

THE BANDON LIGHT

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E B A N D O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

LORD BENNETT'S TRIP TO BANDON

By Jim Proehl

His headstone in Bandon's Averill Cemetery identifies George Bennett as "The Founder of Bandon." As with most historical "facts," there is truth in that epitaph, but not simple truth.

Lord Bennett's account of his first trip to the place he helped become Bandon is an interesting piece of writing that reveals some of the character of "The Founder of Bandon."

Writing in the royal "we," Lord Bennett tells the story of his journey to America in 1873. "We came here from Bandon in Ireland, which we left on the 26th day of May, and landed in the capital of Coos county as previously stated, including delays in New York and San Francisco, in less than a month."

Empire City was the county seat in 1873.

Two sons accompanied Bennett to Coos County. The young men travelled down the Coquille River a couple days ahead of their father.

Still using the "we" and "our" to refer to himself, Bennett continues his account of his journey to the coast.

"Our course was up to Judge Hall's place and from there across the isthmus to the head of Beaver Slough. There we waited several hours for a boat. It was a lonely place, surrounded by hills, which were heavily timbered to their very summit, with gigantic spruce and fir.

"There wasn't the twitter of a bird, or even a breeze, however light or soft, to ruffle the foliage of the salmon berry, the alder, or the willow that surrounded us.

"At last the boat came and we commenced our journey down to the Coquille. It was a little flat-bottomed affair and the boatman stood in the fore part using his paddle. With this he not only paddled the boat, but pushed it from side to side as it struck against either bank, struck against a sunken log, stuck fast in a mud bank, or butted against a beaver dam.

"Meanwhile, we had to duck our head every few minutes to prevent the overhanging brush from

LORD BENNETT, THE SELF-STYLED "FOUNDER OF BANDON"
BROUGHT GORSE TO THE AREA.



tearing the hair off our head, or one of the branches catching us under the chin and hoisting us overboard, deposit us in a greasy, oozy slime where we could probably remain.

"As we got further down we got into deeper and broader water and we got more courage; we asked our boatman several questions, but he seldom answered us, and when he did it was in monosyllables.

"Then we thought he looked angry at us, and we couldn't tell for what.

"He turned round and looked sharply at us three or four times, and then the courage which we had begun to feel left us, as we felt convinced that he was only waiting for a chance to strike us on the head with that horrible paddle and having taken our money—and we had considerable with us at that time—throw us over to the numerous water rats that were swimming around, to be devoured by them at leisure.

"We became bereft of hope.

"Every look he gave us told us plainly that we were drawing nearer to our untimely end.

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The Bandon Light

A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

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Bandon Historical Society Museum

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Nominating Committee

Andy Christensen, Ron Knox,
Donna Mason, Jim Proehl, Brian Vick

The Board members meet the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4 pm at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

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www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org

If you have an interest in Bandon's history and would like to help preserve our past for future generations, call us - we need you. The Museum is OPEN Monday through Saturday 10-4 pm. June through September we are open 7 days a week. The Museum closes for the month of January. Our volunteers are waiting to help you and answer your questions about Bandon's history.

Enjoy Bandon's rich and wonderful history
270 Fillmore & Hwy 101
(at the only stop light downtown).



Judy Schultz Knox

Here it is May 2015 already...can't imagine where the days have gone.

I have not been at the museum (my 2nd home) for some weeks. Ron had surgery in September and is still recouping with good days and not so good days. On April 3rd I broke the humerus bone in my left arm and have been in a sling for seven weeks and am now in physical therapy. Not so "humorous" to me. One day at a time. I hope to be back at the museum very soon.

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors and Eileen have done a GREAT job organizing events, making sure everything was done on time, and keeping up with the daily office work. Thanks so much to each if you. I truly appreciate all your work and extra help.

All of us do what we do at the museum for one reason: Bandon's history. Teaching it, remembering it, and preserving it for future generations. All our volunteers are priceless. From greeting guests at the entrance door, preserving the photograph collection by scanning, keeping records of collections for preservation, setting up exhibits, coordinating the shifts of volunteers, to the newsletter crew, our school tour connections and grant writers...and so very many more people who volunteer that we could not do without. Thanks to all of you for your continuous help. If you want to help and join our history crew, come on down or call us, we would love to have you.

Admission to the museum has stayed the same, Adults \$3.00, members and 12 and under free. We are pleased to let you know that we have over 340 members. Thank you for continuing your memberships. If you need a gift idea, the gift shop contains historical books and photographs, collectable posters, and lots of new items not found anywhere else. We are handicap-accessible and have over 3500 sq. ft. of exhibit area.

Thanks to all of you for making Bandon's museum what it is and for your continued support. Hope to see you at the museum.



MEMORIALS

November 2014 – April 2015

Donors

Ronald Sutherland
Suzanne & Robert Webber
Ruth Engelbart
Edith Winters
George Domenighini

In Memory

Bob Sutherland
Bud Baird
David Engelbart
Buster Jacobs
Gary Davis



“BLESSED BY WATER, CURSED BY FIRE”

When the new Coos County History Museum opens later this spring, the theme of an exhibit on Bandon will be “Blessed by Water, Cursed by Fire.” The Bandon Historical Society helped develop the exhibit.

The exhibit acknowledges that fire has had as much of a role in shaping the community’s history as have the ocean and river.

It’s a paradox that an environment that averages 60 inches of rainfall per year has a dry season that leaves the community prone to devastating fires.

Most towns have a big fire in their history. The first two decades of the twentieth century, when gas heating and electricity were added to closely built wooden structures, was an era when towns in Oregon were especially likely to be ravaged by fire.

Bandon would remember the fire of 1914, a restaurant fire that spread and destroyed three city blocks, as “the big one” were it not for the 1936 fire, a forest fire that swept through the area destroying farms, neighborhoods and almost every business.



Fire Burned Out Almost Every Business



Residential Remains After The Fire

The current shape of the Bandon school system, the configuration of grades and buildings, was set 40 years ago in the aftermath of an arson fire that destroyed Bandon High School.

A legacy of those fires is a keen community awareness of the need for fire protection.

What history can’t tell us is what tragedies have been prevented by the presence of Bandon’s strong fire department.

The museum recently shipped several artifacts to the Coos Museum to complement the text and photo portion of the Bandon exhibit. The Coos Museum plans to rotate pieces of their main floor exhibit so that over the course of a year, the subject matter changes.

The artifacts the museum loaned may be back in three months or may be gone for a year.

The Coos Museum chose the Bandon museum to ask to contribute to their opening exhibit in part because Bandon’s historical society is well established and active. By contrast, the other county community represented will be Dora, a community with a more challenging town structure.

Over time, the Coos Museum plans to tell the story of every county community, but Bandon will be featured on opening day.



Enjoying The Beach At Face Rock

EAGLE SCOUT PROPOSAL

By Jim Proehl

Bandon Boy Scout Austin Carrero recently received approval from the Chinook District to do an Eagle Scout service project in connection with the Bandon Historical Society.

For his project, Austin will establish a display cabinet in each of the three school buildings and create a display depicting that school's history. Austin will either build a display case or find an underused display one in each building.

Austin will design the exhibit for each case and work with museum volunteers to prepare exhibit materials.

The museum will assist Austin by giving him access to photographs and historical information and providing advice about display techniques.

To meet the requirements of the award, a Scout has to involve and give leadership to others in the course of doing the project. Austin will have to share what he has learned, both about school history and building a historic exhibit, with other Scouts and enlist their help in building the displays and display cases.

The Scouts also require the Eagle candidate to raise the funds to finance his project.

An Eagle service project must be done as a partnership between the Eagle candidate and an entity outside of the Boy Scouts. The Chinook District Eagle Board, (which represents Scouting in Coos County) must pre-approve each project.

Bandon Eagle Scouts have worked cooperatively with the museum before. Former Museum Board President Paul Shelton enlisted Eagle Scouts Trever Jackson and Dustin Baum to do two separate Eagle service projects at the Averill Pioneer Cemetery under the auspices of the Bandon Historical Society.



**Boy Scouts troop outing
August, 1965, Western World photo**

BANDON HIGH SCHOOL'S COMMUNITY 101 PROGRAM

The museum will be looking for one or more student employees this summer thanks to a grant awarded by Bandon High School's Community 101 program.

"Community 101, a program of The Oregon Community Foundation, is a classroom-based program that gives students the opportunity to get involved in their communities through grant making and volunteering," according to the OCF website.

A class receives a \$5,000 allocation for grant making in the areas of arts and culture, education, the environment and healthy families. Students identify community needs, decide where to focus, and then implement a grant program. At the end of the term, they present their grant awards. The entire \$5,000 allocation goes to the community.

Frequently, businesses or individual donors sponsor a classroom by providing the \$5,000. The Norman Sprague Foundation of Bandon was a community sponsor for this year's Bandon High program. In this way, they can support their local communities while also encouraging youth philanthropy and civic engagement.

The classroom teacher acts as the program advisor and empowers the students to make decisions while guiding them through the process.

Bandon High social studies teacher Silia Polamalu advises the program as part of the curriculum of the high school's leadership class.

The program specifies the position go to a currently enrolled high school or college student. Job duties could include sorting and filing, photo scanning, research, grounds keeping, helping to build exhibits, maintenance and greeting guests at the front desk.

In its grant proposal, the historical society pitched the summer program as an experiment to see if student employees would be a good fit at the museum.

The Bandon High class granted \$500 of its allocation to the Bandon Historical Society. The museum board committed an additional \$1,100 of operating money to bring the total to \$1,600 in potential salary for student employees.

It is unlikely Community 101 would fund this project beyond one year. If employing students in the summer works well, the museum will need to look for other ways to keep the program going.

ARTIFACTS DONATED TO THE MUSEUM

November 2014 – April 2015

Donor Howard Tucker family: Two [2] Shell Oil calendar frames
Donor Larry Hess: 1935 “Campus Cords” corduroy boys pants
Donor Patricia Hiley Hess: 1953 wedding dress
Donor Wayne Campbell: Book of Cemeteries [Oregon Burial Sites]
Donor George Sombart: “B” varsity letter and Bandon Tiger license plate
Donor Estate of David & Virginia Corrie Cozart: 1906 clipper ship model from Prosper Boatyard

MUSEUM RECEIVES GRANTS

Grants from the Coquille Tribal Community Fund and the Coos County Cultural Coalition will help the museum better fulfill its mission in 2015.

The Coquille Tribal Community Fund granted \$2,600 to the Bandon Historical Society Museum.

The museum will use the 2015 TCFC grant to improve its storage and preservation practices. The grant will buy materials that better meet museum best practices.

In its application letter, the museum wrote, “We don’t do a **bad** job of storing things at the Bandon Historical Society Museum. But we don’t always do the **best** job.

“As a small non-profit, we constantly weigh the best economic practices against the best archival practices. Therefore, we have material carefully stored in plastic tubs, manila envelopes and cardboard boxes that should be kept in archival, museum specific, storage containers.

“The material in storage does not generate income through admission. However, it is important as research material and important in preserving the story of our community.”

Museum board President Dean Conyers and Vice President Jim Proehl represented the museum at a luncheon for recipients held at the Mill Casino February 19.

This is the third consecutive year the museum has received a grant from the Coquille tribe. The two previous grants were used to improve the museum’s exhibit area. The revisions to the maritime room completed in January were funded by the 2014 grant.

The Coos County Cultural Coalition granted the museum \$690 to buy materials for educational programs.

The Bandon Historical Museum uses its “History Detectives” program to bring more of the community’s children into the Bandon Historical Museum and take more history instruction into schools and to other groups that serve youth.

For 2015 the goal is to replenish program materials that have proved successful and develop more program materials for more grade levels. The funds from the grant would purchase consumable materials children can use in and take from the museum and program materials the museum can make available to teachers.

An aspect of the museum’s program that especially appeals to the Coalition’s granting committee is the collaboration with the high school art department. Art students produce the ceramic tokens, screen printed history detective badges and tie-dyed bags students get to take home from a visit to the museum. The grant pays for the raw materials.

"If it wasn't at this turn or bend of the river, it will surely be at the next.

"We were unwell and felt cumbersome and heavy, and could scarcely make a move to defend ourselves.

"He was as light and agile as a wild cat or a panther.

"At last, when we had resolved to submit quietly to our fate, a thought flashed across our mind. '*Masonry* abounds in the United States. Try him; he may be a friend and brother. If he is, you are safe. If he is not, you cannot be worse than you are anyhow.'

"As he was turning round and, as we fancied, to finish us, we telegraphed *Masonically*.

"He started, and looked keenly at us.

"Hurrah, we're safe, thought we, as we telegraphed again, and a faint smile glimmered over his beaming countenance.

"He telegraphed back and immediately he telegraphed a step further.

"Throwing down his paddle—yes that horrible paddle—and rushing toward us with his outstretched arms. 'How are you brother?' said he, as he warmly and eagerly shook us by both hands.

"We need scarcely say that we were only too glad to gratefully reciprocate the recognition. We were one at once.

"All our fears left us.

"We were under the protection of a brother Mason, and our mind was at rest."

Having survived his first trip down the Coquille, Bennett bought a huge parcel of beachfront land, cleared a 400-acre farm, and platted a town he called "Bandon Beach" on the area near Coquille Point.

About the same time, the Averill and Dyer families were establishing a town on the riverfront. Bennett convinced the citizens to consolidate the two communities and choose the name Bandon, the name of his hometown, over the name Averill, the name of the town platted along the river.

So Lord Bennett's title of "The Founder of Bandon" is a fact, if not the whole story.

Bennett wrote a 500-page history of Bandon—Bandon, Ireland.

He was at work on his history of Bandon, Oregon when he died in 1900. The story of his first trip down the Coquille is taken from that uncompleted manuscript, which was discovered about 25 years after his death and published in a 1927 edition of the Oregon Historical Society quarterly.

He never mentions gorse, but he didn't finish the book.

All Class School Reunion

Saturday, August 22nd-No Charge

Bandon High School Gym

Visit Ocean Crest School-Noon to 4:00 PM

Bring pictures from your school days to share
with your classmates and the museum.

GOLF, GORSE AND GOLF

By Jim Proehl

“Golf, Gorse and Golf” is the theme of a featured exhibit under construction just inside the museum’s entrance. The exhibit will grow and evolve throughout the year.

The exhibit shares the story of Westmost, Bandon’s first golf course, built in 1927. Pictures document the changing faces and names of a course also known as Face Rock, Bandon Golf and Country Club, and Old Bandon Golf Links.

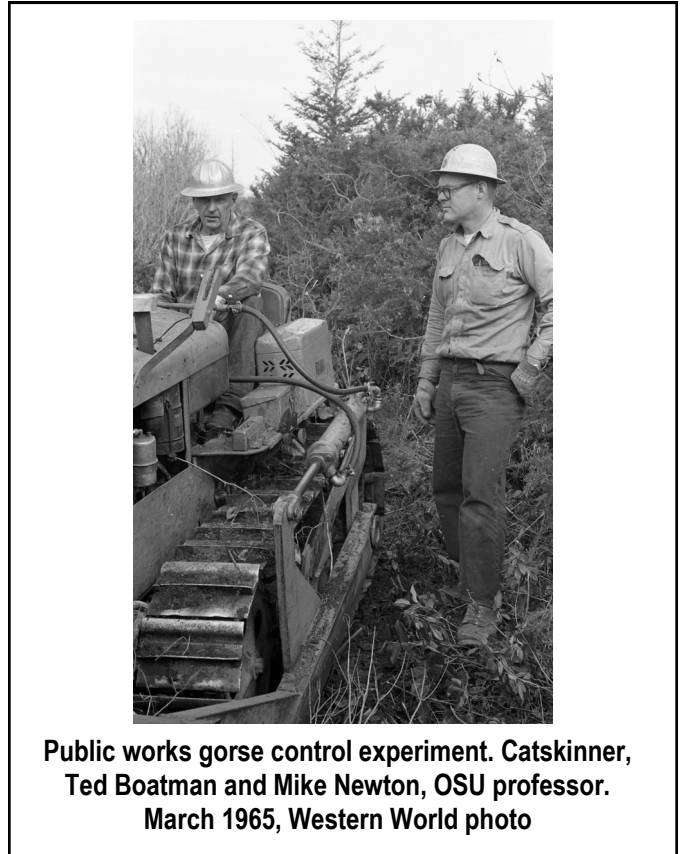
Or, as a man whose family owned the course when he was a boy said, “We just called it the gorse course.”

Gorse gives color to the courses at Bandon Dunes, as illustrated by professional photographer Wood Sabold. The Dunes resort provided the Sabold photos and several artifacts to the golf portion of the exhibit.

Missing is material on Bandon Crossings, but the exhibit remains a work-in-progress.

Volunteer Andy Christensen took the colorful photos that anchor the gorse part of the display.

Local bee enthusiast Pat Reed provided a video showing close-up views of bees collecting pollen from gorse flowers. Local musician Steve Montana plays the music that backs up the bees.



Photos from the Mary Schamehorn collection of *Western World* negatives document gorse fires and gorse control efforts.

The ever-changing nature of the exhibit encourages volunteers and visitors to continue to think about, and add to, the museum’s collection of information about golf and gorse.



NEW MEMBERS

November 2014-April 2015

Chris & Mikayle Stole
Bill & Peg Jones
Elaine Stohler
Patricia Seidler
James Lundy

JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society

Enclosed is my check

(please check one)

\$15 Individual _____ NAME _____

\$25 Family _____ ADDRESS _____

\$35 Business _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

\$250 Life _____ PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

\$500 Benefactor _____

\$1000 Patron _____

If you would like to contribute to the Bandon Historical Society's

Sustainability Fund, please fill out the information below

I pledge \$_____ to be paid _____ monthly or _____ quarterly or _____ annually

A check is enclosed for \$_____

Please make check to BHS and mail to: Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon, OR 97411

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