

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

MICKEY FLESCHNER

President

JACK K. BABCOCK, VP

Treasurer

LINDY LINBERG

Rec'g Secretary

NED SIMMONS

Vice President

VIRGINIA WATERS, Curator
of Natural History

Other
Board of Directors

Axel R. Lindgren

Bruce Pettit

Virginia Waters

Sue Morton

HELEN PARTEE,
Newsletter Editor

'EXPLORING OUR HISTORY'

1994

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

1994

TSURAI-TRINIDAD TRAIL

By: Axel R. Lindgren

When I was born my grandmother, Eliza Lindgren, the last medicine woman of Tsurai, was eighty-five years of age and had nineteen years of life left to practice her beliefs & customs, and to share her wisdom with a changing and complex world.

Unlike today's young baby-sitters, my brothers, sisters and I had this wise old grandmother who would entertain us by telling her breath-taking experiences which she had encountered during her near century-long life.

Grandma didn't have the typical grandmother image --you know-- glasses, smiling face and kinda fat. Grandma's appearance reflected the countless times she endured periods of 5, 10 & 20 days without water because of religious training, beliefs and practices. Mirrored also were the effects of time; being a parent of five children and making certain the well-being of the Tsurai village populace. All in all, it appeared Grandma shouldered the world and its problems.

She visited Ella Harris at the mouth of Mad River, a Wiyot village; Sizzie Charles at Patrick's Point; Liza Skirk at Stone Lagoon, and she stopped at Big Lagoon. Grandma was visited many times by Robert Spott of Requa, which is at the mouth of the Klamath River. At each of these visits, Grandma would share dried surf fish, dried seaweed and sometime shells which she gathered in the summer months.

Besides being concerned about the neighbors, Grandma had 'internal problems' which always needed attention ... such as one of her sons-in-law (non-Indian) had a bad habit of beating his wife (perhaps the originator of this malpractice) ... but, Grandma had a cure for everything.

This particular day she was visiting and helping with the ironing. (Flat irons were used and were heated on the wood stove.) The master came home and soon a fight was provoked, and continued until Grandma grabbed an iron off the stove and, with a mighty overhand effort, she was right on target at the base of his skull.

Which brings to mind when we children would come from the beach and relate to her the conditions of the ocean which was covering the beach, pushing logs & driftwood around and making it impossible to cross the beach with the cows, Grandma would listen to our full report and say ... "I'll go tomorrow and fix it." (Remember, Grandma was trained how to live with and control nature.) "I could not climb up but I could reach the shells with my cane and I beat 'em good and give 'em a good talkin' to!" Grandma couldn't climb up to the shells because, by now, she was ninety-five years old, or older. In a couple of days, the ocean was calm and everyone could go to the beach, go fishing or clamming, or gather other sea food. A similar method also made for better hunting!

Grandma; or "Liza," as she was known by everyone, visited the nearby or neighboring villages and talked at length with the person of her equal.

on target at the base of his skull. Down he went and lay helpless on the floor. When he regained consciousness, he hastened head-over-heels to The Justice of The Peace office in Trinidad. He made his report to Judge Tommy Tighe. The Judge and other people present laughed and joked about "old Liza" beating-up the wife-beater! Getting no sympathy at the Judge's chambers, he sneaked out of town and never returned. (I think she meant to kill him -- he did also).

In February, 1940, after one hundred and four years of a busy life, Grandma slowed-down and illness took charge. In three short weeks, we learned that Grandma wasn't here forever.

= ± = ± = ± = ± =

"Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used 'til they are seasoned."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

"The man with a new idea is a crank ... until the idea succeeds."

Mark Twain

By: Glenn Saunders

The West Coast Whaling Co. applied for a franchise from the town of Trinidad in 1912 but, for unknown reasons, the whaling plant was never started.

In April of 1920, Pacific Sea Food By-Products Co., of Monterey, leased the water frontage for the construction of a dock and a large building to be used as a whaling station. A 12-yr lease was secured. The property belonged to Hammond Lumber Co. Captain Dedrick was President of the company and had been operating a whaling station at Moss Landing on Monterey Bay.

Two steamers were purchased: The "S.S.Hawk" and the "Port Saunders." A large plank-slip was constructed and the whales were brought up from the ocean with large cables. Even today, after 70-yrns of battering storms, at low tide, the concrete foundation for the slip can still be seen on the left-hand side of the dock. A real tribute to the construction workers of that era.

The whaling station was an economic boost for the small town of Trinidad, with a number of workers and men on the whaling ships. There was lots of work to keep the machinery, valves and boilers in working order. There was a large boiler-house and a large tank of crude oil to operate the plant which was located on the bank above the present boat launcher.

The prime time for whaling was May through September. The whaling ships had to go to Eureka to get coal for fuel. The ship logs noted up-to-360 whales were killed and processed in a year. The "Port Saunders" had a record catch on 7/22/22 of 5 humpbacks, which made for a busy day. The whales were processed into oil & fertilizer; producing 650/700 sacks of fertilizer per month to sell.

Log records also show that whales were plentiful but oft'times too wild to catch. Sometimes, the whales were lost due to rough seas breaking the lines after they had been harpooned. The skill of the man in charge of harpooning the whales was the key to a successful whaling trip.

Another chapter in the diverse history of Trinidad, CA. G.S.

* ° * ° * ° * ° *

D O C E N T S

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

There are openings for docents to welcome visitors and to answer questions three days a week -- Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, 1:pm to 4:pm, starting again next spring, April-1995.

It's a rewarding way to learn more about

The smell of the Trinidad Whaling Station carried for many miles and was the talk of the county! The lumber town of Crannell was the recipient of the majority of the odor carried by the prevailing north winds. No one had a refrigerator, just screened coolers, so the women always had to pull the butter out of the cooler or else it would pick-up the whale smell. My Grandfather, William Chaffey, was operating the grocery store in Trinidad and, at times, clerks were hard to hire because of the strong whale odor.

The bunk houses, cookhouse, garages and storage sheds were located on Edwards St., in the area where the Collins, Partee and Hardison homes are located today. The buildings were all painted red and, as a kid growing up here, those buildings were great places to explore after the station closure in 1929. The garage at Fred Wagner's trailer park was made out of boards from the remnants of those buildings. (That garage was moved from the Griffin property where it was originally built).

Cont'd _____



It's a rewarding way to learn more about our town's history and to meet our many interesting guests and visitors traveling through the greater Trinidad area.

If you would enjoy being part of this fine group of volunteers, call Loma Burkett at #839-5929 or Ned Simmons at #677-0716. Or, call the museum #677-3883 and leave your name and telephone number We'll get back to you!

= + = + = + = + = + =

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 (July or April '94), we hope you will renew your membership at this time.

Your continued support of T-M-S is greatly appreciated, and we "thank you" for it.

- - - - -