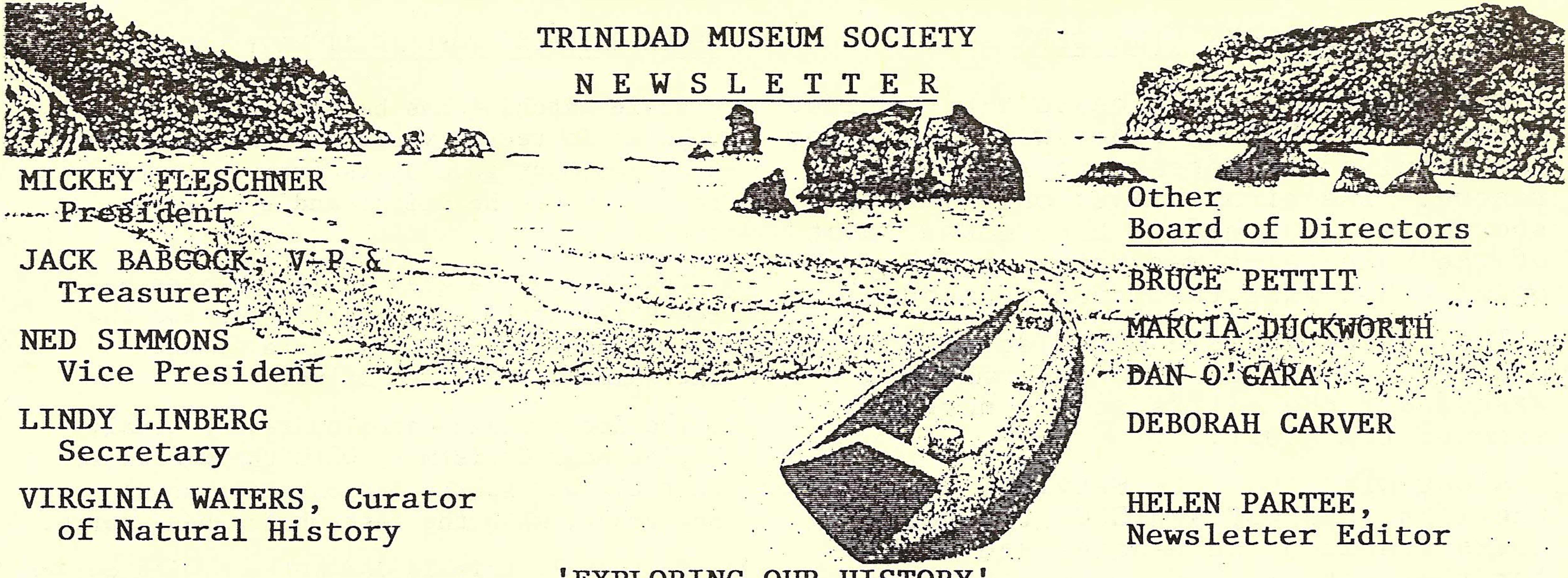


TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



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'EXPLORING OUR HISTORY'

1997 OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER 1997

TSURAI-TRINIDAD TRAILS

By: Axel Lindgren

The small peninsula which juts out into the Pacific Ocean in such fashion that it forms a well-protected bay from the winds & high seas from the north-- the perfect protection from the high seas, winter & summer--was recognized by a band of Indians who established a permanent settlement on a terrace on the bayside about twenty-feet above sea level. The village was Tsurai, which means "Mountain-by-the-Sea."

The peninsula, itself, was called Tsurewa, which served the Tsurais in various aspects. Tsurewa was worshipped by the Indians for its protection which allowed them to harvest sea food on any day of the year ... It was an oracle from which good & evil was predicted by the various fog formations; one which would cover the top (as if wearing a hat), or only the top would be visible...or, a perfect band of fog would form with only the top & bottom of the peninsula visible!

Tsurewa was covered with grasses and was more productive & accessible when free of brush. Useful herbs, berries and roots were permitted to grow after an annual burn. With the entire peninsula accessible, it made a perfect vantage point from which to study the migration of ducks and whales, and to monitor the sealion supply.

Indian leaders were free to travel to established places to pray, meditate or communicate with the creator.

Spears were stored on the steep wall above the waterline between the bay and the point.

Then in 1775, June 9th, the Spanish 'intrusion' which lasted for 10-days ... enough time to allow the Spaniards to study the Tsurai people and the forest -- and erect a cross on the beach and atop of Tsurewa, which is now known as Trinidad Head.

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Axel Lindgren is a lineal descendant of Tsurai, Fifth generation by documentation. The Tsurai Village was found to be here by early travelers in 1620. Axel will be an Octogenarian in December and he and his wife, Bonnie, continue to reside in Trinidad.

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Members ... Please LOOK at the date on your mailing label -- Are you due for renewal in October? If so, an addressed-envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

If you are past-due (July), we hope you will renew your membership at this time. We sincerely appreciate your continued support of T-M-S and we "thank you."

The unearthly blast heard 9:00c Friday morning, October 8, 1982, was a call for the Trinidad volunteers to respond to a rescue. The siren blasts only lasted a short time, but before they ended, most of the volunteers were present. It was amazing how fast the group responded.

The rescue-vehicle was dispatched to College Cove where a young woman was washed-off the cliffs on the northern side of the bluff.

Along with the Park Service, County Sheriffs, the CDF and CCC, the volunteers searched the beaches and rocks for the victim. The search included the 'blow hole' at the middle of the bluffs, as well as several caves carved into the rock of the cliffs. The search continued until the early afternoon when it was called-off due to the high tide. The search was continued Saturday with the low tide, but with no results.

The only gratifying aspect from this tragedy was the cooperation shown by the various peoples engaged in the search ... there was no friction between the agencies and the operation proceeded smoothly.

However, the biggest lesson learned is that our neighbor "the ocean" can be dangerous and treacherous ... so be careful by the cliffs; waves can almost jump up those cliffs and people can be swept away!

The volunteers are trained to engage in cliff rescue but prefer only to practice it--not do it in reality!

(The victim of this tragedy was a Humboldt State student. She had been fishing with a friend when her line got snagged on a rock below and she climbed down to untangle it. A large 'sneaker' wave came up and carried her into the surf.) Eric Reed Keller-TVFD

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

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Whale watching has become increasingly popular in recent years and the Northcoast provides many good spots from which to observe these beautiful and mysterious creatures.

The California gray whale migrates between its Arctic feeding grounds and the warm lagoons of Baja California, where the mammals breed and calve.

The local whale-watching season usually begins near Christmas, when the whales are on their way south, and may last until September, when the last whales head north.

Most adult animals and mothers with calves leave the Baja lagoons in the spring, but stragglers can be seen near our shores most of the summer.

The best way to see the 12,000-mile, eight-month migration -- the longest of any mammal -- is to find a spot high above the shore where you can look down into the water.

The most popular local spot is Wedding Rock (in Patricks Point State Park), just north of the town of Trinidad. Other good locations, although not as elevated, include Clam Beach, Big Lagoon, Trinidad Harbor and Mad River Beach. Some locations, such as the end of the jetties on Humboldt Bay, are better for viewing during the summer; however, the jetties can be dangerous. Large "sneaker waves" can unexpectedly wash over the jetties in any weather.

Since the southward migration is more regular and concentrated, you're likely to see more whales than during the slower, more desultory, return trip. The whales 'fast' on the trip south, intent on reaching warmer waters to consummate their bi-annual cycle of breeding & giving birth.

The 10-12 month gestation period of the gray whale (no longer endangered) ends with the live birth of a calf usually weighing about 1,500-lbs and measuring 15-ft long. The calves gain as much as 200-lbs a day on their mother's milk, which may contain as much as 50-percent fat.

Mothers with calves are usually the last to leave the breeding grounds. The warm & predator-free lagoons allow these gentle, intelligent new-born creatures to learn the lessons of life and build-up a thick layer of blubber to protect them from the cold of the polar seas.

(Writer unknown)

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