

Las Plumas

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History of the Last Chance Mining District and the Plinco Mine

by Daniel Elliott, M.A.

Adapted from a National Register Eligibility Report

The Sierra Nevada witnessed a flood of hopeful miners in the early 1850s, but placer gold deposits were not abundant along the eastern edge of Plumas County. Placer mining was undertaken with little apparent success near today's Frenchman Lake in the late 1850s by a few early settlers. However, no significant mining developments occurred within the Diamond Mountains from a point west of Honey Lake south to the Beckwourth Pass during the mid nineteenth century. While many of these early ranchers had considerable mining experience, the focus of their economic activities had now shifted toward agriculture. Yet, many continued to prospect and mine as opportunity (and fortune) allowed.

In December of 1901, the *Plumas National-Bulletin* reported that a "good prospect" had been identified by F.C. Dickinson which had been designated as the Last Chance Mine, about two miles east of today's Frenchman Lake. The claim



Overview of 1970s borrow pit that destroyed the front end of the Plinco Mine. The mine is located in the northeastern part of Plumas County.

had been recorded in November of 1899 and included a number of locators aside from Dickinson, some of whom were from the Reno area. This is the earliest known copper claim along the eastern escarpment and was hailed with great optimism by the newspaper that December. The locators of the claim left the name of the mining district blank on the location notice but it was not long afterward that the linear area between Sierra Valley extending north to the escarpment above Milford, some 25 miles in length, became known as the Last Chance Mining District. There does not appear to have been any official organization of the Last Chance Mining District and most references for it come from contemporary newspaper articles.

By 1905, the Last Chance claims had been sold and became known as the Mohawk Copper Mines. The claims were patented and under lease by individuals from Reno by 1913. This same year the mines were shipping a daily production of eight tons of ore running an average of 6-percent copper. The vein had been developed using a 180 foot shaft with three levels being worked. Equipment included an 80-horsepower boiler, an Ingersoll-Rand compressor, a 25-horsepower single drum hoist

and a Knowles water pump. In 1916 and 1917, 14 men were employed. This operation may have been second only to the Plinco Mine in regards to the extent of its operations within the Last Chance Mining District.

The Murdock Copper Mine and the El Dorado Group were both located in 1909 in the same area as the Mohawk Group. The former consisted of eight claims encompassing 160 acres. Six men were working the Murdock during the 1917 season; three above and three within the mine. At least 90 tons of ore had been produced by that time and several shafts were ultimately developed. The ore ranged from 6 to 8-percent copper per ton. The mine had a shipping point at the Western Pacific in Chilcoot. The El Dorado Group of copper mines consisted of five claims which operated only sporadically during

the 1910s with little significant development.

In October of 1919, it was reported in the *Plumas National-Bulletin* that several men were sinking a shaft in the DuFay copper property located seven miles north of Chilcoot. Also, as late as 1920, a group of Portola men were developing another new copper property in the area, forming the Plumas-Chilcoot Copper Company. A shaft had been sunk to a depth of 75 feet that season but with the severe drop in copper prices taking place by this time, there does not appear to have been any further development.

At the northern end of the Last Chance Mining District, the Golden Horseshoe Claim was located on October 14, 1905 by Joseph Novak of Eureka, Utah, and Orlando McNab. Novak's claim was on land that had just been declared part of the new Diamond Mountain Forest Reserve in July of 1905. The Potosi Claim was located by Novak and Fred Streck in 1911 adjacent to the Golden Horseshoe. At the beginning of 1914, Streck also located five more claims; the French Cook, Incubus, Mormon, Despair, and Nightmare that together would form what became known as the Golden Horseshoe group of claims. Another nearby group of copper claims were located sometime prior to 1913. These were called the Copper King and Copper Queen mines consisting of four claims taking up 80 acres. Limited development of a 40-foot tunnel and a series of 10 to 20-foot excavations was reported in 1913.

Novak initially appears to have sold the Golden Horseshoe group to Utah investors in 1912. The following was recorded in the *Plumas National-Bulletin* on July 11, 1912:

BIG MINING DEAL IN LAST CHANCE SECTION

Novak Copper Mine Taken Over by Salt Lake Capitalists and Development has Begun

The Golden Horseshoe group, known as the Novak copper mine, in Last Chance Valley, has been taken over by Salt Lake capitalists, and development on a large scale will begin at once. The name of the company is the California - Utah Gold and Copper Mining Company. This property has the ear-marks of making one of the largest copper mines in the West. The development at present consists of a shaft at 50 feet in depth, sunk all in ore that will average 5 percent copper and \$2 in gold, with a streak on the footwall side that will average better than 20 percent copper with good gold values. The shaft is now down to the water level, and the values are found to increase with depth. It is the intention of the present management to continue the shaft on down to the 100-foot level, then drift both ways on the vein and stope and market the ore.

With the present high copper market this property should be a dividend-payer from the start. In order to equip the property with machinery, the management has decided to sell 50,000 shares of the treasury stock at 10 cents per share, and Manager J.B. Dumont, with headquarters at Milford, is certain that before the close of the year this stock should sell for 50 cents per share. - *Lassen Advocate*

Yet, there was no further mention of these Utah investors subsequent to this article and no deed recorded for this transaction. It appears that the deal was not finalized and Novak retained ownership of the Golden Horseshoe Group.

Despite the optimistic outlook in the above article, there was apparently only limited development during 1913-1914 at the mine. By 1915, however, the Golden Horseshoe group had been bonded and leased by Novak to J. F. Cutler and four men were reported to be working the mine; two on top and two in the mine. A report highlighting the prospects of the property, prepared by Cutler in July of 1915, indicated that the equipment and facilities currently at the mine consisted of "...a forty H.P. boiler and a 7x10 geared hoist and a No. 5 Cameron sinking pump, covered by [a] shaft house at [the] working shaft." Buildings were present on site that were said to be ready to accommodate a crew sufficient for "starting up" operations. Other improvements included a small barn and a blacksmith shop. The site also had tools in stock. The main shaft had been excavated to the 120-foot level with a couple of shallow but promising drifts run to the north and south. Cutler's marketing appears to have paid off. On November 18, 1915, the *Plumas National-Bulletin* provided the following:

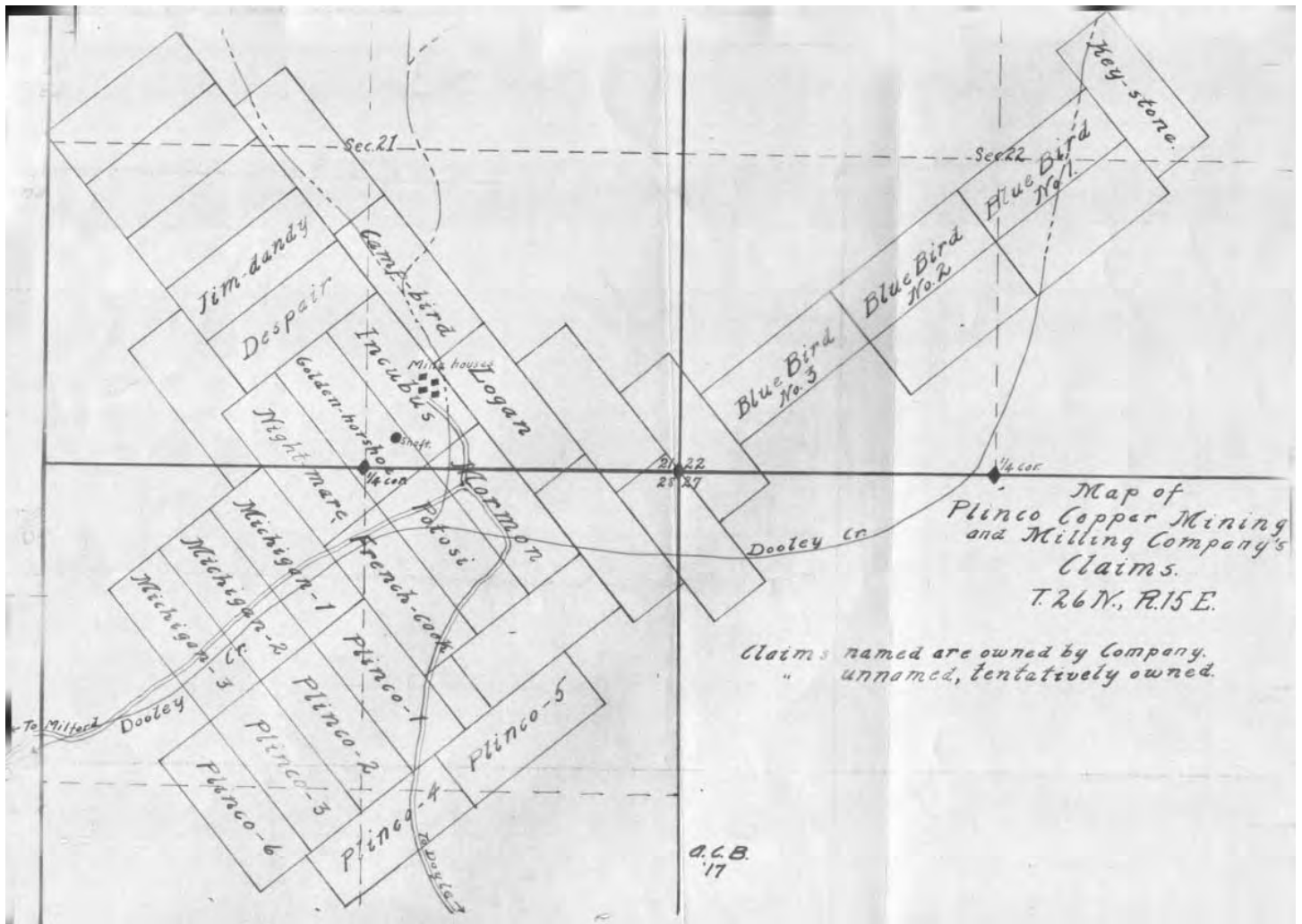
OPENING COPPER MINE NEAR DOYLE

Eastern Capitalists Develop Promising Property in Plumas County

Doyle, Nov. 14 - Work has already commenced on the development of what is known as the Novak Copper mine about 13 miles west of Doyle, just across the line in Plumas county. J.F. Cutler, representing capitalists of Duluth, Minnesota, and Lincoln, Nebraska, is now on the ground and supervising the work being done.

About \$16,000 will be spent during the winter on shafts and buildings and the way cleared for the erection of a smelter in the coming summer. The shaft on the property is now down about 140 feet and it is proposed to sink it 100 feet farther this winter. This, with the necessary drifting and cross cutting, will comprise the development work to be done this winter.

Eight or 10 men are already at work and one car of lumber is now being shipped in from Doyle. Two



more cars are on the way and will be taken in this winter. There is considerable hoisting machinery already on the ground. The property is a well-known one and considerable work has been done on it in years past, but is now proposed to develop it to its fullest extent.

The Plinco Copper Company filed its Articles of Incorporation in the State of Nebraska on November 2, 1915. A privately funded venture with no public stock offered, capital stock was \$100,000 in shares of \$100 each. Jesse E. Rasmusen was named president and director with George W. Dill named vice-president. The company was reincorporated on May 6, 1916 as the Plinco Copper Mining and Milling Company, with the stock now set at one million dollars. Three additional directors were named including J. F. Cutler.

In October of 1915, ten more claims were located adjacent to the Golden Horseshoe group by Ezra Fairchild and John Bassler. These were purchased by Cutler in November of 1916 then resold to the Plinco Company. Cutler had filed location notices himself on nine adjacent claims that were added to the group in late April and early May of 1916. Six of these were named Plinco 1 through 6, while the other three were named Bluebird 1 through 3. These claims were also sold to the Plinco Company. By late 1916, Novak's original seven Golden Horseshoe claims were under escrow. Ownership of the Golden Horseshoe group finally passed from J. F. Cutler to the Plinco Mining and Milling Company in January of 1917.

As these claims came under the control of the Plinco Company, activity was robust. The *Plumas National-Bulletin* of February 22, 1917 described operations as follows:

DEVELOPING COPPER PROPERTY NEAR DOYLE
Plinco Copper M. & M. Co. Is Using Diamond Drill and
Expects to Erect 100-Ton Plant

The Plinco Copper Mining and Milling Company, which is operating a promising copper property in Last Chance Valley, Plumas County, fourteen miles west of Doyle, is now at a depth of 230 feet, doing a lot of diamond drilling, the result of which, in addition to ore exposure, already made in workings, is expected to

justify the erection of a 100-ton oil flotation mill this year.

The company has already installed a modern power plant and is installing a sawmill to get out mine timber and lumber for new mine and outbuildings.

The company is financed by Lincoln, Nebraska capital. The property is located in the same district as the now famous Engels mine and the formation and ores are said to be almost identical.



Concrete headframe foundations at the Plinco Mine, 2006.

The infusion of capital and the resulting developments and expansion of operations at Plinco resulted in additional employees at the mine. Families had taken up residence and Plinco had now become a small mining settlement well known throughout eastern Plumas County.

Operations would probably have been at least somewhat seasonal due to the relatively harsh winters and poor roads. Lumber and supplies were transported in while ore was transported out. All of this was accomplished using trucks on a road that extended south from the mine to link with the road following Last Chance Creek. The route continued up the Last Chance drainage south to the Doyle Grade road. Doyle Grade descended some seven miles to the east connecting with the Western Pacific Railroad at Doyle. Once transferred to the railroad, the ore would be transported east to smelters in

Utah. By late 1916, the company was petitioning the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to cooperate in constructing a new road linking the mine with the Doyle Road near the Forest Service's Meadow View Guard Station. Although there is no further mention of it in the newspapers, a more direct road is shown extending over hills south of the mine on some of the forest maps of the 1920s and 1930s. It connected to the Doyle Grade at Meadow View. Good transportation was obviously of great importance to the company.

At the outset of 1917 the company was working a shaft of 120-foot depth with drifts running between 25 and 50 feet to the north and south. It was said that the surrounding country "... contains a good supply of timber, mostly sugar pine, fir and spruce." A plat of the Plinco Group of mines dated to 1917 shows 23 named claims under company ownership and 12 more un-named claims that are "tentatively owned." The main shaft is located just west of the north-south trending road at the southeast corner of the Golden Horseshoe claim (Novak's original 1905 location). The residential area is shown northeast of the shaft (within the Incubus Claim).

The years 1917-1918 witnessed the height of the World War I era copper mining boom and operations as Plinco reached its zenith during this period. Eastern and mid-western capitalists had been consolidating control of many western mining operations and speculating on properties having even marginal promise. Yet, while the war was in large part responsible for the high price of copper, it also sapped the strength of the local workforce. An August 1917 work reference for a former Plinco employee shows the company's letterhead. It was penned for the benefit of one Walter Shore, who had been employed as "... a machine drill runner in shaft work." It is apparent that Mr. Shore was leaving Plinco for military service and he received a good report from the company.

In September of 1917 the mine recorded its only known fatality. It was described in the *Plumas National-Bulletin* of September 20, 1917 as follows:

MINER WAS KILLED AT PLINCO MINE - Oscar Ridenour, an employee of the Plinco copper mine at Last Chance, in the northern part of this county, met accidental death Monday of this week when the hoisting cable used in the shaft at the mine caught on a dump car and the latter fell on Ridenour, stunning him and pinning his face down in the drain at the bottom of the shaft. Coroner Chamberlin was summoned from Quincy and an inquest was held. Death was not caused from injuries received from the falling car, but was due to drowning, according to a physician who gave testimony at the inquest.

By 1918, the rising cost of labor, supplies and transportation made the economic viability of small scale copper mines more and more tenuous. There is little information specific to the operation at Plinco in 1918 but the mine continued to operate through this season and through most of the 1919 season as well. The year 1919 marked the first drop in Plumas

County copper production since well prior to the war. Both the Walker and Engels operations continued to be active following the war but most of the smaller operations suffered greatly and there were many permanent closures. Thus, toward the close of the 1919 season, the outlook for Plinco was already pretty bleak. By 1920, copper prices had actually dropped below pre-war levels.

In late August of 1919, a massive forest fire erupted in the Last Chance country that brought a permanent end to operations at the Plinco Mine. The Ferris Fire burned over 5,000 acres and was only contained with the greatest effort. Before it was done, the entire Plinco development was completely consumed. An article from the *Lassen Advocate* of Susanville dated August 29, 1919 captured the event and provided some additional information on the operation as well:

Plinco Mine Buildings Are Destroyed. (Special to the Mail) Doyle, Aug. 28. A forest fire of unusual dimensions has been raging for several days in the mountains about twelve miles from Doyle. On Tuesday night the buildings of the Plinco copper mine were destroyed and a number of women and children living at the mine were nearly entrapped by the flames. The fire started between Squaw Valley and Willow Creek and has burned over an area of about ten miles square. A call for help was sent to Doyle and the southern side of Honey Lake Valley and between three and four hundred men are in the mountains fighting fire. It is hoped that it can be brought under control before it starts down this side of the mountain. Should it escape bounds and spread down the northern slope of the mountain into the valley there are many ranches and growing crops which would be in the path. The women of this entire part of the valley are preparing food for the fighters which is being sent to them on pack horses.

The destruction of the Plinco mine buildings occurred Tuesday night between 7:30 and 8 o'clock and the immediate cause was the explosion of a ton of dynamite which was stored in a cave back of the mine. All of the buildings except the sawmill were completely demolished. Heroic efforts had been made to save the buildings and the explosion occurred after it was thought that everything was safe. S.A. Rutherford and A.J. Hutchinson remained on the scene that night and managed to save the sawmill by keeping streams of water playing on it.

At the time the flames surrounded the mine the following people were there: Mr. and Mrs. S.A. Rutherford, Mrs. L.A. Henrix and two grandchildren, Edith and Barbara DeWitt and Mr. Hutchinson. Walter E. Jotter, the forest ranger who has charge of the district, notified them about 2 o'clock Tuesday afternoon to get out if possible. The only means of conveyance was a Ford touring car belonging to Geo. Alton. No one in the crowd knew how to drive it and the escape was delayed until Fred Raker arrived. He loaded the women and children and ten suit cases into the machine and was successful in getting out, although it was necessary to pass through the fire to do so. C.A. DeWitt and A.E. Pattan of Doyle, with as many men as could hastily be gathered left in cars for the mine as soon as it was learned how serious the situation had become.

A second newspaper account from the *Plumas National-Bulletin* of September 18, 1919 is recounted below:

HEROINE OF PLINCO MINE FIRE TELLS STORY NARROW ESCAPE
Drove Though Walls of Blazing Trees -
Husband, Left Behind, Sought Safety in Creek Bed

Mrs. S.A. Rutherford, house guest in Quincy of Mrs. H.J. Langhorst and heroine of the recent forest fire that destroyed the buildings of the Plinco Mining Company, near Doyle, in speaking of her experiences said that they were most terrifying and awesome. Mrs. Rutherford, who has resided at the mine for nearly five years, her husband being the chief engineer for the company, said that all the men in the camp, except Mr. Rutherford and one other, were out in the woods fighting the fire. Without warning a sudden shifting of the wind swept a wall of flame directly down upon the mine settlement. With scarcely ten minutes warning in which to gather up personal belongings and make their escape, Mrs. Rutherford and one other woman and two children, with Mr. Rutherford's assistant driving, made their way out in a small automobile runabout, speeding on a road that was



Plinco Copper Mining and Milling Co. letterhead, 1917.

curtained on both sides by roaring flames. Mr. Rutherford, remaining behind to do what he could toward saving company property, was compelled to seek refuge and safety in the bed of a creek, where he lay for several hours, covered with wet blankets, while the fire swept over him.

This unfortunate turn of events ended all further development at the Plinco mine. It is very likely that, given the deteriorating economic environment, 1919 would have been Plinco's final season anyway. Even at the height of its development, there was never any apparent attempt to patent the claims at Plinco. Of course, the much larger Plumas County copper operations at the Walker and Engels mines continued to produce through the 1920s but there is no indication of any substantial development of any of the east-side copper mines in the old Last Chance Mining District from about 1920 on.

In October of 1920, it was reported that John F. Cowan of Salt Lake, Utah, was "... under contract to purchase two groups of copper claims, twenty-three in number, known as the Plinco Consolidated, fifteen miles east of the Walker mine." The article went on to describe the primary mine workings

as "... an ore chute on the 100-foot level, which is said to be 100 feet long, showing 9 per cent copper for a considerable distance. On the 165 foot level, a second vein shows 100 feet long by 4 to 13 feet wide, which assays 7 per cent copper. On the 200 foot level the ore has been opened up 300 feet, the ore body being 25 feet wide in spots..." Thus, prior to the 1919 fire, the depth of the mine was at least 200 feet with considerable drifting. Another source indicates that the mine had ultimately made a depth of 300 feet. What became of Mr. Cowan's plans is not known but there does not appear to have been any reconstruction or further working of the mine. Interestingly, on the same page as the optimistic 1920 article on Plinco in the *Plumas Independent*, another article is entitled "**BREAK IN PRICE MAY CLOSE COPPER MINES.**" This more ominous article notes a world-wide surplus of copper and a general desire to curtail production. Prices for copper had fallen to 12 cents per pound by 1920 whereas it had been at 18 cents in 1918. The suspension of many operating mines in the western U.S. was forecasted if the Federal government did not take action to fix prices. Of course, this did not happen and copper prices continued to fall.

Whatever equipment that was salvageable after the fire was probably removed rather quickly. Although it remained inactive, the location of the mine continued to be plotted on forest maps for decades afterward.

There was something of a local resurgence in small scale mining in the area north of Chilcoot during the 1950s. There was also some reported uranium prospecting in the area as well but no substantive developments associated with it. Plinco may have seen some assessment work during the 1950s or 1960s but there is no definitive record of it. Sometime prior to 1972, a large surface excavation was cut by a caterpillar some 230 feet in length extending up the hill to the west. This exploratory cut was made about 500 feet north of the old mine.

The mine area was utilized as a source for aggregate sometime between 1972 and 1977. Not only were the tailings completely removed, but the hillside where the original adit was once located was largely removed as well. What appears to be a sealed shaft with surrounding concrete footings for a hoist/headframe is still located just above the massive cut for the quarry. The currently open shaft, part of it now excavated away, is located at the base of the cut below and to the east of the concrete footings or foundations. Today, only a semi-subsurface galvanized steel water tank and the concrete footings remain. Below the shaft and quarry area near the road are the decayed remnants of the concrete footings for what must have been the reduction mill adjacent to the road. In addition to this, only a few exploratory excavations on the slope and scattered refuse remain as obvious evidence for the historic workings at the Plinco Mine.

The Last Chance Mining District never even remotely rivaled the Engels-Walker operations in Plumas County copper production. Yet, the Plinco Mine was one of the most substantial, if not the most substantial copper mine in this district and appears to have provided at least a decent pay-off to the operators and/or investors. There is no record of the total output of the Last Chance Mining District but, in comparison to the larger Plumas County operations to the west, it was undoubtedly very minor. The Plinco Mine was always a small-scale operation that was itself very indicative of the rapid boom and bust cycle of the World War I era copper mining industry in eastern Plumas County.



Top right and above: Digging a test unit for archaeological study, 2006.

Artifacts Donated to the Museum

Thank you to the following people for their generous donations:

Estate of Lois Alexander by Jay Alexander: Early ice skates, Quincy Furniture Co. yardstick; Stephen Beck: Collection of photos of Camp Wallace-Alexander, 1929-1972, 1968 Logbook Piedmont Council; Chris Bolton: Postcards of Bucks Lake Lodge 1950s, Greenville 1930s; Julie Chapman: Photos related to the Maxwell family; Pete Dryer: Cooper Mountain mining map; Bob & Barbara Emert: Genealogy of the Bell family; Kaley Erickson: Matchbook cover collection of Plumas County businesses; Art Garcia: One field phone, poles used for communication and power along the Western Pacific Railroad; Keith Johnson: Maps and Bucks Lake archaeological report; Ann Rainey Kelsey: Plumas County Sheriff's Office patch worn by her father, Leo Kelsey, 1948-1964; David & Kathleen Ladd: Hand-stitched crazy quilt; Don Larios: Plumas County Jeep Posse shoulder patch; Samuel Lawson: Railroad track components from the Clover Valley Lumber Co. railroad; Linda Leonhardt: 1901 Bible from the Flournoy family; Tom Locke: Rita



Marshall: Poems by Mary Baker Eddy; Small game obsidian arrowhead; Ruth & Michael Pedro: Savercool family photos and information; Gary & Cheryl Pini; Two health related books, 1908 & 1922; Plumas District Hospital Boutique: Two 48-star American flags; Margaret Posehn: Collection of photos and research material used in writing the book "Sloat and Cromberg;" Nance Reed: Quincy Motors Sales leather key holder; Ruth Reid: 1915 Pine yearbook; Bruce Robbins: Boy Scout memorabilia 1943-1966; Scott Rose: Antique bottle found in Jackson Street water line trench; Inga Stone: 1920s Quincy Ladies Aid Cookbook; Janice Hall Thomas: Scrapbook of P.G. & E. activities; Judy & Don Thomson: Antique bottles; Estate of Ruth Van Gilder: Gilt frame, antique folding chairs, antique doors.

Boy Scouts of America Centennial Exhibit



As part of an upcoming exhibit on the centennial of American Boy Scouting, the Plumas County Museum is seeking Boy Scouting memorabilia from former and current Plumas County Boy Scouts and Boy Scout leaders.

In 2010, the Boy Scouts of America celebrates its 100th anniversary, and the Plumas County Museum plans to mark the occasion with a new exhibit featuring images and artifacts highlighting the history of the Boy Scout movement in Plumas County throughout the years – with emphasis on the early days of Scouting in Plumas County.

Of special interest to the Museum are photographs of early Plumas County Boy Scout troops in uniform, photos of Plumas County Boy Scouts involved in community service, camping, and other outdoor activities, Scouts in parades, award ceremonies, and other Troop and District special events, as well as artifacts and memorabilia such as uniforms, flags, rank and advancement badges, hand-carved staffs and neckerchief slides, commemorative medals, plaques,

award, ribbons, and pins, and any photos or objects associated with past and present Cub Scouting, Explorer posts, and the Order of the Arrow honor camping society.

Stories, memories, and memorabilia from events such as National Jamborees, Camporees, Courts of Honor, Pinewood Derbies, or from the old Mount Lassen Area Council are also being sought, as are items associated with individual past and current Troops (such as Troop histories) in Plumas County, 1910 to the present.

If you have, or know of someone who has, any Plumas County Boy Scouting items, photographs, stories, or history to share, loan, or donate to the Museum, please contact Paul at the Plumas County Museum at 283-6320.

Notes from the Director - Scott Lawson, Museum Director

Our warmest holiday greetings go out to our members from the staff of the Plumas County Museum. This has been a busy and somewhat chaotic year for the museum. We have had to take some serious budget cuts again, resulting in reduced operating funds and in the loss of the Museum Registrar, Laure Gage. We are fortunate to have Paul Russell with us as Assistant Director, and with his experience, we hope to weather the still foreseeable rough seas of this budget crisis.

On a lighter note, I would like to thank Jon McKay of Portola and his crew consisting of Mario Valadez, Gary Smith, Russ ---, Matthew Zazueta, "Turtle," Scott Keogh, and Nick Eckenroad. Together they have constructed a first-rate wagon shed for our wagons, sleigh, and farm implements. This project was a long time coming and sorely needed.

We conducted two field trips this summer, the first was to the Lake Almanor Basin where we toured historic sites such as Keddie, the Shoofly Bridge, Indian Falls, downtown Greenville, Prattville Cemetery, the Collins Pine Museum and the Chester Lake Almanor Museum. The second trip took us to the historic gold mining town of La Porte. On the way we saw the Illinois (Thompson) Ranch, Willow (Egbert) Ranch, Middle Fork Feather River, Nelson Point, the 1890 Nelson Creek Bridge, Washington Hill, Onion Valley, some great fall color, and the Gibsonville Cemetery. At La Porte, we toured the Frank C. Reilly Museum, and local historian and Plumas County Museum board member Jann Garvis gave a great walking tour of the town. The weather was perfect and everyone enjoyed themselves.

We would like to thank our docents who have helped to make the museum such a wonderful attraction for our visitors: Mary Bird, Melissa Shelton, DeAnne Mosley, Ken Green, Rachel Ochoa for garden work; Ann Castaldini, Marilyn Britton, and Courtney Browning for Variel Home tours; Marilyn Bergum for Sunday staffing; our great Spanish Peak Locomotive crew that keeps on chugging; Chris Bolton and Jim Shannon for photo and archival work; Carol Paoli for fielding research requests; Stephanie McMillan for transcriptions of historical documents, and Tracy Ball for setting up our new Point-of-Sale store cash register system. Also, a big thank you to all our docents and volunteers who staffed the Peppard Cabin and the Pioneer School during the County Picnic and the Plumas County Fair.

On behalf of the Plumas County Museum and membership, I would also like to thank John Larrieu of Portola for his many years (we think about 17) of service on the Board of Trustees. John has provided years of valuable insight and support, and will be missed on the Board and at the Museum.

In closing, please accept our warmest holiday wishes, and be sure to drop by YOUR museum to see the displays and check out our museum book store and gift items for the upcoming holiday season.

Museum Book Store Holiday Special!

Be sure to take advantage of the *Museum's Holiday Special* discount of 10% off all books and publications (some restrictions may apply). This means members receive an additional 10% for a whopping 20% off!

What better time to get your holiday shopping done, and what better gift to give than a good book on local or regional history to curl up by a warm fire with.

On top of this, don't miss the enclosed discount coupons for drastically reduced books. Along with the holiday 10% this makes for rock bottom prices! Be sure to bring your coupons in or call for these end of the year savings.

Our newest titles are *Powerhouses of the Sierra Nevada* by Steve Hubbard, and *The Mining Camps Speak, A New Way to Explore the Ghost Towns of the American West*. Both are chock-full of great photographs. We accept cash, checks and VISA or Mastercard. You can also order on the internet at www.plumasmuseum.org (follow the tabs to the online store) or call 530-283-6320 Tuesday through Saturday, 9-4:30.

We also carry a fine line of local gold nugget jewelry.

Don't forget, these specials expire on December 31st!



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:

Lois Alexander, Quincy; Marjorie Lee Clarke, Quincy; Don C. Johns, Quincy/Oroville; Patricia McElroy, Quincy; Joe Segura, Vacaville; Mollie Sosa, Quincy.

New Members

Thank you to all our new and renewing members!

Individuals: *Terri Castaneda, Carmichael; Glen Gibson, Citrus Heights; Bob Janowski, Quincy; Rachel Ochoa, Quincy; Carol N. Tretten, Walnut Creek.*

Family: *Hal & Cheryl Babb, Cupertino; John Cunningham & Sharon Taschenberg, Rush Creek - Quincy; Jim & Deborah Heiland, Monterey; Diane & Norm Jacobson, Salinas; Hanz Holtz & Michele Jimenez-Holtz, Meadow Valley.*

Patrons: *Kevin & Margaret Ottolini Geno, San Francisco.*

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:

Andy & Gayle Anderson, John & Mary Bean, Randall & Dorris Beck, James & Billie Bequette, Gary & Louise Bullis, Pat & Janna Cook, Evert Dale, Richard & Paula Foster, Velma Gonzalez, Warren Grandall, Marilyn Johnson, Robin Johnson, Lois Jones, Michael & Myung Ja Koh, Elise Kroeber, Gordon & Edith Martin, Robert & Lillian

Mohammed, Richard & Carol Neville, Thelma Olsen, Orphie & Kay Pierson, George Poole, Fred Schaeffer, Jr., Ron Seibold, Laura Ashkin & Chris Stanton, Danny & Debbra Thorsen, Valerie Vann, Evelyn Whisman, Bev Woods, the Yoacham Family.

**Jay Dembosz and Glen Gibson – Fixing the Museum's Grandfather Clock.
Jon McKay & Portola Crew - Wagon shed work.**

FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURE DAY

Once again this year, from September 22-25, Ginger Gramm (the Museum's Education Committee chairperson), Lorena Gorbet (Mountain Maidu elder and community activist), along with parents, teachers, and community volunteers, presented First Peoples Culture Day activities at four different Plumas County schools. Third graders at schools in Quincy, Chester, Greenville, and Portola enjoyed archery, Mountain Maidu beliefs and language, grinding acorns and making dolls and bullroarers, playing games, listening to stories, and learning about nature in the All Relations Nature Walk.

For lunch, students brought natural foods to share with everyone, and the feast taught the lesson of community. Respect was the word of the day as the children had fun at each activity while learning about life as a California Native. Judging by student comments such as, "It was awesome," "I had a great day," and "It was the best day ever," – the events were a rousing success.

First Peoples Culture Day is an important part of the Museum Association's Educational outreach and all activities tie in with the Social Science standards of third grade teachers. All volunteers are welcome and Museum volunteers especially are encouraged to become involved in helping staff First Peoples Culture Day activities.



THE SMITH'S SHOP

Museum docent and head blacksmith Ray Nichol (far left) demonstrated historic blacksmithing techniques to a group of 17 Lassen Technical Institute students from Susanville. Each year the institute sends students to the Museum to view and assist Ray in making various tools and other hand-forged objects. Ray donates time on the forge for other events as well.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Every year the Museum staff, happy to greet all our visitors, takes special pleasure in conversing with international tourists. This summer we hosted folks from Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Of course, along with them, we also host a great number of visitors from all over the other 49 states and territories.

Museum Visitor Discovers Source of Monetary Inflation!

On October 20, Peter Ray, a retired Chinese collection bibliographer from U.C. Berkeley Center for Chinese Studies and University of Chicago East Asian Library was visiting the museum with his companion, Chris Hayamizu. While perusing the Chinese exhibit case, Ray spotted a piece of paper that piqued his interest. Museum staff carefully retrieved the piece from the display and laid it out for inspection. Ray's demeanor went from mildly excited to exuberant.

Apparently, the pieces (it turned out there were two separate pieces) are not just "worn out Chinese documents" as they had been described in our accession records, but Ming dynasty Kwan notes given out between 1348 and 1378 to substitute for long strings of brass coins. How these pieces ended up in Plumas County is a mystery, although the collection they were donated in came from the Ruth Haddick Estate of Cromberg. It is thought they may have come to our area after the Boxer Rebellion as souvenirs. So many of these mulberry bark paper notes were issued that it ultimately wreaked havoc with the Chinese economy and precipitated the first known instance of currency inflation. Today, these notes are highly prized by collectors, being, without a doubt, the oldest pieces of world paper money one can aspire to own.



Plumas and Beyond...

McQuarrie & Sheehan Art Exhibition



Left: John Sheehan explains the finer points of one of his works to fellow artist Michael Kerby. Right: Heather McQuarrie (right) talks with Ty Herbertson about her photography at the November 6th opening.



Heather McQuarrie and John Sheehan formally unveiled their joint art exhibition on the Stella Fay Miller Mezzanine Gallery Friday, November 6th in conjunction with the Quincy Art Walk. Heather's color photography is focused mainly on local and regional natural settings, wildlife, and people, although on a recent cross country trip she took over 1,000 photos! John works in mixed media with an emphasis on oil. His subjects range from landscapes and still lifes to portraits, abstracts and action. Their well-received reception saw over 100 guests and plenty of fine food and refreshments provided by Lee Anne Schramel-Taylor. You will want to make it a point to drop in and view their fine exhibit. The show will run through the end of December.

SPANISH PEAK LUMBER CO. PROJECT TO SEE TRACKS SOON!



Restoration of Engine No.2, Spanish Peak Lumber Company logging locomotive.

From left: The Spanish Peak Lumber Co. No.2 in 1926 at Spanish Ranch; in 1949 in Alameda; in 2001 at Quincy; 2002 in Quincy; 2007 at the fairgrounds on its first self-propelled trip in 50 years; and in 2009 as finished with its original color of yellow.



Recent developments between the Museum and the Plumas County Fair have taken an encouraging step forward; we may actually have some trackage down by next summer! With new Fair Manager John Stefanic's encouragement and resourcefulness, it looks like the project is again underway. We are also negotiating with the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola about the possible loan of a caboose as a depot for our rail project.

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, *Mixed Media & Photos*

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 9-4:30, closed Sun., Mon., holidays.

TRUSTEES:

Ken Barnard, Graeagle
Charlie Brown, Quincy
Don Clark, Graeagle
Patrick Cook, Graeagle
Marc Eastman, Quincy
Bob Edwards, Quincy
Ginger Gramm, Greenville
Jerry Holland, Quincy
OPEN, Portola
Doug Miller, Chester
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www.plumasmuseum.org

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