



THE BANDON LIGHT

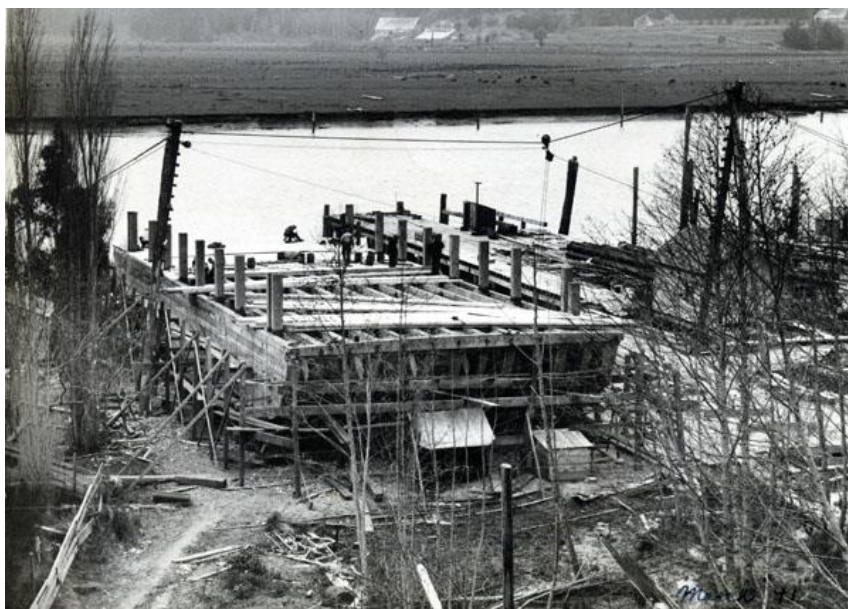
A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Last Shipyard

By Dick Hancock

From 1857, when Fitzgerald, Giles and Hall built a small, unnamed schooner on the Coquille River, until the end of World War II, shipbuilding was an important industry on the lower river. Sailing vessels, steam schooners, tugs, barges and fishing vessels of all sizes and types plied the seas of the world from the Coquille River yards of the Heuckendorffs, Hermans, Reeds and others. It all ended with the end of World War II when the Prosper Shipyard, which had built wooden barges for the US Navy, closed forever.

But one stalwart builder of wooden ships for iron men came back! **Art Mattson** had spent the war years building wooden minesweepers for the Navy in California and on Coos Bay but returned to his boat yard above Prosper and once more started building and repairing wooden boats. Art was the son of Finnish immigrant John Mattson and was a Master craftsman who was as picky about the materials he used as he was about his own craftsmanship. For a young boy, spending time in his boat shed was a heady experience, watching the long curls flow from the wooden



Mattson shipyard, 1941 in Prosper, building a barge for the Corps of Engineers.



Mattson shipyard's 1941 sawmill crew.

plane as Art painstakingly shaved down a Port Orford Cedar boat rib to make it fit exactly in place or smelling the metallic odor of the red copper paint as he brushed it into the new planks he was fitting in the bottom of the old *Active*, a Moore Mill towboat that he pulled out of the water for maintenance every year or two. It was a privilege, not a chore, to be allowed to run errands or carry tools - or on a very good day, to be allowed to drive the glue-coated wooden plugs inserted over the heads of the screws holding the planks to the ribs.

The "ways" were a complicated arrangement of cables and a carriage riding on beams running down into the water. The cables, attached to an arrangement of gears and rollers driven by a vehicle's rear wheels riding on rollers, pulled the carriage and the vessel placed on it, out of the water. The deeper the draught of the vessel, the higher the tide had to be to get it into the carriage. The *Billy Moore*, another towboat, needed at least a seven foot tide to get on the carriage. Flat bottom barges, such as the Bullards or Riverton ferries, could be pulled on lower tides. Once out of the water, the hulls could

Shipyard (Continued on page 6)

A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

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Volunteers: They make it happen!!

Gayle Nix

 Gayle Nix I think about how blessed we are to have the many volunteers who willingly give their time and energy to our museum.

Kathy Dornath, our volunteer coordinator, was recently named the May Volunteer of the Month for the Greater Bandon Association, and we at the museum could not agree more!

We have volunteers who:

- sit at the front desk, greet visitors, handle the gift shop checkout.
- develop and refresh our exhibits, keeping them updated and interesting.
- scan and print negatives and photographs.
- do handyman jobs, keeping the museum in order
- help with fundraising.
- help with our accessions and our Past Perfect Program.
- maintain our website and newsletter layout.
- take on the huge project of getting our obituaries online.
- recently moved here from a museum in California where they did “Gold Panning for kids” and are setting up to do a similar program here.
- remounted and moved the memorial boards, which are now suspended from the gift shop ceiling. They look great and are much easier to read.
- work in our research library. I bet most of you don’t know we have all kinds of history books and local area books that can be checked out!

Plans are still being made for a “Night at the Museum” event to occur sometime in October. There will be four or five volunteer “experts” who will be on hand to answer questions about Bandon. This after-hours program will include some adult beverages and cheese so it should be a fun night!

Our annual volunteer potluck appreciation event will take place at the museum on Thursday, August 23rd at 5:00. Mark your calendars now!

Thank you to all the volunteers who make our museum something that the town of Bandon can be very proud of. It truly is all about the Volunteers--they do make it happen here!

Gayle Nix
Executive Director

Photo Find: Henry Hewitt Baldwin

by Jim Proehl



Henry Hewitt Baldwin, ca 1900.

He may be the earliest connection between Bandon, Ireland, and Bandon, Oregon, but until recently we did not have a picture of Henry Hewitt Baldwin. Three photographs donated recently by Jean Kronenberg Ritenour filled that gap in our local history.

Though Lord Bennett's tombstone names him the "Founder of Bandon," on his arrival, he stayed with his friend, Henry Baldwin.

Born in Bandon, Ireland, in 1825, Baldwin went to sea at age 16, immigrated to the US in 1846 and joined the US Army in 1849. As a soldier, he was sent to reinforce the garrison at Port Orford. Dow Beckham's book *Bandon By-the-Sea* gives this account of what happened next: "In January, 1852, the *Captain Lincoln*, carrying US Army troopers and supplies, missed Port Orford in a storm and wrecked on the North Spit of Coos Bay. The captain selected four dragoons to travel south to Fort Orford to report the accident and find assistance for the castaways. The four soldiers had to swim the mouth of the Coquille River and ferried their small amount of belongings across on a raft. The garrison at Port Orford welcomed them in pleasant surprise because they thought all aboard the *Captain Lincoln* had been lost.

"Henry Baldwin, an Irishman by birth and one of these dragoons, served fifteen years in the US Army and then settled on Bear Creek. A schoolmate of George Bennett of Bandon, Ireland, it is probable that Baldwin influenced Bennett to settle at the mouth of the Coquille River. Later these men named the town Bandon after their old home in Ireland. After several years he moved into Bandon and built his home—*San Souci By the Sea*. (Perhaps becoming the first person to retire on Beach Loop Road.) Baldwin subsequently expressed his delight in his choice of a home with the terse phrase: 'happy as a clam, and don't give a damn.' Baldwin died February 26, 1911, age eighty-seven in Bandon."

Baldwin was a prolific writer, contributing poems and articles to area publications.

When Baldwin was 82 years old, he made a return visit to his hometown in Ireland. He offered these words of advice. "To those thinking of or intending to return here, I will say as a friend, stay where you are." He especially was disappointed with the food on his return to Ireland.

In the 1920s, the Shindler family bought (and still owns) the property where Baldwin's house stood. The large cypress tree that arches above Ocean Drive near Garfield Avenue is known as the Baldwin cypress.

If we had any doubts about the bearded man being Henry Baldwin, the inscription above the door, which is reported in another account, identifies the house as the Baldwin home. Who else would be posing outside the fence?

Baldwin is buried in the GAR cemetery. His headstone reads, "Born in Bandon, Ireland. Died in Bandon, Oregon." Through Jean Ritenour's contribution, we have a face to go with the epitaph.



Henry Hewitt Baldwin in front of his home San Souci by the Sea, March 5, 1900.

Veterans Day Celebration Planned



Lynn Osborne, US Army, World War I

World War I will be the focus of this year's Veterans Day celebration at the Bandon Historical Museum according to event organizer **Rick Hinojosa**. This year's event will be held Saturday, November 10, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Admission is free all day thanks to our co-sponsors, Ocean Spray and Edgewaters Restaurant.

Veterans Day originated as a way to mark the armistice in 1918 that ended World War I one hundred years ago. The event will combine displays by military collectors, special museum exhibits, vehicles on display in the parking lot and a brief speaker program.

We hope collectors will bring in their best World War I material, though all military memorabilia will be welcome according to Hinojosa. In the run up to the event, museum volunteers are looking for stories and information about Bandon boys who served in World War I, veterans who moved to Bandon after the war and the home front as experienced in Bandon.

The museum would especially like to find photographs of area World War

I vets and stories that might go with them. Finding WWI vets is part of an ongoing project to collect service photos of Bandon military veterans. Families do not have to give photographs away. The museum only needs them long enough to scan and permission from the family to further share the pictures.

A group, sponsored by VFW Medal of Honor Post 3440 in cooperation with the City of Bandon, is working to build a Bandon Veterans Memorial in the City Park. The museum is cooperating by sharing information about local veterans. The memorial will be financed in part by donors buying bricks bearing the names of local veterans. Memorial Brick information and application forms are available at the museum.



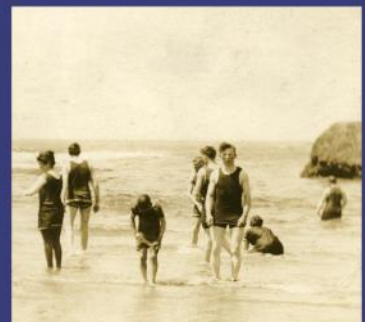
Rayner Geisendorfer, member of Bandon High Class of 1915



Bandon Historical Society Museum
Highway 101 and Fillmore Ave.
Bandon, Oregon 541-347-2164
Open Monday through Saturday
10:00 am to 4:00 pm plus
Free Summer Sundays

Courtesy of

**First Interstate Bank and
Best Western Inn at Face Rock**



Future Governor Visits Bandon in 1958



It looks like **Mark Hatfield** has his hands full with this group of Cranberry Cadets.

He wasn't yet Governor Hatfield or Senator Hatfield but was candidate Hatfield when he visited Bandon in August of 1958.

Then Secretary of State and Mrs. Hatfield were on their way with a crew of other area Republican politicians from the county fair in Myrtle Point to campaign appearances in Coos Bay when they made a stop in Bandon where the Cranberry Cadets just happened to be drilling and so were able to lead an "impromptu" parade for the candidates.

The group is outside the *Western World* office, in the days when the *Western World* was in the First National Bank building at the corner of Second Street and Alabama. A poster for the County Fair is among those in the window. The parking meter has a bit of a lean to it, perhaps the result of a collision. The building is currently the Masonic Hall and houses the Cobbler's Bench in the corner store front.

The Catholic Church stands on the hill in the background.

The *Western World* was a squarely Republican newspaper, so it may not be a surprise to discover a newspaper photographer was on hand to capture this "impromptu" photo opportunity. But it probably wasn't in the plans that the candidate for governor would have to play referee to a dust-up among the cadets.

We don't know what the girls in the back row said (or did with their batons) but it's obvious one of the little girls in front took exception and chose to retaliate at the moment the photographer, likely **Louis Felsheim**, snapped the photo.

This picture didn't make the paper, though Hatfield got a lot of ink (and a more distinguished photograph) in the August 21, 1958 edition. Museum board member, and former *Western World* editor, **Mary Schamehorn** preserved this image and about fifty years of other negatives from the *Western World*. One of the beauties of the collection is we get to see the photos that did not make the paper, and they often tell more interesting stories than the ones that did.

Hatfield was elected governor in November.

The Missoula Floods—An Ice Age Event That Changed The Pacific Northwest

The Missoula Floods, an ice age event that shaped the geology and history of the Pacific Northwest, will be the topic of a presentation hosted by the Bandon Historical Society.

The program will be Thursday, June 21, at the Sprague Theater, in Bandon's City Park, and will begin at 7:30 PM. Admission will be free courtesy of **Chas Waldrop Real Estate**.

Bob Setterberg, from the Oregon Historical Society, will take the audience on an incredible journey from Montana to the mouth of the Columbia River, a journey that radically altered the Northwest's topography. The story is generously illustrated.

Flood (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1) Shipyard

be scraped and inspected and any soft planks or damage repaired. Then, caulked and painted, they would be returned to their natural element and back to work.

Art was usually the first one on the river to catch a Chinook. Sometime in June, when things felt right to him, he would start trolling his Bear Valley #5 spinner in front of Prosper. Rowing his hand-built cedar and canvas-covered punt with his ever present White Owl cigar pointing the way, he would methodically cover his favorite spots. Never later than the Fourth of July, he would connect. After the first one each year, it was easy, he would say. "Only secret was to be at the same place the fish you intended to catch would be!" The size of the fish he caught varied with who was listening to the story at the time. Seemed like none of them were ever less than thirty pounds, though.

After the war, he never drove a car. He had lost an eye in an accident and felt unsafe driving but he never lacked for transportation. The Greyhound bus or the milk truck would get him where he wanted to go - or there was always his punt to row. When he visited our house, we kids always were sure he had come to see us, not our parents! He would come to the door, call whatever kids were home, and reach into his pocket and pull out a handful of coins; wait until we were all there, and throw them all over the room. After the mad scramble to retrieve them, we would all gather around and hear whatever tall tale he had to tell us that day.

Up until his death, at about 90, he seldom failed to walk from Prosper to Bandon every day for a drink at Lloyd's Café. He wouldn't turn down a ride but not getting one didn't deter him from the trip. Rain and wind were no impediment; he and his White Owl made the hike. Next time you're in town, have one for Art!

And that's the way it was.....

Donations and New Members

Donations in Memory of: Jean Shine, Dr. Del Remy, Judy Favilla, Marie Ducharme, Edith Pershbaker Leslie, Jack Bowder, Craig Scott Goodfellow, Carolyn Chandlee Greene, Maggie Karl, Susan Snead, Jay Hess, Doreen Hess, Buck Rogers, Jason Tree

Memorial Donors: Mary Ellingson, Delores Holdscaw, Coquille Indian Tribe, Judy Knox, Mark and Trina Johnston, William Bernstein, James Jackson and Lori Doss, Barbara Dodrill, Norma Handsaker, Kathy Phillips, Paula Bechtold, Kathy Dornath, Geri Procetto, Nancy Drew, Bonnie Cox, Paul Kilcoyne Family, Horthy Joyce, Gina Swenson, Alyce and Jim Cawdrey, Sharon Ward Moy, Gayle Nix, Stephen & Annette Langenstein, Sally Morgan, Beverly Carlson, Carole Vedder, Careen Pierce, Pete and Joan Goodbrod

New Life Members: Lynn and Andy Christensen, Michael Hahn

New Members: Katherine Hawthorne, Roger Brown Family, Julita Fong, Jim and Phyllis Gilman, Ron Loya Family, Lew Soraich, Stu and Sue Clark



(Continued from page 5) Flood

Bandon Museum volunteer **Jeff Moore** suggested Setterberg be invited to Bandon after seeing his presentation in Vancouver, Washington, at a joint conference of the Lewis and Clark Trails Association and the California/Oregon Trails Association. "This presentation was the hit of the conference," said Moore.

The visual presentation ties together the wealth of historic, geologic, and statistical components that tell the story of a series of floods that resulted when ice age dams broke in western Montana and sent unimaginable quantities of water to the Pacific Ocean according to Moore.

Setterberg also gives the story a human component by telling the story of the geologist who first found evidence of this event and endured ridicule until the story gained acceptance, said Moore.

Setterberg uses photographs of geographic features from Montana to the Oregon coast to illustrate his story. "Anybody who's familiar with Oregon topography will know just what he's talking about and will come away with a new appreciation of the state's landscape," said Moore.

Oregon Historical Society Board Member **Robin Miller** will introduce Setterberg's program. "Come early, get a good seat, and learn about the Missoula Floods June 21 at the Sprague Theater," said Bandon Museum Board President **Jim Proehl**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, May 27, 2018— Free Summer Sundays, thanks to our sponsors **Best Western Inn at Face Rock** and **First Interstate Bank**, the Museum will be open with free admission on Sundays through the summer months.

Tuesday, June 5, 2018— 7:00PM at the Bullards Beach Meeting Yurt, “**About a Hundred Years Ago-A Travelogue Visit to Bandon**” by Jim Proehl.

Thursday, June 14, 2018— 7:00PM at the Bullards Beach Amphitheater, “**Tales from the Cemetery-Who’s Buried at Bullards Beach**” by Jim Proehl

Thursday, June 21, 2018— The Missoula Floods - It Forever Changed the Pacific Northwest. 7:30PM at the Sprague Community Theater, Bob Setterberg from the Oregon Historical Society takes us on an incredible journey from Montana to the mouth of the Columbia River. Free admission thanks to our sponsor, **Chas Waldrop Real Estate**.

Tuesday, June 26, 2018— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, June 26, 2018— 7:00PM at the Bullards Beach Meeting Yurt, “**Life on the Coquille—When the River was the Road**” by Jim Proehl.

Thursday, July 5, 2018— 7:00PM at the Bullards Beach Amphitheater, “**Tales from the Cemetery—Who’s Buried at Bullards Beach**” by Jim Proehl.

Tuesday, July 10, 2018— 7:00PM at the Bullards Beach Meeting Yurt, “**Shipwreck Stories—Tales from the Treacherous Bandon Bar**” by Jim Proehl.

Thursday, August 23, 2018— Volunteers’ Appreciation Potluck Picnic. Join us in thanking the many volunteers who make the Museum so great. 5PM at the Museum.

Tuesday, August 28, 2018— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Sunday, September 23, 2018— Annual “Bandon Fire” Event, program begins at 2PM with free admission thanks to our sponsor, **The Bandon Inn**.

Tuesday, September 25, 2018— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, October 23, 2018— Museum Board Meeting, 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Saturday, November 10, 2018— Veterans Day Event, 10AM to 4PM. 2018 marks 100 years since the end of World War 1 and will be the focus for the day’s event. Free admission thanks to our sponsors **Ocean Spray** and **Edgewater Restaurant**.

President’s Corner...

By Jim Proehl

Board President



Ben Fisher, who recently retired as the manager of Bullards Beach State Park, visited the April meeting of the museum’s board to share a concern about the Coquille River Lighthouse. He talked about his frustration, during his time as manager, with getting State Parks to attend to the long-term maintenance needs of the lighthouse.

Without getting into all the details, Ben is concerned that safety issues could soon prohibit the public from being able to enter the lighthouse, that the building could deteriorate and that, sooner or later, access to the lighthouse and the beach near the north jetty could come to an end. The issue does not lie with the management of Bullards Park but with Oregon State Parks.

I had no idea there was a problem.

As a museum, we work with the Oregon Heritage Commission and the Historic Preservation Office, both branches of Oregon State Parks. Historic preservation is not outside the mission of Oregon State Parks. Every time I turn on local TV, I see a commercial about state parks and lottery funds. It’s a matter of priorities.

As anyone who has worked within a government agency knows, concern from the public carries a different weight than concern expressed from within the system.

We addressed the letter that follows to **Lisa Sumption**, the director of Oregon State Parks, but will be sending it to other state leaders. As a community interested in Bandon’s history, we need to be aware of the problem and share our concern with decision makers at several levels.

Think about where your influence lies.

Please add your voice to ours.

Dear _____:

The Board of Directors of the Bandon Historical Society is concerned about the Coquille River Lighthouse.

We understand there are structural issues with the building. We know that the “ownership” of the lighthouse is complicated and that decisions to be made about these issues are on the horizon.

The Lighthouse matters in Bandon.

It is our most photographed landmark. It is the local subject most frequently portrayed by artists. Because most of Bandon was destroyed in the fire of 1936, we have few historic buildings. The lighthouse is our oldest standing structure. It is the symbol of our community.

Bullards Beach State Park is an economic driver in Bandon. The campgrounds house the visitors but the lighthouse is the attraction. We appreciate the work of the park staff but know the preservation of the lighthouse is beyond the scope and the budget of the local management.

We believe Oregon State Parks to be the best possible stewards of the lighthouse. Please share our concern by making preservation of the Coquille River Lighthouse a priority.

Sincerely,
James Proehl
Board President
Bandon Historical Society

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Already a member? Please consider a donation to help support your museum.

(please check one)

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\$25 Family _____ ADDRESS: _____
\$35 Business _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
\$250 Life _____ PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
I'm a Member _____ and would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of \$ _____

Please make check payable to BHS and mail to:

Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon OR 97411

For more information on benefits of memberships go to

<http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/membership.html>

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