

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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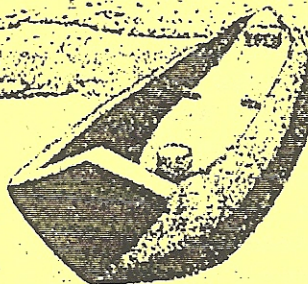
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'EXPLORING OUR HISTORY'

1996

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

1996

TRINIDAD DURING THE "ROARING TWENTIES"

By Axel R. Lindgren

Any worker who wanted a job, had his choice. The big lumber companies were operating within walking distance of Trinidad, at Camps 21, 26 & 28. The roads were almost impassable, so it was a "walking show" at 4 o'clock in the morning. Room 'n Board was available for those who would rather live away from home than walk to-and-from work each day.

Closer to home was the rock quarry, where huge boulders were blasted from "Potato Rock" (which was a relative of Pilot Rock, a Tsurai belief). Potato Rock possessed the high quality needed to build the jetties which protect Humboldt Bay. The huge boulders were loaded aboard a heavily constructed open R.R. car and transported to the entrance of Humboldt Bay. The smaller particles (fragments of the high grade larger rocks) were crushed by machinery into gravel of various size and piled accordingly for future use. There was no waste in the destruction of Potato Rock! The company made available a cookhouse and cabins for the thirty or forty employees.

Here at the rock quarry was the end-of-the-line for the Northwest Pacific R.R. I witnessed how a train was turned around to go back on the road from whence it came. A turn-table with a diameter which would accommodate the length of the engine was built with a heavy boardwalk with wooden-cleats on the surface to ensure the footing of the men who pushed on the turntable, turning it 360 degrees. Now the engine was ready for its return trip.

About a half-mile south of the rock quarry was McConnaha's saw mill, cookhouse and living quarters. The mill cut redwood shingles and redwood railroad ties which were delivered to market on R.R. cars.

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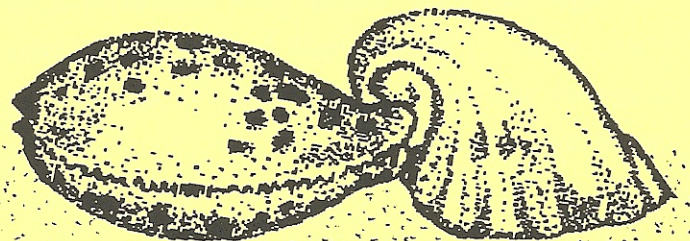
"KUDOS" to our T-M-S DOCENTS

The museum is now closed for the winter months, however, it can be opened by special request for TMS members with visiting friends or relatives ... and for small group tours. Call Ned Simmons #677-0716 or Axel Lindgren at #677-3473.

We wish to take this opportunity to heartily "thank" Loma & John Burkett and all the dedicated Docents who took turns keeping our museum open to the public this summer. Our Board of Directors sincerely appreciate the personal time and effort donated by these fine volunteers on behalf of the Trinidad Museum Society.

Our Docents come from Westhaven, McKinleyville, Arcata and Samoa, as well as Trinidad, to keep our museum open to the many visitors and tourists on Friday, Saturday & Sunday afternoons, April to September.

If you would enjoy being part of this fine group of volunteers, please call Ned Simmons @ #677-0716 to learn how you can participate in this community effort and become a T-M-S Docent in 1997.



The shingles were cut from redwood bolts which were delivered by a cable line to the shingle mill which was three or four miles from the woods operation.

From: The Humboldt Historian, 1972  
Courtesy of Janis Saunders

If the woods work was unappealing, there was the whaling station at the Trinidad Bay. The whaling industry was also in two-parts: The whales were harpooned at sea, then towed to the processing plant at Trinidad Bay. At the plant, the whale was butchered and made into pet food, fertilizer, and crude oil. The crude oil was shipped from Trinidad by N.W.P.R.R. The stench from the whaling operation floated-on toward the residents south of Trinidad -- especially Crannell!

"Nearly every city & town in Humboldt County has, at some time in its existence, had a conflagration that threatened to destroy the entire community. The City of Trinidad had it's on February 23, 1928.

Fishing and Trinidad have always been synonomous. A short while after salmon season opened, the Paladini Fish Company of Eureka towed one of their processing barges into Trinidad Bay and remained the entire season. The processed fish were delivered to Eureka by boats. During "good runs," the Bay was over-crowded. At one time we counted one-hundred twenty-eight boats.

Discovered shortly after 2:o'c in the morning by a resident living directly across the street from the Saunders' store, the fire alarm was sounded and the entire citizenry of the community joined in the fight to save the blazing structures and prevent the spread of the flames through the town.

Along with these major operations, there were smaller operations in Trinidad which made the big ones possible ... such as Art Gilmore's blacksmith shop, at the corner of Main & Trinity -- the Sea Breeze Hotel -- Pinkham's Hotel -- Sangster's Hotel (which was operated by the Pardini family) -- the La Rocca and Pinkham saloons -- McConnaha & Spinass Garage -- two general merchandise stores owned by M.R.Saunders and Rhoades & Son, and The Big Four Restaurant. The Lindgrens furnished fresh milk to these operations ... with the exception of the whaling station!

As it was, five buildings were destroyed: The Saunders store, the old Pinkham Hotel and Pinkham Saloon, a residence occupied by the Saunders family, and a barn owned by the Pinkhams, all went up in flames.

Trinidad was, indeed, a thriving metropolis during the "roaring 20's" due to forest-related resources and salmon fishing, which have steadily declined.

The telephone switchboard located in the Saunders store was completely destroyed, making communication with outside areas virtually impossible. Without outside assistance, the folks of Trinidad battled the flames for five hours before they were brought under control.

The flames were visible for many miles, lighting-up the surrounding countryside -- and "old timers" will tell you that Trinidad never came closer to total destruction than in the early morning of February 23rd 1928!"

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MEMBERS . . . Please **LOOK** at the date on your mailing label. Are you due for renewal in October? An addressed-envelope is enclosed for your convenience. If you are past-due (April or July '96), we hope you will renew your membership at this time. "**Thank you**" for your continued support of our local museum -- it is very much appreciated.

Trinidad Treasures

*And god said, let them gather  
on the edge of the land by the sea  
where they'll learn to reap the harvest,  
walk with nature and run free.  
  
And they found this place he spoke of  
where the forest met the shore.  
They called it Trinidad village  
and they wanted for nothing more.  
  
They hunted and fished and ate berries  
that covered the sandy loam.  
They sang and danced and told stories  
and learned the meaning of home.*

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