

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER

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'EXPLORING OUR HISTORY'

1992

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

1992

YESTER-YEARS . . . . .

By Axel Lindgren

In August of 1925 I started to school in a two-story, four-room schoolhouse on Trinity street in Trinidad. It was fun learning to read, write, 'rithmatic and memorizing poetry. Each week we memorized a new poem, stood before the lower grades and recited the same from memory. This part of learning wasn't new to me, for I accompanied my oldest sister to her 3rd grade class every Friday when I was 4-years of age. I stood before the lower grades and recited several stanzas of a poem.

At recess-time, I watched the bigger kids play various games and drank from the water-fountain. This was up-town and fascinating to me as I was accustomed to drinking from a water bucket and a dipper. I couldn't get enough of that water and ... you know what happens to little boys when they drink too much water! I was no exception, but that didn't dampen my desire to visit school every Friday.

Notice: T-M-S ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Trinidad Museum Society will be held on Sunday **April 12th** at 2:pm in the Museum Center building on Trinity Street.

Officers will be elected for the coming year; a financial statement will be given, and current and future developments will be discussed.

A video will be shown of Huell Howser's "California's Gold" television program. This video features the hand-carved Yurok redwood canoe, carved by Axel Lindgren, and shows his son, Hoss, paddling it around scenic Trinidad Bay with Huell Howser and Axel aboard.

Also, there will be a special introductory talk on the recently completed mushroom exhibit developed under the direction of Dr. David Largent, Professor of Mycology at Humboldt State U.

Refreshments will be served by the

One evening there was some special event at the Town Hall in the Library (today's City Clerk's office). Three or four students were invited to entertain the small gathering and I was one of the entertainers. The teacher, Mrs. Myrtle Hamilton (whose husband was the last manager of Northwest Pacific RR Depot in Trinidad), allowed us to choose what we did best. I stood by the wood-burning heater near the entrance and quoted the rhyme:

"I had a little pony, I named him Dapple Gray; I lent him to a lady who rode him far away. She whipped him, she lashed him, she rode him through the mire; I would not lend my pony to all the Ladies Higher." You know, I haven't forgiven that woman yet!

The next 4 or 5 years, my learning skills improved immensely. No more Three Bears & Goldilocks, Three Little Pigs, Mutt 'n Jeff or the Katz & Jammer Kids. I could read the sports page!

At about this time, a fighter from Trinidad was in the twilight of his boxing career and answered proudly to his professional names of "Terry McBride" or "Frankie Lewis." He was born Oliver Hancorne, part Yurok and part English, but a world beater. (His name is mentioned now-and-again in Ring Magazine.)

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Refreshments will be served by the Trinidad Museum Docents. Mark your calendar -- everyone's welcome -- please come! C.F.

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\* **T-M-S and Clarke Memorial Museum**  
\* will jointly co-host a book-sale-  
o and-signing party at the Clarke  
\* facility in Eureka on Sunday May 3,  
\* from 2:pm to 4:pm.

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\* "The Four Ages of Tsurai," a docu-  
o mentary-history of a Yurok village  
\* in the southern tip of Yurok country,  
o has long been unavailable and out of  
\* print. A re-print with an added  
o introductory by lineal descendant  
o Axel R. Lindgren, will be available  
\* for sale.

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\* At this festivity will be special  
o speakers, door prizes, museum ex-  
\* hibits, Mamie Parton's Yurok basket  
o collection and ceremonial regalia  
\* modeled by the Lindgren grand-  
o children (seventh generation of  
\* Tsurai).

o  
\* Refreshments will be served by  
o the Docent Auxiliary of both museums.  
\* Don't miss this re-enactment of pre-  
o historic Tsurai. See you there!

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Another athlete from the Greater Trinidad Area with championship aspirations was Milton "Tiny" Abbott, who was born and lived in Luffenholtz until the 'big fire of 1908' which cremated the little settlement along the Old County Road in south Trinidad.

"Tiny" was a big man who stood six-feet seven or better, weighed well over 200-lbs and was billed as the "Redwood Giant." And rightly so, for he towered over everyone. "Tiny" found fistic fame when he squared-off against Max Baer in the Bay Area. Abbott was awarded the fight when Baer continued to hit below-the-belt. In a re-match, Baer went over the mountain and soon after became the Heavyweight Champion of The World.

Unlike Abbott, Andy H. James (grandson of Humpback Jim) fought at 118-lbs. He weighed as much as Tiny's right arm, but Andy was all heart with a fighting spirit. He had many tattoo's from the neckbone to the anklebone and was known to the local fight fans as "the tattooed boy from Trinidad." Andy had a great admiration for me and was a true one-in-a-life-time friend. He didn't make it in the pro-ranks but was a whirlwind as an amateur.

Going to school, fishing, hunting, swimming and playing on 'Old Home Beach' was an enjoyable part of my early life. It was a *lais sez-faire* world!

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Members: Please **LOOK** at the date on your mailing label . . . Are you **due** for renewal in April, May or June? An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

If you are ~~past-due~~ and renew at this time, your new renewal date will be **4/1/93**.

Pls keep in mind ... your memberships and contributions are the sole support of the museum ... We sincerely appreciate your continued support, and hope you are enjoying our quarterly newsletters.

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• Commencing Friday **MAY 29th**, the Museum will again be open to the public on weekends -- Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 1:pm to 4:pm. Come and see the many exhibits and visit with our friendly Docents.

• If you would like to participate in this community effort and become a Docent, please call us at **677-3883** and leave a message.

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 1126  
Trinidad, CA 95570

Address correction requested

By **Glenn Saunders**

The "Big-4" was a very famous Italian restaurant in the 20's & 30's in Trinidad, located on the southeast corner of Highway 101 and Main Street. The other three corner businesses were occupied by Saunders' Store, Modern Garage and Erickson's Store.

The Big-4 building was originally the Good Templars Hall, built in 1881 and used as a town meeting hall, and as a church for Protestant services when a visiting minister would come-by. (The Good Templars, originally called the 'Reformed Drunkards,' banded together for the purpose of combatting the evils of liquor.)

The building was owned by Judge "Tommy" Tighe, an old railroad man who was Justice of The Peace. It was moved from the lot adjoining the present Holy Trinity Church; this was accomplished when the new 101 Highway opened in 1924.

When Vic Evangelisti opened the famous eating house in '24, he asked Judge Tighe "What shall I name the business?" The Judge said: "Hang a lantern on the post and call it the 'BIG-4.'" (It is believed he thought of that name because of the 'big 4 railroad tycoons' in the Bay Area: Stanford, Flood, Huntington and Crocker.)

Customers came from far and near for the great Italian food the Evangelistis served 'family style' -- green salad, Minestrone soup, two varieties of fried chicken, apple & banana fritters, French fries, tomato-style string beans, French bread, Italian biscotti, and ice-cream for dessert ... and all the refills you wanted for the big price of ... fifty cents!

As a sideline for a money maker, a shot of whiskey could be had for 25¢ in a short-trip to the kitchen! No bar, as it was 'prohibition times' and therefore illegal. 100-proof alcohol was bought in 5-gal cans and then it was "cut." To give the alcohol the color of whiskey, the Evangelistis crossed the street to Saunders Store and bought quantities of Kitchen Bouquet which they added to their "recipe." The end of prohibition came with the election of F.D.R. With the capital to reinvest, the Evangelistis wanted to build a new elaborate Italian restaurant, but Judge Tighe's heir would not sell the property. (Trinidad's loss became Arcata's gain.) The Trinidad building stood for many years, used as a local cafe and bar, through a variety of owners, with periods of vacancy. It deteriorated and was dismantled to make room for the widening of Main Street and construction of Saunders Shopping Center.

