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TRINIDAD MUSEUM  
SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Exploring Our History

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1991

JANUARY

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MARCH

1991

From T-M-S President Axel Lindgren:

Hello again, and may I extend my belated wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year to all.

Starting this New Year with old happenings in Trinidad, I will share the historical contents of a letter I received from Dorathy Watkins, dated September 29, 1983. The following are excerpts from Dorathy's letter:

... "I was visiting Trinidad a few weeks ago and stopped-in at a novelty shop on the old Sangster property. I used to live in the old house back in 1932 to 1936."

Dave Zebo's house (today), before renovations.

... "I happened to buy a paper about Trinidad Historical Days. I didn't have a chance to read it until I arrived back home. It brought back so many memories; my husband, Warren Watkins, Jr., was born there up near the cemetery in 1904."

Warren was born in the house above the entrance to the State Park, off Stage Coach Road. The house was removed in the 1960's, and is now State Park property.

From Vice President Chas. Fleschner:

Our very special **thanks** to **Helen Partee**. In addition to editing and mailing the Museum Society's Newsletter, and maintaining membership records, Helen's time, effort and financial contributions extend well "beyond the line of duty." Helen's exceptional support of the Museum is fully appreciated.

**Kay Johnson** has done it again; she has just completed the task of giving our Native Plant garden a neat trim and pruning. Also, thanks to **Diane Moore** and **Davey Tree Service** for the donation of generous quantities of mulch; **Kay** has given the garden a new winter coat. **Many thanks** to everyone.

The Trinidad Museum Society now has a superbly mounted specimen of the well-known Spotted Owl, thanks to the concern and generosity of **Gregory** and **Paige Smith**. A quote from a Department of Fish & Game letter will explain by what means and authority the Museum may exhibit the specimen of this endangered species:

"This letter shall serve as author-

... "My husband's father, Warren Sr., Martha Underwood & Molly Baines were Rose Ann Watkins' children. She was a Sangster when she first came to Trinidad; her husband Jim and son Sandy Sangster were drowned off Trinidad." Rose Ann Sangster Watkins was the same age as my Grandmother, Eliza Lindgren (an estimation by Martha Watkins Underwood in 1940).

... "Then she (Rose Ann) married Warren Watkins. They built a hotel I believe near the whaling station. The Hanrahans had a hotel there also." The hotel that Watkins built was the Occidental Hotel on Galindo & Van Wycke streets.

... "I can remember two Indian girls who worked for Grandma Watkins, and both were buried near the whaling station. A white picket fence was built around their graves. It looks like someone's yard now." Near Tom Odom's new house and Ruth Greenberg's house. I didn't know there were two graves. I was told the white picket fence surrounded the grave of "Injun Muggay," wife of "Dave Fisherman" (Dave Nesbitt).

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over

This letter shall serve as authorization to possess, mount and display the Spotted Owl found dead on the roadside of Scenic Drive in Westhaven, by Paige Smith on November 7, 1989. This owl will be located and displayed at the Trinidad Museum Society Center in Trinidad. The mounted owl shall be considered to be the property of the California Department of Fish & Game, and if at some future date is no longer needed, it shall be delivered to the Wildlife Protection Division, Eureka Department of Fish & Game office, 619 Second St., Eureka, CA." /s/ James Froland, DFG Warden, Fortuna, CA.

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**Notice:** Due partly to the development of exciting new exhibits, the Trinidad Museum Society Center will be open only by special arrangement, from Dec. 2, to April 19, 1991. C.F.

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Members, please **L O O K** at the date on your mailing label ..... are you due for renewal in JAN, FEB, or MARCH 1991? We hope you will renew your membership at this time.

**"HAPPY NEW YEAR"** to everyone, from the Board of Directors of **T-M-S**.



By Glenn Saunders

... "Warren's Dad worked on the Light House (on the Big Head), and told us how the rough seas put the light out!" Rough seas put the light out in 1913, the 13th day of December, about 4:pm.

Since the Christmas season, 1990, has just passed, I will attempt to tell you what it was like 60-years ago -- 1930's style.

... "Warren was a little boy when the Indians had a Rancheria where the bell and lighthouse is now located. He could remember the sweathouses and the children. An Indian lady used to take care of him once in awhile. She would bake acorn bread in the sand and he said the sand didn't even stick to it."

The economy was very depressed, jobs scarce, and a very simple life for the few people living in Trinidad and surrounding areas. Wages were 30¢ an hour for a chopper in the woods, if a job was available; and large crabs were \$2.00 a dozen.

An historic or Pioneer House was occupied by Billie and Jane Childs, where the Memorial Lighthouse & bell is today. Billie Childs was drowned while digging mussels on Pilot Rock, June 1913, late afternoon.

There wasn't any electricity except at Saunders Store, and Modern Garage (Spinas & Small's station across the street).

... "Warren had 4 brothers, one born at Luffenholtz when it burned." The Great Fire (Luffenholtz) in the Fall of 1908. Woodrow Watkins, the youngest and last of the boys, passed away in October 1990.

No refrigeration, no Christmas lights, no street lights, and only 7 telephones on the switchboard in the store for the entire town. Bottles of milk were picked up at the Lindgren and Griffin homes, as they were the only ones who had milk cows.

1990 has been a banner year for T-M-S. Most importantly the membership continues to grow. We've received many generous donations -- for the Native Plant garden, and the yet-to-come Mycology exhibit; an H-A-F Grant which made possible the photo collection which depicts early Trinidad and neighboring communities, the people, and the early American making the transition to European contact; a Wells Fargo Bank Grant which made T-M-S the proud-owner of its very own much-needed Camcorder; and let's remember the donations of Arcata Redwood Co., and Louisiana Pacific Corp., which kept T-M-S afloat.

Turkeys were scarce for the family table. Chickens and ducks were the main fare as most everyone had a flock, as well as a pig or two. It was always a big event in our family when the time came to kill the pig; much more exciting than my weekly job on Sunday morning cleaning out the pig pen.

I want to thank again, these organizations and individuals who contributed so freely, and the people who worked diligently to make possible the growth of our Museum. It is impossible to name all individuals without possibly omitting someone, for this has been a concerted community effort which makes the T-M-S interesting and unique.

The two-room school house was at the same location as the present school. Some of the older students were 15-16 years old, and had no shoes to wear with their well-patched clothes. No buses, hot lunches, or snacks in those days either. Some children walked 2 or 3 miles to school.

Let's keep up the good work!

Decorations were very scarce, outside of the annual tree. We always had a school Christmas program at the Town Hall. My Dad, Mose Saunders, at the end of the program, passed-out a large orange and a bag of hard candy to each of the 40 or 50 students. This was very much appreciated and eagerly looked forward to each year.

Gifts of any kind were scarce for most families, and a used bicycle with a fresh coat of red paint was the dream of most every kid in town. That was Christmas in Trinidad sixty years ago!

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY  
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