

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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'EXPLORING OUR HISTORY'

1992

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A YUOK RIVER LEGEND

By Axel Lindgren

A Yurok legend claims that the entry of rivers into the Pacific Ocean, along the Pacific Rim of the Yurok World, is determined by the sleeping position of a mythical monster who lies asleep in the coastal waters. The history of both Little and Mad River are excellent examples of this claim.

For years, the Mad River made a perpendicular entrance into the ocean but, in the last half-century, the river went completely mad, moving north and parallel to the breaker-line for 3 or 4 miles--washing away age-old sand dunes and other works of nature which lay in its path--before veering into the Pacific Ocean. At present, the Mad River is undercutting the works of man -- the 101 Freeway -- at Vista Point. This action is cause for deep concern today.

Members ... LOOK what we have for you!

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce our latest project the re-publishing of The Four Ages of Tsurai, a documentary-history of the Indian village on Trinidad Bay. The founding of Tsurai (southernmost of the 54 or more Yurok villages) is believed to have occurred about 1620 A.D.

This historical and unique book would also make a fine gift for your family and friends who enjoy visiting Trinidad.

Added to this re-publication is an addendum by Axel R. Lindgren, Lineal Descendant of Tsurai, Fifth Generation by documentation.

The book is reproduced on light-tan pages (much like the original) with a plastic-coated soft-cover and will

At the turn of the century, Little River flowed in the same direction as today but made a quick northerly ninety-degree turn at the Bridge and hugged the bank--a few feet from the freeway--until immediately below Princess Rock where it cut a mean left and flowed into the sea.

In my time, Little River's course was to the south and emptied into the ocean opposite Crannell Road junction where it began to erode Hammond Lumber Company's railroad track which followed the beach for a few miles before turning inland near Railroad Drive. This railway was the lifeline of Hammond Lumber Co., as it was the main artery for log delivery to the company's manufacturing plant in Samoa.

The company's first attempt at correcting the track undermining was to place tons-and-tons of redwood bark on the seaward side of the railroad. This 'cure' was futile. The next attempt was more expensive, for the company built a 3 or 4 hundred foot dike which diverted the river north. This dam was constructed of heavy tung-and-grooved redwood timbers and reinforced with rock on the ocean-side of the dam. After 50-plus years, this barrier remains and is still visable after many violent winter storms.

Little River, unwillingly forced north, is now firmly entrenched in a permanent channel until the mythical monster moves from his fetal position to where his legs are out-stretched from his body; then, the Rivers will head directly into the ocean.

plastic-coated soft-cover, and will sell for \$10.00 (tax included) if purchased and picked-up at the Museum Center building on Trinity street.

Since the Museum is not open to the public at this time, to order call **Ned Simmons #677-0716** or **T-M-S #677-3883** and leave a message. We will return your call as soon as possible. Or, if more convenient, you may stop-in at **Trinidad Realty** to purchase your copy(s) at 361 Main Street.

Any out-of-town member requiring the book to be mailed to them, should send a check for \$12.00 (which includes tax, postage & handling) to: Trinidad Museum Society, P.O.Box 1126, Trinidad, CA 95570. We will mail the book to you as promptly as possible.

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It's that time again, members. Please check the date on your mailing label are you **due** for renewal in January, February or March? We hope you will continue your support of T-M-S.

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

The Board of Directors of T-M-S wish you all "good health, much happiness, peace and prosperity in this New Year."

THE GREAT TRINIDAD HOTEL FIRE

By Glenn Saunders

The Trinidad Hotel, built at the turn of the century on Ocean Ave., has had many memories for me. I will always remember the friendly and homey atmosphere; people visiting and sitting on the veranda that overlooked the fish pond and Trinidad Bay.

I was a very small boy when I would jump-a-ride with my father when he or one of the clerks, Sid Webster (late husband of Mildred Webster) delivered groceries to the hotel for the kitchen of the dining room. The cook always had a sweet treat of some kind to share with us. The hotel was owned and operated by the Ehreiser family at the time, and was a Trinidad 'institution.'

There were two fires at the hotel. The first was in 1953 which started from combustible material in a shed-building occupied by Abby Ehreiser and adjoining the hotel. Roy and Rose Hasbrouck lived on the 2nd floor, and Rose was 9-months pregnant with her daughter, Terry. All bedlam broke loose; some people threw lamps, etc out the windows and carried bedding, etc down the stairs. I was the Fire Chief at that time and, with our small trailer with a pressure tank on it, we were able to contain the fire ... to everyone's relief! Al Myers and Phil Byerly were a couple of my very able and dependable assistants. Todd Collins and Fred Shipman, as young men, were exploring around one of the apartments, found a refrigerator with some beer in it and took care of that!

The second and final fire happened early in 1956 around 10:pm in the evening. No one knew for sure how it started, either faulty wiring or from one of the stoves. A very strong wind was blowing hard from the south, sending live cinders as far away as George Collins' present house. Todd was on his roof with a hose trying to keep the roof wet. Luckily, the wind changed direction and 'the town' was saved from total disaster. George Collins was the Fire Chief at the time and, again, he hooked-on to our fire department's small trailer and hauled it to the raging inferno but the hotel (having been built of all redwood) became completely engulfed in flames in a very short time.

A few of the fire highlights: Roy Hasbrouck shut off the large propane tank but, shortly after, the tank blew up completely, sending pieces of steel and shrapnel through the air.

Everyone stampeded and hit the ground to avoid the flying debris. Resident Andy Petersen Jr. had his leg in a cast and, in the confusion, he was trampled in the mud. Todd Collins took him home and cut off his damaged cast with a chainsaw. Andy recovered without ever going back to see the doctor!

Dave Zebo was our local Highway Patrolman at the time; he tried to keep the traffic moving and people from getting hurt. Resident Walt Guy who came down from the 'local pub' with a "heat on" busted into Pop Scott's house (which was still standing), tore-out the water heater and threw it on the ground. Why? No one knew.

Lucille & Bill Cummings lost all their belongings, glasses and money. George & Hazel Collins opened their house to them for a month or so, until they could find another place. Dr. Chuck Earl, our local family doctor, bought new eyeglasses for the Cummings family.

At this time the hotel was under the ownership of Harry & "Pudge" Howard, with Rose Hasbrouck as manager. The 7 converted apartments rented for \$20.00 a month and the hotel had 14-ft ceilings; so that was very impressive!

"Little Mary" who lived in one of the apts, was a very short Indian woman with a "111 tatoo" on her chin, which was very common many years ago. Rose Hasbrouck had given her a kitten when they moved from the hotel to their own home. "Little Mary" was asleep the night of the fire and the kitten jumped on her face. She came running out of her apt screaming, "Fire, fire" and alerted the other occupants. She told Rose: "The kitty saved my life--saved my life!"

The ashes and embers were 4-ft deep and burned for the next several days. A new set of dishes, never used, were uncovered in the ashes. None of the dishes were broken, just fused together from the heat, which was an interesting conversation item for years!

This was a very somber and sad day for the Trinidad residents. We were all so thankful for "Little Mary's" kitten, and that there was no loss of life or serious injuries.

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Four-score minus seven years ago -- on December 28th -- Axel was born at home on Langford Drive in Trinidad to Georgia Lindgren. "Happy 73rd Axel" and best wishes for many more.

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY
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Address correction requested