

# TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall-Winter 2021

400 Janis Court

P.O. Box 1126

Trinidad, CA 95570

[trinidadmuseum.org](http://trinidadmuseum.org)

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## TRINIDAD HEAD LIGHTHOUSE 1871 TO 2021 150 YEARS AS A MARITIME BEACON



The 1947 Fifth Order Fresnel electric lens in the Trinidad Head Lighthouse with the 1898 Fog Bell House in the distance.

Explorer and scientist Josiah Gregg and his party of eight traveled overland to find Trinidad Bay and Humboldt Bay in December 1849. The resulting gold rush caused Trinidad to be settled as a supply station for Trinity River mines when it was made clear that the Trinity River drained into the Klamath River, not into Trinidad Bay as was earlier believed.

Between 1850 and 1865 at least 25 ships sank and at least 274 lives were lost off California's north coast.

The steamer *Brother Jonathan* was wrecked on St. George's Reef eight miles off Crescent City on July 30, 1865. The tragedy took the lives of over 165 people,

including an Army general and a territorial governor. There were only 19 survivors.

To aid vessels engaged in commerce, including the lumber trade, a lighthouse was proposed for the ocean-facing side of Trinidad Head. In 1866, all of Trinidad Head, 42 acres, was acquired by the Lighthouse Administration and funding was requested from Congress to build a lighthouse to aid all mariners.

In 1871, Congress approved \$20,000 to build a lighthouse and a two-story redwood lighthouse keeper's home and outbuildings. Work began in the spring on a shelf excavated 175' above sea level

(Trinidad Head is 380' at its highest point). A 25' brick and stucco lighthouse, painted white, was built. Jeremiah Kiler, lighthouse keeper for the Trinidad Light Station from 1871-1888, lit the first oil lamp on December 1, 1871. The 4,000 pound brass fog bell (in place near the Trinidad Memorial Lighthouse since 1949) and the fog bell house were added in 1898. The fog bell house built 125' above sea level, now with an automated fog horn, is the last remaining one in California.

The Trinidad Head lighthouse keepers under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Lighthouse Service include: Jeremiah Kiler (17 years), Fred Harrington (27 years), Ed Wilborg (7 years), Malcolm Cady (15 years), Emory Vradenburg (6 years) and Perry Hunter (1 year). The first three keepers died while in service on the head. Family interactions between the lighthouse families and the people of Trinidad were frequent. Maude Harrington, daughter of Capt. and Mrs. Harrington, married Robert Beach. Julie Clark of the Bureau of Land Management relates one story:

"Kaquaish, also known as Josephine Beach (1839-1936) was born prior to the arrival of the Euro-Americans. At the time of her birth, there were 1,500 Wiyot people and after the 1860 Indian Island Massacre, few tribal members remained. Kaquaish and her eleven month old son were on their way to the ill-fated world renewal ceremony, but got lost in the fog and returned home before the attacks began. Her father was Kiwelata, the Wiyot chief who met with the Josiah Gregg party when they 'discovered' Humboldt bay in 1850. Kiwelata's portrait hangs in the Clarke

museum today and as L.K. Wood described him, he was 'very friendly and seemed disposed to afford us every means of comfort in his power. He supplied us with a great quantity of clams, upon which we feasted sumptuously.' Josephine married Charles Beach at the age of 17 and had 12 children. Her son Robert Beach married Maude Harrington, daughter of Trinidad lighthouse keeper Fred Harrington. The woven families of lighthouse keepers and the blending of cultures is a prevalent theme throughout Humboldt County."

Lighthouse jurisdiction passed to the US Coast Guard in 1939. Afterwards, personnel at the light changed more frequently. Automation occurred in 1974, however, USCG families serving with Aids to Navigation Team Humboldt Bay continued to occupy the Coast Guard living quarters (built after the charming old keeper's dwelling was demolished in 1961), until about 2000, when the USCG triplex was torn down.

The 375mm Fresnel lens installed in the lighthouse in 1947 was removed by the USCG in 2013, when an LED light took its place, and is on permanent loan to Trinidad Museum.

The current steward of the lighthouse grounds, the Bureau of Land Management, together with the California Coastal Monument partners, are planning a December 4, 2021 commemoration of the 150th year of faithful navigational aid service to all mariners and their sea-going vessels. The Trinidad Head Lighthouse will be open all day, with other activities to be announced.



**U.S. Coast Guard triplex and lighthouse grounds, circa 1970s (the original 1871 redwood lighthouse keeper's home was torn down in 1961)  
Both photographs from the T.J. Mackell and R.J. Buckmaster, United States Coast Guard, Collection**



## BRUNO HERMAN GROTH'S "SNOW OWL"



**Snow Owl By Bruno Groth**  
Painted, welded, steel c.1960s. Exhibited at Ankrum Gallery 1969. Donated by Bruce Pettit.

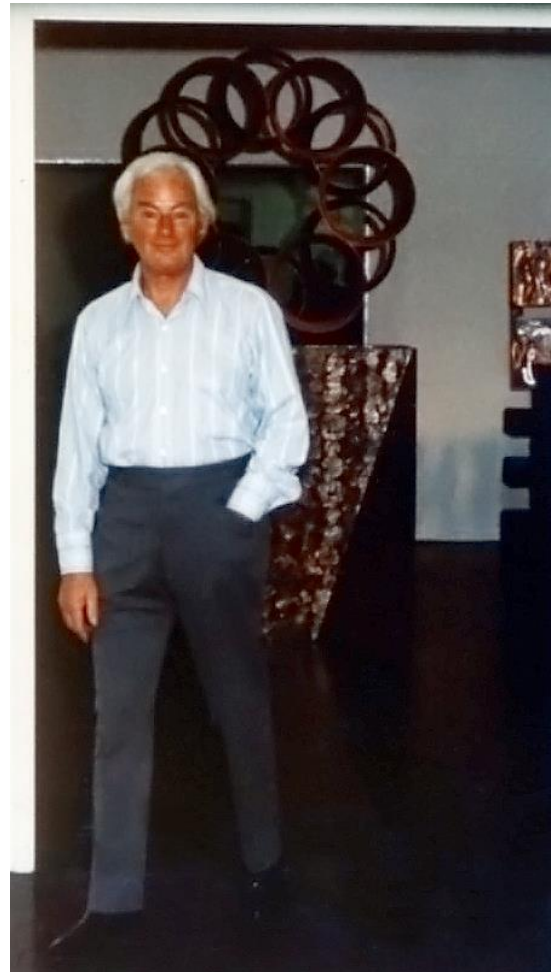


**Snow Owl by Bruno Groth**  
Trinidad Museum 2021

Trinidad Museum Society founder Bruce Pettit recently donated Bruno Herman Groth's steel sculpture "Snow Owl" to the museum.

Listed in "Painters and Sculptors of Los Angeles 1932" and whose work is in international collections as well as at Humboldt State University, Bruno Groth (1905-1991), born in Stolp, Germany, built his architecturally stunning home above Old Home Beach and lived there with his artist wife Nita and his two renowned artist children, Nina and David.

The circa 1960s fanciful sculpture is on view on the museum's porch during open days, Thursday through Sunday from 12:30 to 4 p.m.



**Bruno Groth**  
In his Trinidad Studio





## Charles Henry Harmon's Painting "Big Lagoon" in Heritage Room



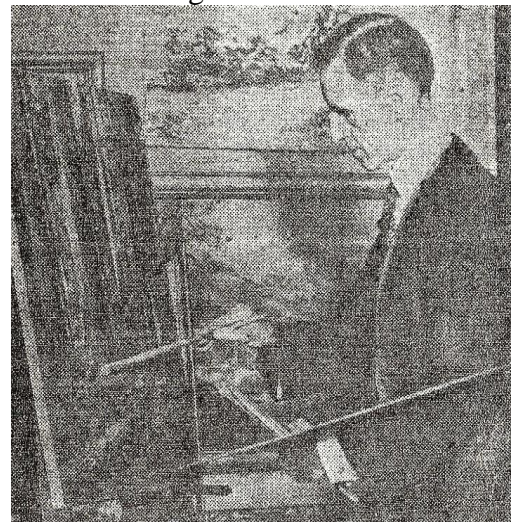
Charles Henry Harmon's "Big Lagoon" circa 1930  
Gift from Bruce and Elena Pettit

Charles Henry Harmon (1859-1936), painter of landscapes and coastal scenes, was born in Mansfield, Ohio and spent most of his life in San Jose, however, he visited the North Coast on many occasions and painted scenes along the Redwood Highway, built in 1921-22. Harmon's daughter, Muriel H. Minor, was married to Isaac S. Minor, who built Arcata's Minor Theater. On his journeys north he brought his paints and canvases to capture the rugged coastal landscapes.

An article in the *San Jose Mercury News* dated October 19, 1930, reads: "One of the finest of the new paintings shows a portion of this lagoon with wild azaleas in the foreground, the trees along the point and the road skirting the water's edge. As the artist looked down into the water on a brilliant day he succeeded in catching the reflection of the sun sparkling in the limpid depths. This is a gorgeous work of art." "Big Lagoon," a gift of Bruce and Elena Pettit, is on view in Trinidad Museum's Heritage Room.



CHARLES H. HARMAN.



Charles Henry Harmon in 1930s *San Jose Mercury News* articles



# Harbor of Refuge Proposed at Trinidad in 1880 and 1924

Norman R. Smith published an enticing look at Trinidad development prospects in 1924. His *Trinidad Humboldt County in Northern California The Best Part of the State with Glimpses Here and There of Places You Will Love to See Issued By Them That Know About It For the Benefit of Those Who Should* was widely distributed. Smith wrote on the title page: "It is Here the Redwoods Grow and Where All Growing Things Are Lush and Green The Whole Year Through."

Smith, who with his wife, Lois, the photographer

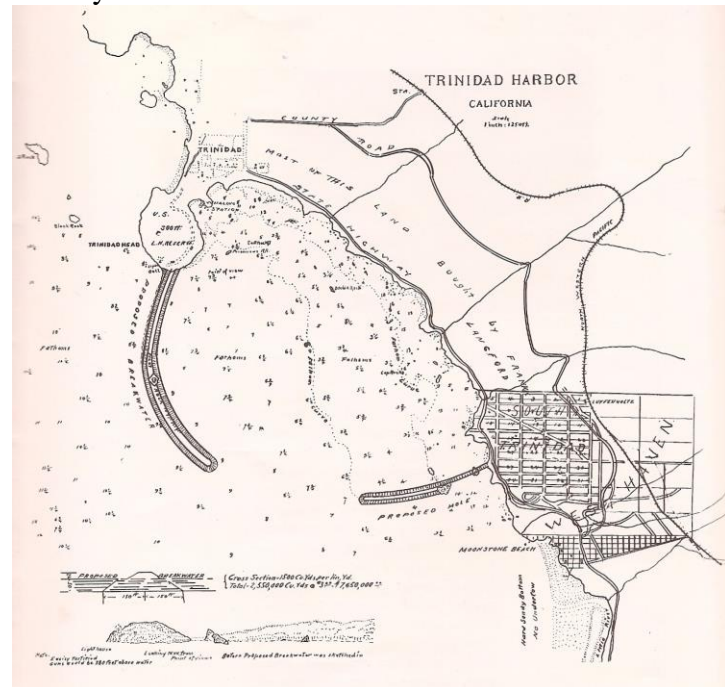


for most of the pictures in the publication, moved from Long Beach to Trinidad in 1924 and set about convincing many entrepreneurs to envision "A Terminal City...on this harbor, join(ing) Transcontinental Traffic to the Trans-Pacific Ocean Carriers; for Trinidad is the only Deep-water Roadstead between San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound, that is not a bar-harbor."

A harbor of refuge was envisioned by Smith in Trinidad Bay. He wrote "In 1880 the Government Engineers recommended a Breakwater at Trinidad, to enlarge it, and later, a bill was introduced in Congress and passed, but the senator from California who was also the president of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company with the consent of the Oregon delegation, concluded, that the best interests of the coast would be better served if the appropriation were spread over more territory; the bill was so amended that the bar at Coos Bay was adorned with a breakwater. Humboldt Bay had two jetties built and San Pedro had one, thus making Los Angeles a great seaport town. So Trinidad

the terminal harbor, aimed at by three transcontinental roads, is still waiting for its day of recognition, which must arrive in the near future, as powerful interests are centering on that locality. Just as the Union Pacific now runs into Los Angeles Harbor, altho (sic) a few years ago, that was not considered likely."

Sean Powers of Arcata donated a blueprint for a proposed breakwater in a harbor of refuge. It is hard to date the diagram, however, it was drawn before the Old Redwood Highway was built in 1921-22 and shows many old landmarks, including the Trinidad Railroad Station off today's Quarry Road, as well as the town of Luffenholtz off Westhaven Drive, which burned in 1908. Norman Smith must have used this diagram in his updated version in the 1924 booklet. The Sean Powers diagram, faint but framed and on view in the Heritage Room, was rescued from an Arcata dumpster years ago. Trinidad Museum Society archivists hope to find the name of the engineer who drew Trinidad's harbor of refuge. In the 1950s, Trinidad's leaders and the Army Corps of Engineers pursued the plan for a breakwater. This story will continue in the next Trinidad Museum Society Newsletter.



**Proposed Trinidad Breakwater maps circa early 1900s and 1924. Upper left; before Redwood Highway (Scenic Drive) was constructed. Gift of Sean Powers of Arcata. Lower Map; 1924, from Norman Smith's *Trinidad Humboldt County in Northern California***

# Natural History Room Exhibit Has a Makeover



as a rotting log or soil. The model shows several types of fruiting bodies and their associated mycelia. The other two new models (installed in the cabinet describing how people interact with fungi) show the most sought after edible fungus on the North Coast (the king bolete or *Boletus edulis*) and a fairy ring mushroom group. More models of local fungi species have been ordered and will be installed later this fall.

Visitors to the museum are invited to enjoy all of the exhibits in the Natural History Room, including displays on wildflowers, insects, seashore life, whales, rocks and minerals, soil, geology, and birds.

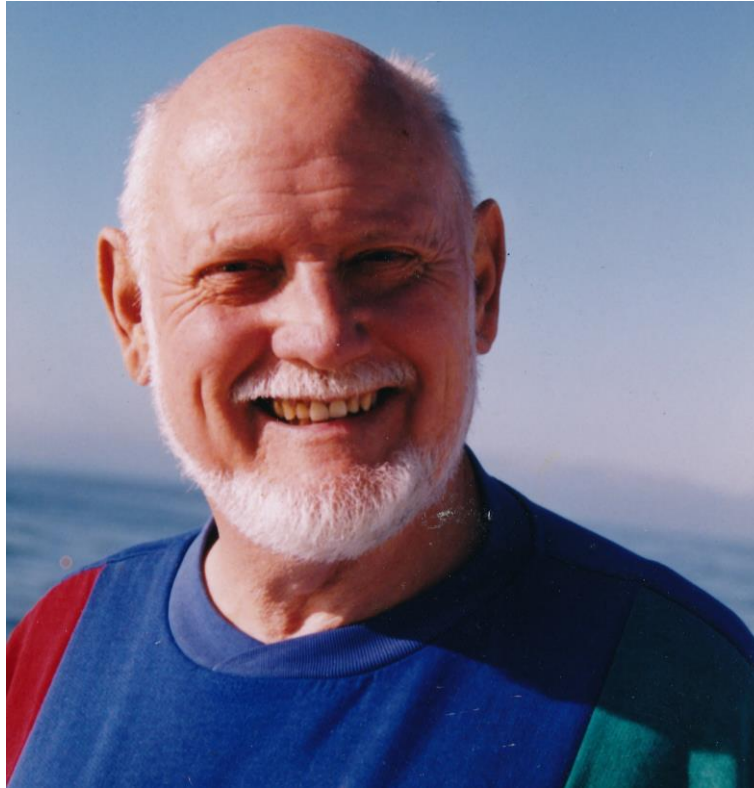
Over the past two years, the fungi exhibit in the Natural History Room has been updated and expanded, and the update project is nearing full completion. The exhibit fills three cabinets. One cabinet has a guide to fungal species on the North Coast and a photographic exhibit of local fungi. A second cabinet has interpretive information about how fungi have been used by people as well as myths and depictions of fungi in literature. The third cabinet provides interpretive information on fungi and their roles in the environment.

The latest updates include installation of several fungi models to replace freeze-dried fungal specimens installed more than 30 years ago in both the cabinet on fungi and people and environmental roles cabinet. Shown in the photographs are three of the new models. A model of several fungi species installed in the environmental roles cabinet shows how fungal fruiting bodies develop from the fungal “body” known as a mycelium. What we know as a “mushroom” is merely a reproductive structure for the production of spores—the body of the fungus usually grows in a source of food, such





## Remembering Robert "Bob" Hallmark (1929-2021)



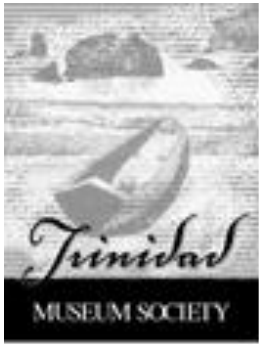
Robert D. Hallmark died on the first day of summer. His beloved wife, Carol, lives in Vancouver, Washington near her family now. She would like for Bob's circle of friends in Trinidad's commercial and sport fishing, business, social and civic community to remember him with a smile. He is remembered for the goodwill, good fishing, grace, generosity and humor he brought to Trinidad for decades. Carol Hallmark wrote:

"Dear Family and Friends,

On Monday evening June 21, 2021 Bob left us to be reunited with his family. We had a quiet day; he was comfortable and resting preparing for his final journey. At 7:30 p.m. he was with his loved ones. At Bob's request, there will be no formal service. His wish was to have his ashes spread in Trinidad. We will do that at a later date.

He leaves behind family and many friends who loved and cared for him. He will be missed. Cherish your memories and the years you shared with him. Remember the man who loved to fish, being on the *Jo*, or racing down the pier. Those are good memories. One of the highlights of his day was sharing a cup, or cups, of coffee with "The Boys" at the Seascape. If there were fishermen around, all the better.

Bob lived a busy life. He accomplished many things in his 91 years: fishing, owning a business, raising a family, belonging to numerous organizations, giving support and help when needed. He enjoyed his hobbies, always thinking and creating. He loved every moment of it. He enjoyed life. Have a cup of coffee with friends. Share a story or two. Maybe have a 'Bob omelette' or some sourdough pancakes and enjoy. Stay safe, stay healthy. Love and enjoy your family and friends."



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### Trinidad Museum Society\* Support

If you haven't already joined the Trinidad Museum Society, we encourage you to do so. Our membership year, like our fiscal year, runs from February 1 to January 31.

#### Memberships

- \$35 Member     
  \$50 Sponsor     
  \$100 Patron     
  \$250 Benefactor  
 \$1,000 Lifetime membership

#### Special Gifts

In addition to becoming a member of the Trinidad Museum Society, we hope you'll consider giving a gift to recognize someone special or to support some aspect of the Museum.

- Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_     
  Native Plant Garden     
  Exhibits     
  Building Maintenance  
 In memory of \_\_\_\_\_     
  In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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Museum Directors: Patti Fleschner, president([baycity@sonic.net](mailto:baycity@sonic.net) or 707-677-3816); Scott Baker, vice-president; Dennis Koutouzos, treasurer; Virginia Waters, Secretary; Jill Mefford, Matthew Marshall, Jim Webb, Mary Spinass Kline

\*Trinidad Museum Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, tax ID# 68-0042645