

Trinidad

People and Place

Location

Trinidad is in Humboldt County just south of Redwood National Park, about 295 miles north of San Francisco. The community encompasses 0.5 miles of land and 0.2 square miles of water. The geographic coordinates of Trinidad are lat 41°03'43"N, long 124°08'29"W.

Demographic Profile

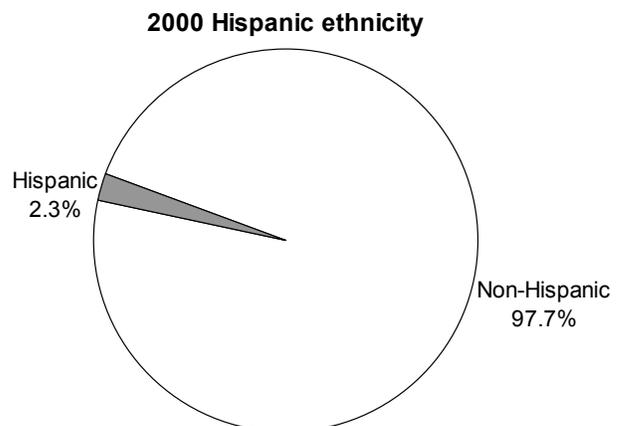
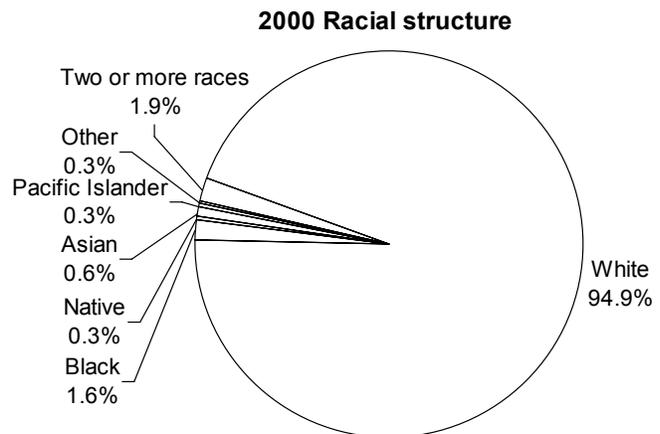
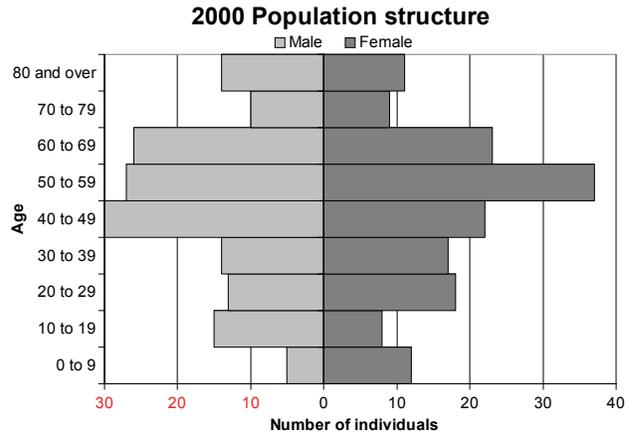
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Trinidad had a population of 311 people, a decrease of 14.1% from 1990. The gender composition was 50.5% female and 49.5% male. The median age was 50.2, significantly higher than the national median of 35.3. About 47.3% were between the ages of 40 and 64, compared to the national average of 30%, and only 16.7% were under the age of 25, compared to the national average of 35.3%. Of the population 18 years of age and older, 88.1% had a high school education or higher, 46.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 16.4% had a graduate degree or higher; the national averages were 79.7%, 22.3%, and 7.8% respectively.

The majority of the racial structure was white (94.9%), followed by individuals who identified with two or more races (1.9%), black (1.6%), Asian (0.6%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.3%), individuals who identified with some other race (0.3%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.3%). Ethnicity data indicate 2.3% identified as Hispanic. About 5.5% were foreign-born, compared to the national average of 11.1%. Trinidad Rancheria residents are also part of the community. The 2000 U.S. Census indicated the rancheria had a population of 73, of whom 80.8% identified as American Indian and 19.2% as white. Ethnically, 13.7% identified as Hispanic.

It is significant to note changes in Trinidad's ethnic composition over the last decade. The 2000 U.S. Census revealed an increase of 12.2% of inhabitants who identified as Hispanic, while there was a 90% decrease of those who identified as American Indian.

History

Before the arrival of European settlers, the Wiyot, Yurok, Hupa, Karuk, Chilula, Whilkut, and southern Athabascans occupied the area now known as Humboldt County. The tribes spoke individual languages and shared similar, yet distinct cultural systems.¹ Trinidad is



within the original territory of the Tsurai Indians, one of many groups that make up the Yurok Tribe. While the redwood environment did not provide well for some Indian groups due to the thick overgrowth and the size of the trees, the Yurok used the large trees for shelter and canoes.²

In 1595 a Portuguese ship entered Trinidad’s natural harbor but did not land. Spanish explorers arrived on Trinity Sunday in 1775 and named the area Trinidad.^{3,4} The harbor was used for many years as an anchorage for ships active in exploration and fur trade. In 1850 the town was established by Americans as a point of entry to the Trinity and Klamath diggings during the Gold Rush. Trinidad was the Humboldt County seat from 1852 to 1854. The town incorporated in 1870 and is the smallest city in the county. By the 1870s, lumber had replaced gold mining and boats arrived at Trinidad to load lumber from the community’s two sawmills.⁵ Trinidad Bay served as a lumber port, whaling station, and landing site for commercial and sport fisheries.⁶ The Trinidad Head Lighthouse was built in 1871 to aid vessels transporting these goods. The economic history of Trinidad also includes fishing and whaling.

The Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria is a federally-recognized tribe composed of descendents of three tribes who share a similar cultural history, the Yurok, Weott, and Tolowa. The rancheria was established in 1906 by federal law. In 1908 60 acres of land were purchased on Trinidad Bay for homeless Indians, however, it was not until the 1950s that a community was developed.⁷ The rancheria plays an important role in the Trinidad economic base through three business enterprises, the North Coast Inn, the Seaside Restaurant and Pier, and the Cher-Ae Heights Casino.

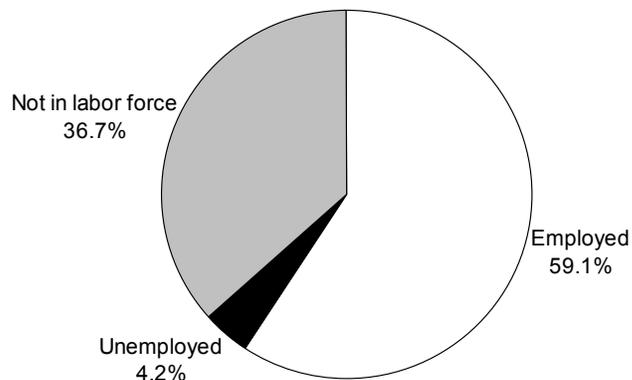
Today Trinidad is described as a “charming rural residential area” that combines small town living with “a unique mix of social and cultural activities, outdoor recreational activities, and accessibility.” Community members include a diverse mix of commercial fishermen, retired people, students and staff of nearby Humboldt State University, timber industry employees, artists and craftspeople, and the local business community.⁸ Trinidad is also home to a fleet of winter crab fishermen. Local festivals and events include the Blessing of the Fleet, the Trinidad Clam Beach Run, the Fish Festival, and the Storytelling by the Sea Festival.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 59.1% of Trinidad’s potential labor force 16 years of age and older

2000 Employment structure



were employed, 4.2% were unemployed, and the unemployment rate was 6.6% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). In addition, 36.7% were not in the labor force. The primary employment sectors were education, health, and social services (36%) and local, state, or federal government (25.1%). No one worked in natural resource jobs including agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industries, but this may be misleading because many fishermen are self-employed and are underrepresented in the data.

The economic base of Trinidad was founded on fishing and timber. Commercial fishing experienced a downsizing in recent years and today the major industries are tourism and timber.⁹ Major employers in Trinidad and the surrounding area are Humboldt State University and its marine laboratory, Cher-Ae Heights Bingo and Casino, and Mad River Community Hospital.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Trinidad’s per capita income in 1999 was \$28,050, the median household income was \$40,000, and 8.8% lived below the poverty level. Of Trinidad’s 228 housing units, 73.7% were occupied and 26.3% were vacant. Of the occupied units, 62.5% were by owner and 37.5% were by renter. Of the vacant units, 43% were due seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Governance

Trinidad is an incorporated city that operates under a council-manager charter. The sales and use tax is 7.25% based on the standard statewide rate. Humboldt County levies a 10% transient lodging tax. The property tax for Humboldt County is approximately 1% of assessed value. See the Governance subsection (page 43) in the Overview section for a more detailed discussion of taxes affecting fisherman and processors in California.

Trinidad is 22.8 miles from a California Department of Fish and Game field office in Eureka and 9.8 miles from the U.S. Coast Guard Station in McKinleyville. The nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office is 294.9 miles away in San Francisco. Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings are held 316.3 miles away in Foster City. Portland, Oregon (391.6 miles), hosts meetings of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Trinidad is 564.6 miles south of the Northwest Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle, Washington.

Facilities

Trinidad is accessible by U.S. Highway 101. A public transit bus system connects Trinidad to nearby communities. The Arcata-Eureka Airport in McKinleyville offers service to West Coast cities and San Francisco International Airport is 306.8 miles south.

Trinidad has one charter and two primary schools, plus a private high school. Students attend local high schools in nearby Arcata (15.9 miles) and McKinleyville (9.8 miles). Pacific Gas and Electric supplies electricity and Cal-American Water Company provides water and wastewater services. The Trinidad Police Department administers public safety. The closest health care facility is Mad River Community Hospital in Arcata. Local accommodations include two bed and breakfasts, recreational vehicle parks, vacation rentals, and hotels and motels. Neighboring communities offer additional lodging.¹⁰

Trinidad Bay is a natural bay formed behind Trinidad Head, a large domed prominence connected to the mainland on its northern end.¹¹ Trinidad Pier, situated in the bay, is the northernmost oceanfront pier in California. This all-wooden pier was constructed in 1946 by the Arcata Lumberjacks' Association and remains one of the primary sportfishing craft launching sites along the West Coast. A gas dock and a skiff rental operation are located under the pier.¹² The Prairie Creek Fish Hatchery in nearby Orick is one of the first small local hatcheries in the area, constructed in 1936. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.¹³

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

Trinidad is known for its crab fishing as well as salmon, lingcod, rockfish, bottomfish, surf fish, and clamming.¹⁴ In 2000 38 vessels, all commercially registered, delivered landings in the following West Coast fisheries (data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): crab

217 t/\$974,425/33; groundfish 2 t/\$5,061/7; and salmon 3 t/\$12,066/5. No fish processors operated in the community in 2000.

In 2000 Trinidad residents owned 11 vessels, of which 8 participated in the federally managed groundfish fishery. The number of vessels owned by residents in 2000 that participated in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/9, groundfish 0/0/NA, highly migratory species NA/0/NA, salmon 0/0/3, shellfish NA/0/NA, and shrimp NA/0/0.¹⁵

A Trinidad resident held one federal groundfish fishery permit in 2000. The number of community members holding permits in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/11, groundfish 0/0/1, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/9, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/2.¹⁶

Trinidad residents held 30 registered permits in 2000, of which 29 were registered state permits. The number of permits held by community members in each fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: crab 0/0/12, groundfish 0/0/1, highly migratory species NA/0/0, salmon 0/0/14, shellfish 0/0/NA, and other species 0/0/2.¹⁷

Sportfishing

Trinidad Bay, with its protected harbor and pier, offers deep water angling for salmon, lingcod, bottomfish, rockfish, crabbing, clamming, and surf fishing.^{18, 19} It had at least three sportfishing business vessel permits in 2003. Internet fishing guide sources indicate at least one sportfishing businesses located in the community.²⁰

Subsistence

Nontribal and tribal fishermen, including members of the Trinidad Rancheria, may use area marine and stream resources for subsistence purposes. Specific information on subsistence fishing in Trinidad is not discussed in detail due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game terms "recreational" fishermen who do not earn revenue from their catch, but fish for pleasure or to provide food for personal consumption. Information on subsistence fishing in California is captured to some degree in the sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 Trinidad residents owned one vessel involved in North Pacific fisheries. Community members landed fish in the following fisheries (data

shown represents landings in metric tons/value of landings/number of vessels landing): Gulf of Alaska groundfish confidential/confidential/1, halibut confidential/confidential/1, and shellfish confidential/confidential/1.

One Trinidad resident held a registered state permit in 2000, and two Alaska state and federal permits were registered to Trinidad residents, including a halibut and a shellfish Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit. One resident held a crew member license for North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

In 2000 Trinidad residents purchased four Alaska sportfishing licenses.

Notes

1. S. Van Kirk. 1999. Humboldt County: A briefest of histories. Online at <http://www.humboldthistory.org/> [accessed 5 April 2007].
2. L. Foster. No date. California's redwood country. Online at <http://www.fostertravel.com/CAREDW.html> [accessed 5 April 2007].
3. Coldwell Banker Sellers Realty. 2003. Trinidad. Online at <http://www.coldwellbankersrealty.com/towns/trinidad.html> [accessed 5 April 2007].
4. Greater Trinidad Chamber of Commerce. 2002. Trinidad history. Online at <http://www.trinidadcalif.com/> [accessed 5 April 2007].
5. West of PCH. 2003. Trinidad head. Online at <http://www.westofpch.com/lighthouse/trinidad.html> [accessed 5 April 2007].
6. Trinidad Inn. No date. Discover Trinidad. Online at <http://www.trinidadinn.com/trinidad.htm> [accessed 5 April 2007].
7. Cher-Ae Heights Casino. No date. History. Online at <http://www.cheraeheightscasino.com/?page=main> [accessed 5 April 2007].
8. Trinidad Realty. No date. Area information. Online at http://www.trinidadrealty.com/Area%20Information/area_news.htm [accessed 5 April 2007].
9. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2004. California state counties. Online at http://www.psmfc.org/efin/docs/communities_2004/communities_pages65_84.pdf [accessed 5 April 2007].
10. WorldWeb.com. 2004. Trinidad, CA where to stay. Online at <http://www.northcoast-ca.worldweb.com/TrinidadCA/Wheretostay/> [accessed August 2004].
11. Lighthouse Friends.Com. 2003. Trinidad Head lighthouse, CA. Online at <http://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=61> [accessed 5 April 2007].
12. Pier Fishing in California. 2004. Trinidad pier. Online at http://www.pierfishing.com/pier_of_the_month/04-98.html [accessed 5 April 2007].
13. National Park Service. No date. Historic structures: Redwood National Park. Online at http://www.nps.gov/redw/cultural_hist.htm [accessed 5 April 2007].
14. Community Realty. 2002. Trinidad, CA. Online at <http://www.relocate-america.com/states/CA/cities/trinidad.htm> [accessed 5 April 2007].
15. NA refers to data that were not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
16. See note 15.
17. See note 15.
18. See note 8.
19. See note 4.
20. Sportfishing businesses determined via Internet search. Online at <http://www.caohwy.com> and <http://www.trinidadcalif.com> [both accessed 5 April 2007].