



THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Everyone Likes A Good Mystery

Jim Proehl



"Mystery Storage Locker Photo" labeled **Grandma Black, Richard Stokes** (9 months), **Betty Bales, David Bales**. Photo#61244

It's the sort of puzzle people imagine when they think of working at a museum. Or at least, we imagine they do.

A stranger walks in with a box he found when he bought the contents of a storage unit. He doesn't want it but thinks it might interest a museum. He found the name "Langlois" in several places. We're the closest museum to Langlois.

"I didn't think we'd find much in it that we could use, but I thought it was worth a look," said museum director **Gayle Nix**.

The box is mostly filled with photos. Some are in albums. Others are loose. Some are in the envelopes they came

back from the photo processor in, such as the set mailed from Kansas City to **Mrs. H. C. Stokes** at a Langlois with a one-and-a-half cent stamp.

Mixed with the photos are a sprinkling of notes, letters and documents. Most of the material looks like it comes from the 1920s through the 1950s. There are hundreds of photo negatives in a variety of sizes and formats.

"Someone's life is in this box," said museum director Gayle Nix. "I feel like we owe it to the family to figure out who these people are."

Most of the photos are unlabeled. Some have the sort of labels that drive us crazy: "*Grandma and Me in front of Uncle's Car.*" But a few are thoroughly labeled, enough to provide hope we can trace some faces to the unlabeled images.

Some family names keep appearing: **Black, Stokes, Bales**.



Another photo labeled "**Ed & Mamie Black**, Langlois Oreg., Taken by **E. R. Ivie** in cranberry bog near Bandon 1943. Photo#61244

(Continued on page 6)

A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

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Gayle Nix

I hope you have noticed the museum's recent upgrades. The board voted to take money out of our sustainability fund to repair the building and replace the siding. We were afraid if we did not do something soon, the walls might fall down.

Gayle Nix
Executive Director

New Life Member: Willilam and Sandra Sherer

Needed: Good "Old" Doctor Story

Do you have a good doctor story? (Not about a recent visit, please.)



Dr. R. V. Leep who died July 2, 1929.

Photo#40742

Author **Bill Lansing** has begun research for a book about people who practiced medicine in the area pre-1940s and has asked our museum community for help.

Lansing released a two-volume set of books on fishing and river systems in southern Oregon during the past year and his book on gyppo logging operations in Coos County has just gone to the printers.

Other Lansing titles include *Remember When* about Coos County schools, *Can't You Hear the Whistle Blowing*, early logging operations, and *Camps and Calluses*, the Civilian Conservation Corps in the area. Lansing is a retired Menasha Corporation executive.

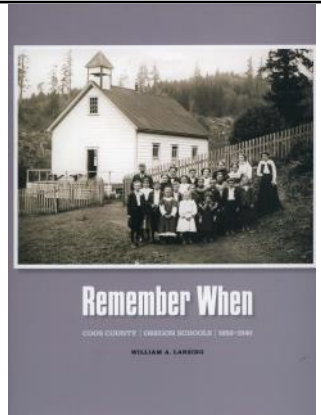
"I always like it when Bill starts a new book because it gets us thinking about a new aspect of our own story," said volunteer Jim Proehl.

If you have a story, please contact **Gayle Nix** or **Jim Proehl** at (541) 347-2164.

DR. H. L. HOUSTON
Physician & Surgeon
 Office over Drug Store. Hours, 9 to 12 a. m.;
 1:30 to 4 p. m.; 7 to 8 in the evening.
 BANDON, OREGON

DR. SMITH J. MANN
Physician & Surgeon
 Office in Panter Building. Hours, 9 to 12 a. m.;
 1 to 5 p. m.
 BANDON, OREGON

Bandon Recorder, Dec. 16, 1913.



HISTORY MINUTES
NOW ON
KBDN-FM 96.5

Museum Vice-President **Jim Proehl** has recorded five short history lessons currently being broadcast on KBDN radio. Tune in to hear about the Ocean Crest School, the Sons of the Beaches, the Big Cheese, Mayday, and the Wreck of the Bonmore.

Bargain Offer!

WEEKLY OREGONIAN, ONE YEAR, \$1.50
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Both Papers to January, 1917,

For \$2.50

Address, Recorder Publishing Co.
 Bandon, Oregon

From January 1916 *Bandon Recorder*

Summer Intern

Thanks to a sponsorship from **Bain Insurance Agency** the Museum was able to hire a student to help us through the many summer activities. **Ellie Schulz**, a junior at Bandon High this year, worked with the Museum volunteers to create new exhibits and organize our displays. "Ellie did a fantastic job for us this summer and we hope to hire a student again next year," said Museum Director **Gayle Nix**.



New Donations to the Museum

Among our new acquisitions are two especially interesting objects.

A table lamp from the Coquille River lighthouse keeper's residence was donated by **Frank Jozaitis** of Gresham, grandson of **Charles Walters**, the lighthouse keeper when it was decommissioned in 1939. The words "Table Lamp" are stamped on the rim of the lamp, which has been converted from kerosene and fitted with an electric socket, testaments to the Lighthouse Service's attention to detail and thrift.



Frank Morris, captain of the Billy Moore tug. May 1948.
Photo#61267



Table lamp from the Coquille River Lighthouse Keeper's Residence. Donated by Frank Jozaitis.

The steering wheel of the *Billy Moore*, a tug boat that served the Moore Mill and Lumber Company, was donated by **David Morris** of Tillamook. Morris grew up in Prosper and attended school in Bandon. His father, **Frank Morris**, was the captain of the *Billy Moore* when it was taken out of service in 1969. Frank Morris was foreman of the mill's river activities for almost 30 years.



The Circus is Not Always Fun

“Arm Chewed Off by Lion” was the headline of the lead story in Bandon’s *Western World* newspaper for September 22, 1927. It was not what anyone expected from a day at the circus.

The *Western World* captured the excitement of the Honest Bill’s Traveling Show coming to town in the September 15, 1927 *Western World*. “Bandon is to have a circus. The heart of every small boy in the community is throbbing with anticipation of elephants, camels, bears, tigers, monkeys, and funny clowns, not to mention cracker jack, pink lemonade and colored balloons.”

The circus was taking advantage of the newly built section of the Roosevelt Highway, later renamed Highway 101. “The company is traveling overland and is en route down the coast on its way into California. The animals travel on foot and for this reason the circus makes short jumps. In Bandon it will show in the Boak field,” reported the paper. Boak Field was on the bluff at about the corner of Franklin and Beach Loop Road. For many years it was the site of Bandon’s hospital.

Bandon doctor **Roland Leep** shot 16mm film clips of elephants cavorting in the Coquille River. School children were allowed an extra hour for lunch in order that they might see the circus parade.

Honest Bill’s Traveling Show drew large audiences. “It was the largest show of its kind that has ever played here,” said the *Western World*, and the circus-wise in Bandon agreed it was better circus than most.

The trouble started when the circus headed south for Port Orford.

“Soon after leaving Bandon early this morning en route south, the elephant herder went to sleep on his horse and at Crooked Creek the big beasts went on a rampage. One of them remained on the highway but the other started down a side road toward the beach,” reported the September 21, 1927, *Western World*.

“At about 5:30 this morning Mr. Fouts who lives on the Olson place near Sunset City, which is on the Bandon beach road, awoke to find the front door falling in and an elephant attempting to enter. He got out in a hurry and went to the Dano place to phone for help. In the meantime, the elephant invaded other places and when found by the circus crew was calmly eating apples from the trees in an orchard on the Kurtzthal place.”

Things got worse when the circus reached Port Orford.

Wait for

Big Circus

Honest Bill ³ RINGS

America's Best Circus

125 - People - 125

100 Horses - Ponies

\$75,000 Worth of Wild Animals

Elephants, Lions, Tigers, Camels, Bears, Goats,
Dogs, Monkeys, Leopards, Buffalo, Elk,
Gorillas, Zebras and Other Animals.

Wire Walkers, Jugglers, Acrobats and
Funny Clowns

ONE DAY ONLY—RAIN OR SHINE

See TEX, World's Largest Elephant.
See DIAMOND, Only Spotted Elephant on Earth.

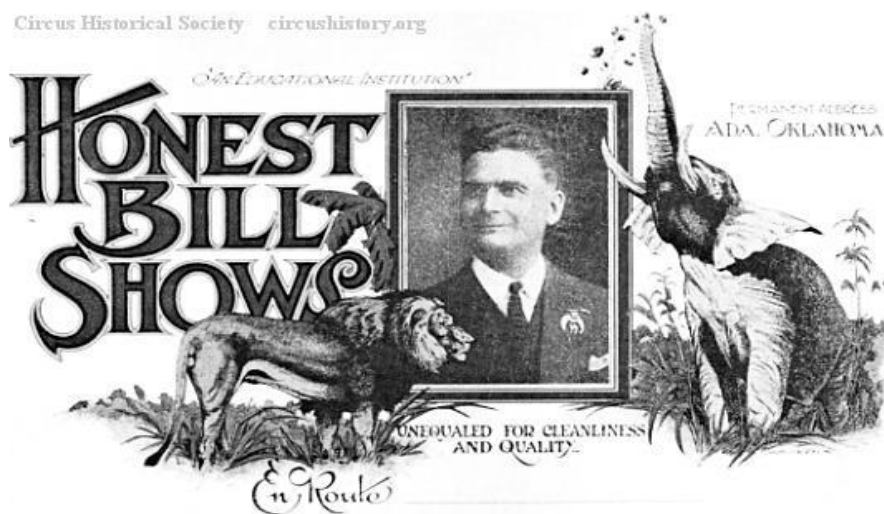
BIG STREET PARADE AT 1:00 P. M.
See open cages in parade

Afternoon and Night
COQUILLE SEPT. 20 BANDON SEPT. 21

“**Orris Fromm**, a 12-year-old son of **Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Fromm** and a student at the Port Orford schools, had his left arm bitten off by a lion at Port Orford this morning.

“The Honest Bill circus, which showed in Bandon yesterday, drew into Port Orford this morning en route to a vacant plot of ground on the Knapp place to pitch tent for an afternoon performance. One of the trucks bearing a lion’s cage stopped near the Leutwyler blacksmith shop for a few minutes and soon children collected around it. Before anyone realized the danger, the Fromm lad thrust his hand through a small hole near the bottom of the cage, the only opening except the ventilator which is near the top. One of the

Circus Historical Society circushistory.org



From the Circus Historical Society

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1)

The pictures are mostly of family but they also preserve the details of places, fashions and objects that help the museum document an earlier era. "There's a postcard of Needhams Service Station in Langlois that by itself makes me glad I took this box," said Nix.

The photos offer a good reminder about how we should label things we want to last beyond ourselves. It seems a little formal to write the first and last names of people we know well on a picture. It's downright awkward to write our own full names on the backs of photos. But the label "Me" on a photo doesn't mean anything to someone who doesn't already know what "You" looked like.

Families might consider putting together a special collection of photos "for posterity,"

with the sort of thorough identification that might seem out of place in the album everyone shares, just in case, someday, it turns up in a storage locker.

"It's not that we want just anything someone finds and doesn't feel like throwing away," said Nix. "We hope people will be very thoughtful about what they bring to the museum. But this box of photos is the sort of 'history mystery' we like to have come through the door."

If you would like to view more photos from the "Mystery Box" just visit our website page at the following URL:
<https://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/mysterybox.html>



Labeled "**Richard Homer Stokes**" Langlois Oregon at Grandma Black's place.
Photo#61243

(Continued from page 5)

animals grabbed the hand with his claws and drew the arm in until it caught the forearm in its mouth. The arm was crushed and mangled to above the elbow.

"The lad was given first aid at the (Port Orford) drug store and rushed to the Leep hospital in Bandon where amputation about two inches from the shoulder was found necessary. The hospital this afternoon reports the lad's condition as favorable. He came out from under the anesthetic and was bearing the shock well." Dr. Leep performed the amputation.

It only got worse for Honest Bill as his circus traveled south. Because of a spreading polio epidemic, several towns in northern California went into quarantine and barred circus performances. The coast highway became more primitive as the circus traveled south. Somewhere near Orrick in the California Redwoods, the circus trucks got stuck in the mud. The elephants were used to push them through. When one truck fell over an embankment, an elephant went with it. No one was sure what to do with a dead elephant on the new roadway.

Dr. Roland Leep died tragically in a hunting accident in the rocks off Port Orford later in the year.

An internet search found bits and pieces of information about Honest Bill's Traveling Show. William Newton Jr. was part of a family of circus people headquartered in Kansas. His father ran Lucky Bill's Show and his brother Henry ran Happy Bill's Circus. Nineteen-twenty-seven was the show's last year. William Newton died in Oklahoma in 1953.

Orris Fromm had a second operation, recovered, and continued to live in the area. He died in Bandon in 1970.



Honest Bill's Circus Cook Wagon (not in Bandon). From Circus Historical Society

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, October 12, 2019 — Columbus Day Storm Program at 2:00PM in the Museum. Hear about how the 1962 storm affected Bandon. Tell your own storm story as well! Free admission thanks to sponsor **5 J Cranberry Farm LLP**. See photo below.

Thursday, October 17, 2019 — A Night at the Museum from 5PM to 7PM. An evening of fun at the museum with fellow Bandonians. Complimentary refreshments thanks to sponsors **Robin and Geneva Miller** and the **Beverage Barn**. Tickets \$10 available at the Museum. Last year sold out so get yours early.

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Saturday, November 9, 2019 — Veterans Day Program from 11AM to 3PM at the Museum. Starting at 11AM **Dr. Jason Bell** will speak about his experiences as an Air Force orthopaedic surgeon in Iraq and **Dave Hankwitz** will tell us about his Air Force service flight suit that is on display. A number of military vehicles will also be on display in the parking lot. Free admission thanks to sponsors **Edgewater's Restaurant** and **Eichelberger & Company Real Estate**.

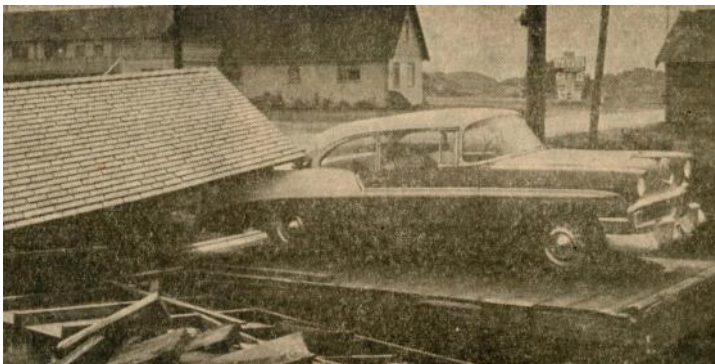
Tuesday, November 26, 2019 — Museum Board Meeting 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

November & December 2019 — Christmas Village on display at the Museum.

Friday, December 20, 2019 — Museum closes until February 3, 2020. Staff and volunteers will refresh the exhibits for the 2020 season.

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 — Museum Board Meeting 4PM at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Monday, February 3, 2020 — Museum Reopens for the 2020 season.



Columbus Day Storm photo, *Western World*, October 18, 1962

President's Corner... By Doreen Colbert

Board President

It has been an incredibly busy summer at the Museum. In the brief time since the publication of our last *Bandon Light* in July, the Museum has hosted seven events with three more planned for October and November. These included the Eye Witness Account of the Bandon High School Fire; Bandon in the 50's, 60's and 70's; Panning for Gold; the Open House for Ocean Crest School's 80th Anniversary; Shaped by Fire, the Surprising Story of Bandon's Schools; a Classic Car Klatch Sunday; Free Smithsonian Museum Day; and the Annual Bandon 1936 Fire Program. In October and November we have a Columbus Day Storm Program; a Night at the Museum and our Veterans Day Event. **Thank you** to the many volunteers and sponsors who helped make all these events happen! In addition to these events, we also had a major building project during the summer. Thank you also to the many people who have mentioned the improved physical appearance with our new siding, shutters and paint.



JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society

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

(please check one)

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\$35 Business _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
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I'm a Member _____ and would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of \$ _____

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For more information on benefits of memberships go to

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

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