

The Way We Were
(A Herstory of Trinity College of Vermont)
By Peggy McCluskey '60
and Carol Lyons Muller '68

The 1930s

These pioneers of our college numbered in the teens as they arrived at the new wing of Mount St. Mary's Academy to begin their college lives. The class of 1932 was one student short for the first day. She had missed the *weekly* train from her hometown to Burlington; presumably it was an *excused* absence!

The 'Wall Street Crash' was very much a part of our alums' lives, and giving back was ingrained in the life of a Trinity student from the beginning. Sister Cephas (Agnes McCann) started a program that involved students creating and delivering Christmas baskets to those in need. When so many families had little or nothing special for their holiday celebrations, any small act of kindness was very well received.

Evelyn Shontelle Gaynor Barden was a 1930 graduate. She taught elementary school all her professional life. During a phone interview in 2023 between Evelyn's daughter, Mary Cassella and Carol Muller, Mary expressed that the Trinity connections stayed with Evelyn all her life. Evelyn attended most of the Trinity reunions and brought her children from Windsor, CT up to spend time with fellow alumnae in the Waterbury, Vermont area. Lifelong friends were her classmates Mary Moriarity and Florence Childs. Florence attended the TCVTAAF reunions well into her nineties.

A 1932 grad was Mary Magdalen Dillon who married Thomas V Burke in 1941. Prior to marriage, she obtained a Master of Art Degree from UVM and taught Latin for four years.

Ruth Ready, a graduate in 1934, was noted in the yearbook as 'calm, confident, reliable, dignified, studious and persevering.' She became Sister Claver, a professor of education, and, after receiving her Ph.D. at Fordham University she returned to Trinity as President from 1957 to 1966. Ruth Ready has the distinction of being the first president of Trinity who was not, at the same time, the Superior of the Sisters of Mercy. She was also the first President of Trinity who was actually a Trinity graduate.

Marjorie Thompson Sankari graduated in 1939. Her obituary notes that she maintained her membership in the Trinity College Alumni Association. (It also notes erroneously that Trinity College in *Hartford, Connecticut* was her alma mater!). In keeping with the Trinity spirit of community service, Marjorie was the guardian ad litem for several children. She passed away in 2001.

A quick count from 1930 through 1939 lists a total of 77 graduating students. The following decade would see that ten-year population nearly double. By the end of the 30s we find that as the number of students grew so too did the choices for activities away from the classroom. Sodality, Literacy, Aristos and Art as well as a Lecture-Concert Series became available. Trinity College was ready to move into the 40s with a move from Mansfield Avenue and Mt. St. Mary's into the Trinity College Campus on Colchester Avenue. The Villa was the initial residence. The seniors in the Villa (AKA the Villans) were given first choice of rooms on the top floor of the Administration Building so they lost no time getting themselves moved. Cold showers and improvised bureau drawers were the price paid, but what were these details in comparison to having room enough to change your mind, beds wide enough to allow an occasional change of position and individual closets; that was real luxury!

A gentleman named Mr. Zerkel and his pet monkey lived in the basement in return for custodian duties. Coal was the likely heat fuel; he must have shoveled a lot of coal to keep that giant building comfortable during our Vermont winters.

The Trinity Alumni Association along with the Trinity Town Club welcomed each graduating class as early as 1938. The Town Club was much like today's Women's Small Business Association or The Rotary; organizations designed to create a business and social network for members. These associations offered then what they offer now: an entrée into the business community with friends waiting to welcome you and offer good advice. The Trinity College Alumni Association was in full swing right up to the closing of the College. We still have not found the end date for the Trinity Town Club. The Alumni Association then morphed into the Trinity College of Vermont Association of Alumni and Friends; TCVTAAF. US!



Two members of Trinity College class of 1930 were on campus Monday afternoon to watch daughters graduate. From left, Nancy Murphy, her mother Mrs. Robert Murphy, Vernon, Conn.; Mrs. Ralph D. Markle, 1291 North Ave. her daughter, Mary.

The two well-dressed women above are from the class of 1930. The photo was taken when they came back to Trinity in 1963 to watch their daughters graduate. The Burlington Free Press listed their names as Mrs. Ralph Markle and Mrs. Robert Murphy; evidently, the women's own first names were a mystery. Perhaps we can clear-up that mystery when we get to the 1960s. If you already know, please enlighten Peggy and/or Carol.

We cannot leave the 1930s without mentioning a woman who came to the College early and stayed as late as her health would allow: Miss Dorothy B. Hunt. Miss Hunt came to Trinity at age 31 in 1931 after studying in Germany, Austria, Canada, and the United States. She was born in the USA but raised in Canada. She found her passion early in life and never tired of music. She studied with the greats: Leonard Bernstein, Lukas Foss, Vigo Kehe and Percy Granger just to name a few. Miss Hunt took the lyrics written by Agnes Desautels (Class of 1934) and arranged them to music; thus our "Trinity College" song came to be. The song made its debut on June 8 at the 1934 graduation ceremony. Miss Hunt spent forty years at Trinity until her retirement in 1970. She made the Trinity College Choir famous throughout New England with joint festivals involving colleges in the area. Under her direction Trinity College produced music for the popular Sunday Catholic Radio Hour. Her dedication to the arts was reflected in the Trinity College Artist Series which brought performers of all specialties to the school. The Series was free and open to the public. The world-famous French mime, Marcel Marceau, Jose Greco, John Carradine and the Pilobolus Dance Troupe were just a few performers persuaded to come to Burlington, Vermont at the request of Miss Hunt. She was a star!



Thanks to Miss Hunt, in 1953 TCVT was awarded an international certificate bestowed by Trinity College, London. This certification recognized that the set standards for music proficiency had been met and exceeded at TCVT. Trinity was the first school in the United States where a student could test for and receive the International Music Proficiency Award. Prior to the Trinity College of VT credentialing, a student needed to test at Trinity College, London.

Poor health forced Miss Hunt to retire early but the Artist Series lived on with appearances from the likes of Maya Angelou and Elie Wiesel just to name two speakers. Miss Hunt left her mark. Trinity and The Arts in general were her life; we were privileged to have had her at Trinity College.

As we conclude Episode 3, let's play (our version of) Jeopardy!

ANSWER: "This lovely 1940 TC graduate worked as the cigarette girl in a New York City lounge/restaurant before finding her true calling in life."

QUESTION: Who is (next episode)

