 8-5, closed Sundays and Mondays.

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