

TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall-Winter 2020

400 Janis Court

P.O. Box 1126

Trinidad, CA 95570

trinidadmuseum.org

Contributors: Patti Fleschner, Alexandra Cox, Mary Spinas Kline and Ron Johnson

NATIVE AMERICAN TOBACCO BASKETS AND TOBACCO PIPES FROM NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA



Nicotiana Bigelovii
(Wild Indian Tobacco Plant)



Karuk, large tobacco basket 1900-1910.
Sharp-tooth design

Trinidad Museum presents a new exhibit, "Native American Tobacco Baskets and Tobacco Pipes From Northwestern California" curated by Ron Johnson, Humboldt State University art professor emeritus, and assisted by Coleen Kelley Marks, Alexandra Cox and Jill Mefford. The exhibit will run for one year and then transfer to Eureka's Clarke Historical Museum. A stunning 68-page color catalogue written by Johnson and Marks accompanies the exhibit. Johnson wrote in the catalogue:

"Indian tobacco in Northwestern California was almost invariably '*Nicotiana bigelovii*,' of which there were three sub-species. This was the tall variety, often six feet high with white flowers. It was cultivated in gardens using burnt logs to create a stronger, more tasty smoking tobacco than the wild plant, which was not collected for fear it might be over a grave and have malevolent effects."

Johnson continued: "It is well established that Native American tobacco was a major part of men's daily lives through smoking in the sweat house, and prayers for good luck in hunting and gambling. Likewise, it was central to doctoring, primarily by women suck-doctors, and was used in several ceremonies. Honoring and respecting the natural world began with the First-Salmon Ceremony which Hupa, Karuk and Yurok tribes still practice. The pinnacle of ceremonies is the World Renewal Ceremony. California's Northwestern Coast tribes are unique in having world renewal ceremonies, and this approach carries into everyday life in which there is no sharp separation, as most aspects of life have a spiritual dimension.

Shannon Tushingham and Jelmer W. Eerkens of University of California Davis archaeology department published a study on the earliest tobacco use in the Pacific Northwest in "Journal of Archaeological Science" in 2013. They wrote that

"tobacco smoking was part of the northwestern California culture very early...shortly after the earliest documented Pacific Northwest Coast plank house villages." The researchers developed a chemical process where residue was extracted directly from the stone or clay matrix of Tolowa pipes. Prior to the 2013 testing, which used sensitive gas chromatography/mass spectrometry, researchers were unsure of the historical use of tobacco on the Pacific Northwest Coast. It was unclear whether European traders had brought tobacco to the area much later, or if some other plant had been smoked in the pipes, Tushingham said. The two-year research project determined that the biomarker nicotine was found in the plant residue (early tobacco had less than two percent nicotine content, compared with a nicotine content of four to eight and a half percent in today's tobacco). Color photographs of the native tobacco plant are on view in the exhibit.

The tobacco basket was in earlier times the primary way to store and travel with Indian tobacco. The lid is tied down with brain-tanned deer hide to keep the tobacco dry. In general, great care is taken when weaving baskets, and in carving pipes. The earliest tobacco baskets lacked

overlay design, but beautiful design became increasingly characteristic of tobacco baskets, especially those woven to sell. In recent times, tobacco baskets have shifted to mark Native American identities and as protective charms. Indian tobacco was a vehicle to reach the first spirit beings and to assure one's well-being through fixing and prayer."

Approximately 48 objects are on view, including baskets and pipes from the Trinidad Museum Society collections, private collections, and loaned items from the Clarke Historical Museum. Some of the object makers include Melvin Smith, Fanny Flounder, Nettie Ruben, Phoebe Maddux, Louise Hickox, Denna Dodds, Marilyn Hostler, Louisa McCovey, Lucille McLaughlin, Ella Johnson, Amy Smoker, Carolyn Ehrlich, Nettie McKinnon, Josephine James, Kathy

Sherman, Lori Smith and Ollie James. The rarest basket on view is a circa 1820 Karuk tobacco basket woven from hazel sticks and pine root on loan from the



Yurok Tobacco Pipe early 20th century.
Soapstone & yew wood

Clarke Historical Museum.

Native Plant Garden News

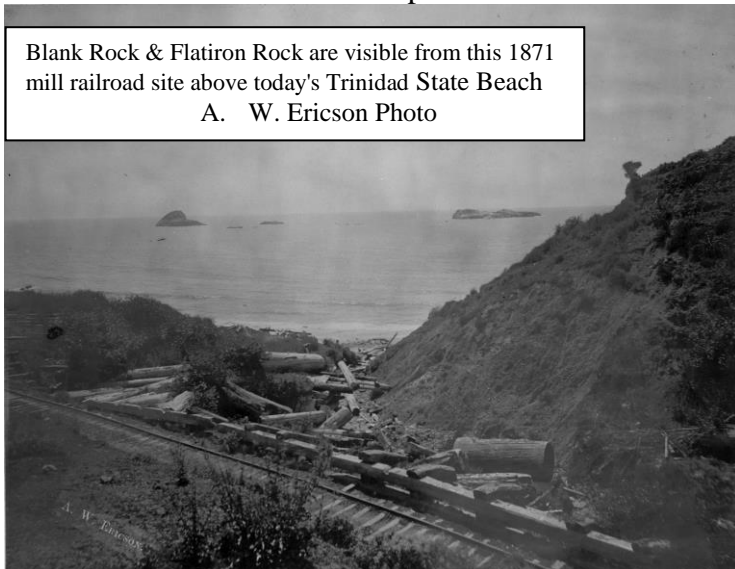
Gavin Scott and Ingrid Bailey in the Native Plant Garden after completing the installation of dozens of redwood cants and driftwood donated by local residents as borders to control erosion and to beautify the decomposed granite pathways. A grant from the Ben B. Cheney Foundation helped to add security lights & to resurface the pathways.



All Aboard! Trains in Trinidad 1871-1930

Sibyl M. Jamieson, whose husband, Harold E. (Ed) Jamieson, worked for the Northwestern Pacific Railroad as a Wiper of Engines starting in 1925 at Trinidad Station wrote a column called "Historical Happenings" in the "Trinidad News and Views." She wrote in 1980 that "at two different times, Trinidad had a railroad, one near the Bay and one northeast of town" at Potato Rock" (today's Mercer-Fraser rock quarry off Mill Creek Lane & Quarry Road).

During the 1870s Trinidad had changed from a mining town to a lumbering town. Sawmills dominated the Trinidad landscape.



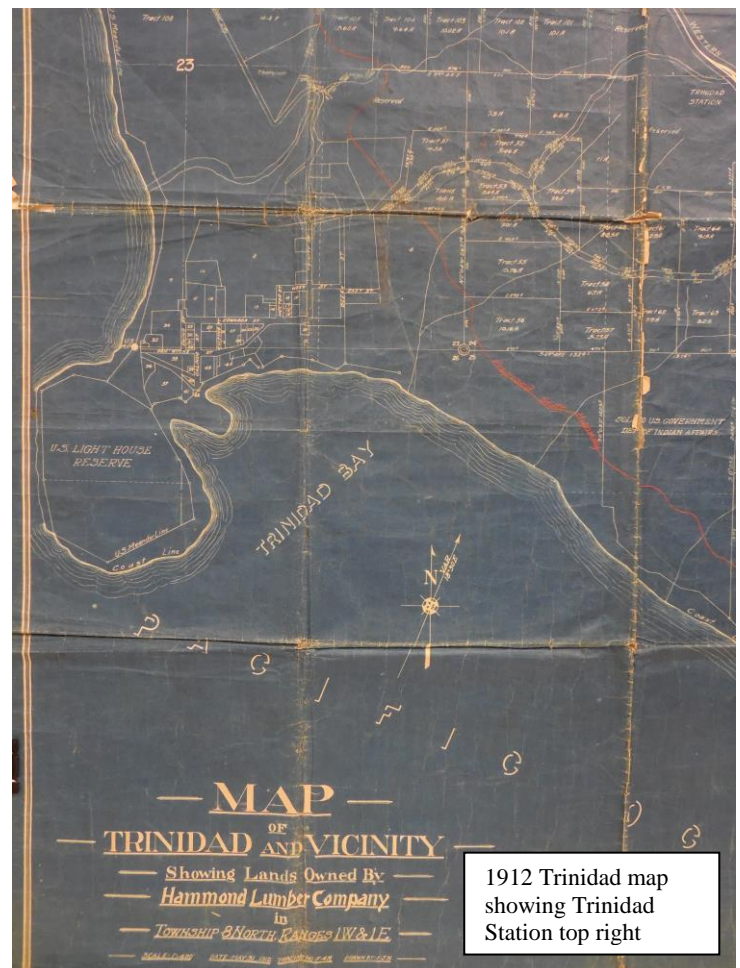
Sibyl quoted from an item in the "Westcoast Signal" that in 1871 "Mill shut down to build a railroad to get logs to the mill more easily...two miles of wooden railway was built from the sawmills to the woods with the cars drawn by mules." The railroad ran from Mayvilla (near today's Larrupin' Cafe & Sea Cliff Motel off Patrick's Point Drive) to the mills on the flats near the Bay and out around the base of Trinidad Head after passing through a tunnel (under today's chain gate toward the bottom of Trinidad Head) and loaded onto ships from the 1859-built Nordheimer-Ryder Pier attached to Trinidad Head.

Sibyl reported that "Trinidad had over four miles of logging road over which the steam locomotive 'Sequoia' carried shakes, fence posts, pickets and lumber to the mill operated by the Trinidad Mill Company, managed by Josiah Bell and owned by Frank Hooper, John Albert Hooper, and J.C. Smith. This company also built a one-half mile tramway to the wharf from their mill. It was built on trestles 50-

60 feet high. Mule power moved the loaded cars to the wharf for shipping."

Fred Stindt, Virginia Sparks & Ned Simmons wrote in "Northwestern Pacific Railroad" (1991): "The use of animal teams to pull log cars to sawmills at Trinidad was suspended in 1880 when a little Baldwin engine #5014 arrived in pieces by sailing schooner to Trinidad, where its parts were landed by a logging derrick, then re-assembled and christened the 'Sequoia.' As a result of a bad fire in 1886, Trinidad ceased to be a lumber town and the engine was sold in 1887 to the Bucksport & Elk River Railroad and re-named the 'Trinidad.' In transporting the engine from Trinidad to Eureka, a section of the county road was not complete around Clam Beach. Locals waited for the tide to go out and drove on the beach to connect with the county road. However, the engine, being hauled by drayage, was too heavy and sank the wagon in the sand. It could not be freed in time and the tide covered it. The next day it continued on its way, and served well until it was sold for scrap in 1934."

The second Trinidad railroad story began in 1902. The Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railroad Companies built a road from Samoa to Fieldbrook and from Fieldbrook to Trinidad in 1904. They



1912 Trinidad map showing Trinidad Station top right

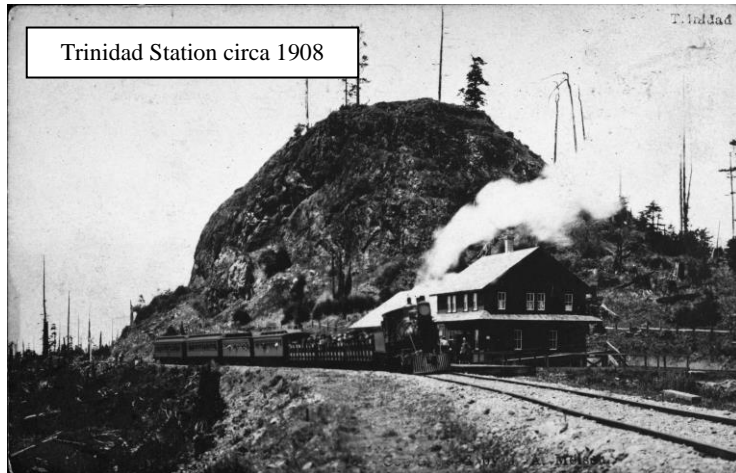
leased their road to Hammond Lumber Company and they operated it from 1904 to 1911, hauling logs, general freight and passengers.

An item appeared in the 'Blue Lake Advocate' on April 6, 1907 stating: 'It is rumored that a new depot will be erected in the near future at Trinidad and that regular trains will be operated to that point.' The Trinidad Station was built shortly thereafter and Mr. Wood was its first agent. Walter Usinger relieved him in 1911 and Bryan Hamilton was the last Agent when the railroad closed in 1928 or 1930.

In 1911, Hammond Lumber Company sold their Samoa-Trinidad line to Southern Pacific Company, which by 1914 was included in the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. It was originally planned to extend the line into Oregon, but those plans were scrapped and the line ended at Trinidad. The Southern Pacific Railroad took over on July 1, 1911 and the line became known as Northwestern Pacific Railroad, hauling mostly freight and some passengers.

Notable train passenger events occurred twice in the early part of the century. On May 19, 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt's Great White Fleet of 16 battleships passed the Humboldt coast. Hundreds of spectators, having taken the train to the Trinidad Station, gathered at the Trinidad Head Lighthouse to witness "the most powerful assemblage of warships in the history of the United States." (Humboldt Historian 1990)

"The Last Train from Luffenholtz" resulting from a forest fire in 1908 is described in another part of this exhibit.



Sibyl Jamieson wrote about another big celebration: "...on September 9, 1913 the Railroad Company scheduled a special excursion train which started from Scotia at 7:30 a.m. and picked up passengers along the way, arriving at Trinidad Depot at 9:45 a.m. with all six railroad coaches filled to

capacity. The passengers were transported to the Bay by horse-drawn rigs and a few Model-T Fords. The event of the day was the dedication ceremony of the granite cross on Trinidad Head which replaced the old 1775 wooden Spanish one. More than 200 spectators witnessed this event. They brought their lunches, ate on the beach at wooden plank tables set up by the Trinidad Civic Club..."

In 1982 Sibyl Jamieson wrote that in the early 1900s there was a picnic ground with a large open air pavilion for dancing and picnics, horse shoe pitching and other games and celebrations for May Day and July Fourth off Berry Road near today's Seventh Day Adventist Church building. She described a boardwalk which ran from the picnic grounds to the Trinidad Depot to accommodate the crowds who came by special excursion trains for special events. "In early October 1921 the boardwalk was still being used by residents going to the depot to catch the train to Arcata and Eureka."

In 1925 the Northwestern Pacific railroad trains carried huge boulders and rock loaded on flat cars to Eureka where it was used in the re-construction of the North Jetty in Humboldt Bay. The rock was blasted from the mountainside near the Trinidad Depot (Potato Rock). A whistle warned nearby residents to keep indoors in order to avoid falling rock. The crew for this job lived nearby and consisted of the engineer, Wally Thompson; fireman Ralph Wooden and engine wiper H.E. Jamieson. The steam locomotive was fired by oil and kept hot around the clock by the engine wiper in readiness for its departure.

Between 1928 and 1930, the railroad from Korbel to Trinidad discontinued and over the years most signs of it have disappeared.

Curators for the Trinidad Trains exhibit are Alexandra Cox, Mary Spinus Kline, Scott Baker and Patti Fleschner

Information, maps, video and photographs in the exhibit courtesy of Scott Baker, Bob Hallmark, Joe Wahlund, "Trinidad News & Views," "The Humboldt Historian," "Northwestern Pacific Railroad" (1991) by Fred Stindt & Virginia Sparks, "Hector Lee in "Tales of California" (1974), "Steam in the Redwoods" by Lynwood Carranco & Henry L. Sorensen, "Railroad Magazine" (August 1953), Trinidad Museum Society archives, Humboldt Room-HSU Library, and Timber Heritage Association.

Shingle Manufacturing

by Mary Spinus Kline

The manufacturing of shingles was an intricate part of the early redwood lumber industry in Humboldt County. Because of its physical properties, redwood became the premier wood for making sawn shingles. Among its many advantages are its straight grain and soft texture, which allow shingles to be sawn truly and vertically without difficulty.

The large size of redwood trees, and greater percentage of clear timber, permit shingles to be wide, clear and free from defects common to other woods. Another advantage is its fire resistant quality, due to the absence of pitch and the presence of an acid which opposes combustion. Its resistance to beetles and weather conditions is superior to that of any other wood used for making shingles.

It warps, shrinks and swells comparatively little and if properly put on a roof, redwood shingles will maintain their efficiency for 25-75 years. By maintaining a redwood shingle roof with linseed oil and graphite, one can expect a long useful life of the roof.

In Humboldt County shingle mills were scattered from just north of Trinidad to the Mendocino County line.

Bolts of wood used for shingles first were made from virgin stock. As the big trees were logged, the stumps were later used for bolt stock. The bolts that came from tree stock sometimes had to be blown apart because of the massive size of the tree. A powder auger was used to drill a hole, then the hole was filled with black powder and lit. A drag saw was then used to cut the bolts to 18-20 inch lengths.

Before 1850 all shingles (sometimes called shakes) were split using a froe and mallet to split the shingle, from the bolt.

Beginning in the 1850s and 1860s, the U.S. Patent Office was flooded with inventions and designs for various kinds of shingle machines. The tricky part of the problem was to find a way to make tapered

shingles. Split shingles had no taper, and this was an added reason for the search to find a way to saw them.

One interesting proposal took the form of a large turntable with pockets for five bolts, placed horizontally. As the table slowly revolved, a horizontal saw beneath it sliced off shingles, like slicing cheese. The taper was made by tilting the bolts. This the operator did by pushing in or pulling out a wedge as they passed by him.

The type that proved more successful, however,

was made with a large circular saw in an upright position, though it took only one bolt at a time. The operator stood facing the edge of the saw, with the bolt clamped to a frame in front of him. With his left hand, using a handle for the purpose, he tilted the bolt forward against the saw. After the shingle had been sliced off, he withdrew the bolt tilted in the opposite direction with his left hand and repeated the operation.

Improvements took the form of automating the operation of tilting and moving in and out. After cutting the shingle, it was held momentarily against the trimmer to straighten the edges, then tossed to the packers. The trimmings were called excelsior and was used as a

packing material.

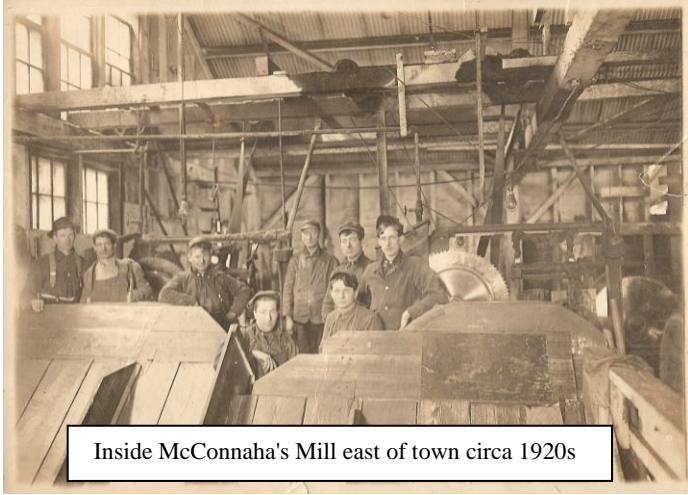
The most nimble fingered of the shingle packers (nicknamed weavers) stacked shingles in the proper order in the packing house. 200 shingles to a bundle that were fastened with steel bands nailed to binders, two strips of wood placed across each side of the center of the bundle. Legend has it that some packers could bundle up to 80,000 shingles per day.

In most places it took five bundles of wood shingles to cover "one square" or 100 square feet. In Humboldt County they shipped what was called a California Square, because the claim was you could expose five inches to the weather instead of the normal practice of four inches. So it took only 800 shingles (four bundles) to cover a square.

Making redwood shakes with froe & mallet



During 1904-05 the shipment of shingles amounted to nearly 700 million annually. The existing mills were capable of cutting 900 million, if needed. The production became greater as transportation improved.



Inside McConaha's Mill east of town circa 1920s

In 1915 with the opening of the railroad, the shingle manufacturing of Humboldt County reached an all time high. there was a shingle manufacturing association, established in 1896 by the principal mill owners of the region. They demonstrated to members the value of unity of action by exercising some control over shipping costs.

By 1920 the shingle industry started to decline. New roofing materials, including roofing, paper, asphalt shingles, corrugated iron roofing and

later aluminum and plastic shingles. Most of the new material was cheaper, easier and faster to apply, though it was not as long-lasting.

The shingles manufactured in Humboldt County were used both for roofing and the fancy siding seen on many Victorian style houses. The Hansen shingle saw, developed by Humboldt County resident Ole Hansen, sawed uniform six-inch shingles and from these it was easy to saw the "fancy shingles." They were made by stacking five of the square butted shingles on top of each other and then re-sawn with a band saw into the needed shape.

When the redwood shingles were introduced to New York City and Boston, they were readily accepted by the builders in these two cities. They ranked them as the best roof covering to be had. They were painted to look like slate, and in many respects they were superior to slate. Slate tended to break and was difficult to replace.

By 1955 only about 20 shake and shingle mills still operated in a normal year. Today there are only two mills still in operation. One of these is at the Blue Ox Mill. The saw is a 1908 Sumner, which owner Eric Hollenbeck claims it still is the best shingle saw around.

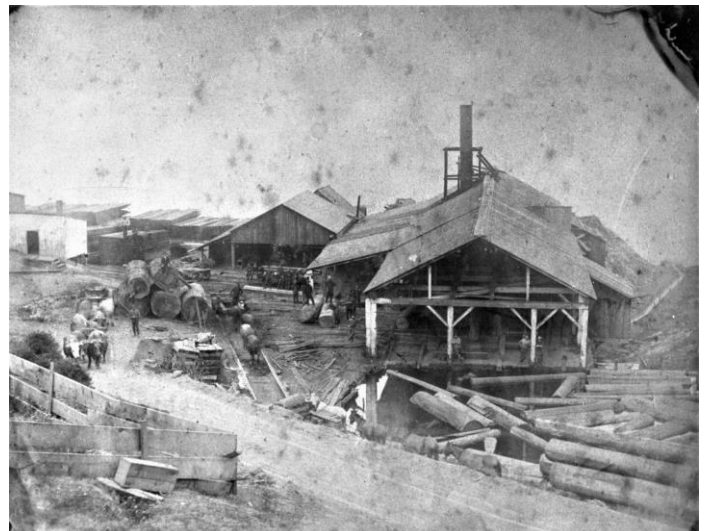
The tonnage of this port may be estimated at 7,000 tons for last year. The number of cargoes about forty.

TRINIDAD EXPORTS IN LUMBER FOR 1881:

Lumber, feet.....	18,000,000
Posts.....	38,000
Shingles.....	8,000,000
Shakes.....	800,000
Wool, pounds.....	15,000

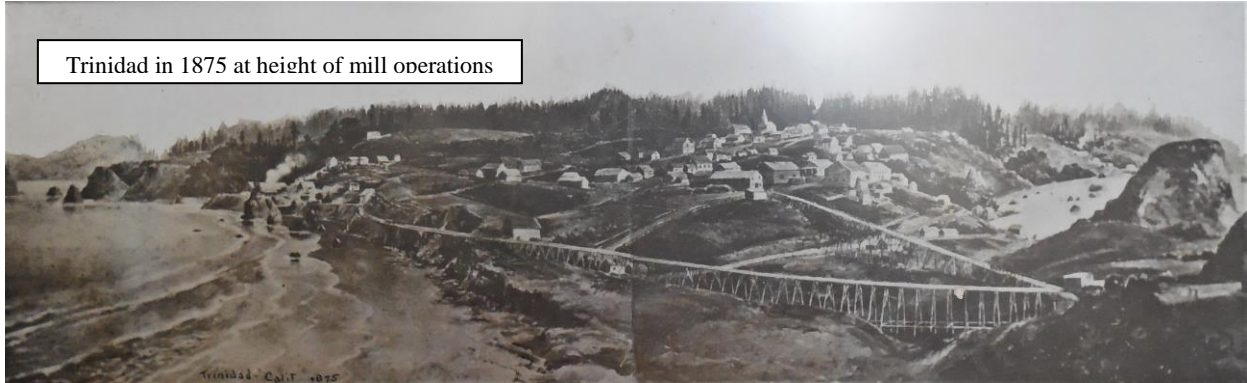


Shingle bolts in the woods. A. W. Ericson Photo.



Demming & March Mill built 1852-53 sold to Hooper Brothers in 1875

The Incorporation of Trinidad, California, November 7, 1870--Trinidad Celebrates 150 Years as an Official California Town



Trinidad in 1875 at height of mill operations

It hasn't always been clear as to the official incorporation date of Trinidad, now accepted as November 7, 1870. The carefully researched "The History of Trinidad" was written by Dwight Manning in February 1957. He wrote:

"Some doubt exists as to the date that Trinidad first was incorporated as a town. Some of the pioneer residents of Trinidad, according to Miss Wilda Tomlinson who was the town clerk for six years, insisted that Trinidad was incorporated in 1850," when the first Argonauts landed in their quest for gold and immediately laid out claims for land and elected a governing body. There was another opinion as to Trinidad's incorporation. Manning quoted from information in D. L. Thornbury's "Humboldt County, California Redwood Wonderland" (San Francisco Sunset Press 1923): "In 1912 it was discovered that the incorporation of 1852 had never been dissolved. Acting trustees were appointed by the Governor of California; an election was held and the population of one hundred keep up the government of Trinidad."

Manning found more definitive information in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors of Klamath County for Monday, November 7, 1870, which "deal with the matter of the petition for incorporation of the town of Trinidad. The petition stated that the population exceeds 200 in number, the majority of the inhabitants have signed the petition, and the metes and bounds of said incorporated town (were set) ... And it is further ordered: that on Wednesday, the 14th day of December, A.D. 1870, an election be held, within the limits of said town of Trinidad, thus incorporated for the election of five Trustees, a Treasurer, Assessor, and Marshall, and that E. Du Bertrand is hereby appointed Inspector and that J.A. Baldwin and Wm. F. Shelton are hereby appointed Judges of said election: and that a certified copy of this order be transmitted to the signers of said petition."

Dwight Manning further tried to clear up the confusion caused by the statement of Leigh H. Irvine, in his "History of Humboldt County, California" published in 1915, that "Trinidad, the oldest town in California but one, is a picturesque village of 250 population." Manning wrote in 1957 to Walter C. Stutler, Deputy Secretary of State, State of California. Stutler replied regarding Trinidad's incorporation date: "Strange as it may seem, this office has no document of official record setting forth incorporation. Prior to 1883, when the Municipal Corporation Bill of 1883 was passed, most incorporations were effected by legislative acts. There was a period of time when incorporations were by order of boards of supervisors under authority of Chapter 133, Statutes of 1856. It was necessary that the population exceed 200 and that the petition to the board be signed by Qualified electors and showing the metes and bounds of the proposed town. This act did not require any filing with the Secretary of State. Therefore, prior to 1883, our office relied upon the statutes for dates of incorporation. Trinidad was never incorporated by legislative act. It is not, as far as we can ascertain, the second oldest municipal corporation. It is possible the community operated under some form of local government not provided for by law. Several towns were incorporated by legislative act in 1850 and these would have been older--officially. While we have nothing official to support our record of incorporation of Trinidad, our record shows Nov. 7, 1870, under authority of Chapter 133, Statutes of 1856, while a part of the former Klamath County."

Another notable event of 1870 was the opening of Trinidad's first school located on a 75' x 150' parcel, south of today's Trinidad Cemetery, donated by J.P. and J. A. Hooper, prominent lumbermen and sawmill owners. It was a one-room, one teacher school constructed by Henry Gastman at a cost of \$220. C.R. Saunders taught there from 1870 to 1874. Nine or ten families sent their children to the new school. The 1870s were busy prosperous times in Trinidad, with sawmills, the sawmill railroad, and the Trinidad Head Lighthouse all running by the end of 1871.



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TMS is grateful for your support. Some members have renewed each year since 1983, when the museum was incorporated. TMS also greatly appreciates the patronage of many new members. TMS membership year is February 1-January 31, the museum's fiscal year.

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