



# THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: Farm & Sea On the Waterfront and

The Beverage Barn

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Lumbering in the Coquille Valley in the Past and Present

*Bandon Recorder*, October 10, 1913, reprinted from *The Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, September 28, 1913

Passing along the Coquille River from Bandon to Myrtle Point, a distance of 30 miles, one realizes that the prevailing industry of the valley is the lumber industry. At every mile along this stream there are evidences of work in the timber. A sawmill, a logging camp, a log boom or raft. He hears the falling of a giant tree, the rumbling of logging trains, the frequent whistling of the donkey engines. He meets and passes many boats towing large rafts of logs.

He sees on a 30-mile river trip a continuous line of boom logs. The Coquille River is the main highway for the handling of the immense amount of timber cut along its banks. It is wide and well adapted for the floating of logs. The raft boats usually wait until there is an outgoing tide for towing the logs to the mills.

For 45 years the sound of falling trees has been echoed through the valley, and at this date only here and there have the river banks been cleared. The logging camp furthest from the river is only eight miles distant, and there is a large amount of timber to be cut between this camp and the river.

There are five logging camps that operate the year round. Conlogue's camp, operated by John Conlogue, is the largest camp in the district. This camp employs 125 men and furnishes logs for the George W. Moore mill at Bandon. Two camps in the vicinity of Coquille are run by the Aasen brothers. Their timber is owned



principally by the Menasha Wooden Ware Company and their logs go to the Smith-Powers mill at Marshfield, and the Prosper Mill Company at Prosper. The other two camps are owned by the Seeley-Anderson Company and by W. E. Craine. The Craine camp is one of the oldest and best equipped camps in the district. Both the Craine and the Seeley-Anderson and one of the Aasen camps have railroads for transporting logs from the woods to the river. The Robert Dollar Company, of San Francisco, has extensive holdings in this valley, their lumber being manufactured by the Alfred Johnson Lumber Company.



*An Aasen Brothers logging site likely near Coquille.*

# THE BANDON LIGHT

A publication of the  
**Bandon Historical Society  
Museum**

Executive Director.....Gayle Hankwitz  
Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

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The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of each month,  
4:00 pm at the Museum. All members and guests  
are welcome to attend.

**Newsletter Layout**  
Jim Proehl

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a 501(c)(3) organization

If you are interested in Bandon's history and  
would like to help preserve our past for future gen-  
erations, call us—we need you.

The Museum is OPEN Monday through Satur-  
day 10-4 and 7 days a week June through Septem-  
ber.

Volunteers are waiting to help you and answer  
your questions about Bandon's history.

Enjoy Bandon's rich, wonderful history!

Located at: 270 Fillmore Avenue, Bandon, OR

**On the corner of  
Fillmore Ave. and Highway 101**

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

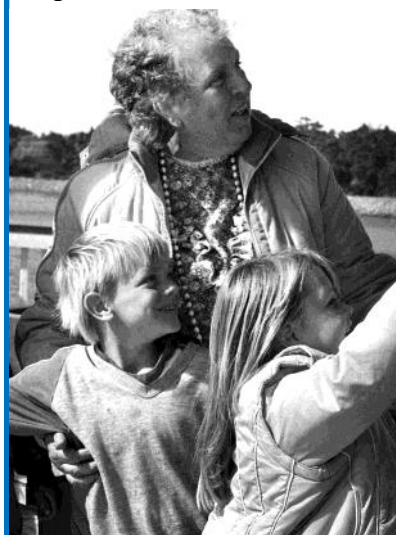
Gayle Hankwitz  
Executive Director

It's great to have our doors  
open again after our January clo-  
sure to spruce up the museum.

Unfortunately, we did not get one  
of our big projects done. We contracted with a win-  
dow company to install sliding windows on some big,  
built in, displays to make them more accessible. But  
with "supply chain issues," we need to wait for our  
ship to come in before we can finish that project.

I'd like to thank all  
of our volunteers who  
are the heart and soul  
of the museum.

Speaking of volun-  
teers, I have to take a  
moment and say how  
much we will miss Ca-  
reen Pierce who died  
January 23. She was a  
front desk volunteer  
until covid hit, but she  
still kept involved. She  
was always someone  
who we could count on  
when we had any his-  
tory questions. She  
donated many items to  
the museum, for which



*Careen Pierce with her second  
grade students aboard the Bold  
Duck in 1985.*

we are very grateful. Careen was a wonderful lady  
whose memory will live forever here.

Let's hope we can gather for some programs this  
year. I know I sound like a broken record. We  
(museum folks) realize how much we enjoy our pro-  
grams and we are all looking forward to sharing our  
history. We have some great program ideas that have  
been ready to go for a couple of years.

So, we hope, this is the year!!!

## New Members:

### Individual and Family Members:

Brian Illingworth family	Joan Englebart
Melody Gillard Juarez	Cleone Reed
Rick and Pam Morris	

### New Life Members:

James and Jamie McLaughlin  
Don and Cheryl Lemon Laffranchi

## New Port Stirling Mystery Coming Soon to our Bookstore

*Dark Sand*, the fourth Port Stirling Mystery, will soon be on the shelves according to Kay Jennings, a mystery writer who grew up in Coquille.

Though the series takes place in a fictional town on the Oregon Coast, any local reader will recognize a lot of Bandon in Port Stirling. Readers who have been following the series know that the third installment, *CODE: Tsunami*, ended with a lot of unresolved questions, sure to be further developed in *Dark Sand*.

Audio editions of the Port Stirling books are now available through Amazon. Kay told us Audible would only agree to produce the audio books if she would agree to write several more, so we can expect the series to continue.

Readers should be able to buy *Dark Sand* by the end of the month, and we hope they will shop for it in the museum book store, along with the rest of Kay Jennings Port Stirling Mysteries.



## Bandon Playhouse Production on YouTube

A Bandon Playhouse production of "*Bandon Burns!*" is now available for viewing on YouTube. The script, by Neal Davis, was adapted in 2017 from a museum publication with the same title, a collection of first-person accounts of the 1936 Bandon Fire. The adaptation has been performed several times by The Gaels readers' theater company.

The easiest way to access the production is to combine the words "Bandon Burns" and "YouTube" in a Google search. The production is an hour and a half long and retains the readers' theater format (No cast members were burned in the making.)

Faced with covid restrictions that prevented them from gathering an audience, the Bandon Playhouse chose to perform "*Bandon Burns!*" as a YouTube video as an alternative.

Though they hope to get back to live performances soon, the Bandon Playhouse would like to continue to produce YouTube videos that feature local history. Playhouse board members Davis, Amy Moss-Strong and Corrie Gant met with museum volunteer Jim Proehl to brainstorm project topics.

Davis pointed out that the collaboration between Bandon Playhouse and the museum opens up a new avenue for volunteers. People interested in doing camera or sound work, taking drone footage, or doing video editing, even if they are not particularly interested in performing or gathering history, could play a role in these projects. Interested parties could make contact via [thebandonplayhouse@gmail.com](mailto:thebandonplayhouse@gmail.com) or [jim-proehl@bandonhistoricalmuseum.org](mailto:jim-proehl@bandonhistoricalmuseum.org).

## Memorial Donations

**A memorial donation has been made in the name of:**

Marc Johnson	Mary Martin
Careen Pierce	Mike Lane
Ruth Donaldson Englebart	Jack Jones
Mary Donaldson Martin	Penny Green
Pat Bates Donaldson	Duane McFadden
Rob Roszkowski	

**A memorial donation has been made by:**

Judy Knox	Careen Pierce
Jim and Paula Smith	Kathy Dornath
Joan Englebart	Carolyn Russell
Norma Handsaker	Sandra Handsaker
Ardisann Szala	Robert and Susan Winnop
Mary Ann Donaldson	Carol McKenzie
Susan Rymal	Jim Proehl
Rebecca Rosencrans	

## Grants to Fund 2022 Projects

Five grants the museum applied for in 2021 will help fund projects and programs for 2022.

A \$7,115 grant from the Braemer Charitable Trust, administered by Trust Management Services, will provide volunteers resources to give the exhibit space a "facelift." The work began in January. The Trust Management Grants are given on a two-year cycle.

The Bandon Dunes Resort/Mr. and Mrs. Michael Keiser Fund awarded the museum \$3,500 for general operating funds.

A \$1,800 grant from the Small Arts & Culture grant program of the Oregon Community Foundation is earmarked for IT support.

"History Minutes" on local radio will be supported through the coming year by a \$2,400 grant from the Coquille Tribal Community Foundation.

The Coos County Cultural Coalition granted \$850 for a program titled "Fun with Cemeteries."

# “Capt. Parker built the next sawmill and about it grew the town . . .”

“Lumbering in the Coquille Valley,” continued from Page 1.

The first sawmill erected on the Coquille River was built 45 years ago by the Pool-Rink & Gruby Company. Its machinery was run by water power and cut 5000 (board) feet a day. This mill only operated during the winter months and the logs were cut in the summer. Ox teams were used for hauling the logs to the mill. Only the choice clear timber was used.

Capt. J. Parker built the next sawmill and about it grew up the town of Parkersburg, a few miles above Bandon. The original Parker mill burned four years after its construction and was rebuilt with a capacity of 30,000

feet. The Parker mill was the first steam mill to be built in this country. J.L. Kronenberg began work in this mill 24 years ago. He was advanced to the position of foreman and within a few years was superintendent. He became interested in buying timber with some of the large timber companies particularly the Doe company.

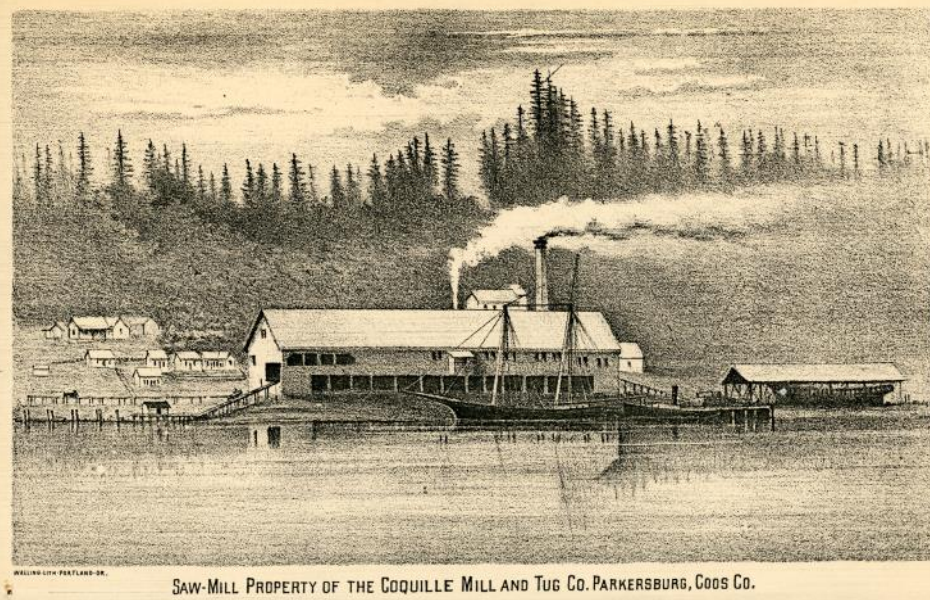
About 20 years ago at Prosper, Adam Pershbaker established and operated a mill with a capacity of 25,000 feet. This mill is now owned by the Prosper Mill Company, in which company Sudden & Christenson, of San Francisco, have the controlling interest. This mill has been greatly improved since its

ownership by Pershbaker and now has a capacity of 80,000 feet and employs 75 men. E. E. Foss is the manager. Around this mill has grown a flourishing little town with a good school and a church and stores. Twenty years ago, Alfred Morras built a sawmill three miles above Coquille. This was the second mill on the river that was run by water power. In after years this mill was bought by the Alfred Johnson Lumber Company, the power was changed to steam and increased to a capacity of 35,000 feet. This mill burned two years ago and has not been replaced.

Carman & Crites, of Aberdeen, Wash., built the Aberdeen mill at Randolph 10 years ago. This plant was later bought by the Alfred Johnson company. It was destroyed by fire last June. This was perhaps the busiest mill on the river. Here was constructed the first and only automatic lumber assorter in the district. This is the invention of C. McC. Johnson, the superintendent of the Johnson mills.

In 1892 a mill was built at Bandon by the Cody Lumber Company. This mill burned four years ago and was replaced by a larger mill with a capacity of 100,000 feet, and is now owned by the George W. Moore company. This is the largest mill on the river and is equipped with the most modern machinery. It has a nine-foot band, a 10-inch edger and a Mershon re-saw. For six years a mill built by Stewart Ly-

Continued on Page 5



*The crew at the Aberdeen Mill, on the north side of the river downstream from Rocky Point. The mill was also known as the Randolph Mill.*

“It is estimated that 100,000,000 feet will be shipped this year.”

“Lumbering in the Coquille Valley,” continued from Page 4.

ons and C. McC. Johnson, two miles above Bandon has been operated and is now owned by the Alfred Johnson company. Since the burning of the Randolph mill, which was across the river from the Lyons-Johnson mill, the Lyons-Johnson has been running day and night.



*A group on the boardwalk at Prosper, the Prosper Mill to their right.*

There is only one idle mill on the river. This was built two years ago by the Coquille Lumber company. (Last) year the company went bankrupt. The average daily capacity of the Coquille River district sawmills is 325,000 feet. The major portion of the lumber sawed comes from fir logs. The amount of capital invested in mills is \$300,000.

The lumber is marketed in San Francisco and Portland. It is estimated that 100,000,000 feet will be shipped his fiscal year. The figures for 1912 gave 63,000,000 but since 1912 two large steamers, the *Speedwell* and the *Grace Dollar*, have been added to the run. There are now six steamers and nine sail vessels, that carry the lumber product over the Coquille River bar.

## “Lumbering in the Coquille Valley:” How We Found This Story

When the museum is closed in January, we often choose to dive into a box or two in the storage room. This year, we just happened pull out an overflowing box marked “logging.” Volunteers sorted through duplicates, pulled out a lot of stuff that belonged in other boxes, then took a fresh look at some photos, especially some that had not scanned into our digital collection. The *Historic Oregon Newspapers* collection maintained by the University of Oregon is a great resource. It is a free, searchable collection of digitized newspapers and it continues to grow. It was while searching for clues about the mills and logging camps in the photos that we found our front page story. The article gave us the key to several, previously unidentified, photos (*below: Lyons and Johnson Mill, Prosper*). We didn’t quite finish the “logging” box. Maybe next January.



# “Watch the Skies!” Defending Bandon During the Cold War

A collection of photos, articles and objects recently brought to the museum by Wayne Campbell provides a glimpse of Bandon during the Cold War through the lens of the Ground Observer Corps program in the second half of the 1950s.



At its peak in the 1950s, the Ground Observer Corps (GOC) comprised hundreds of thousands of Americans. Recruited by local civil defense authorities and the United States Air Force, these civilian volunteers pledged to watch the sky for enemy aircraft intent on attacking their homeland. If they spotted something suspicious, they had clear instructions: Run to the nearest telephone and warn



the filter center, staffed by mostly Women's Army Corps volunteers, who would cross-reference the reported plane with scheduled civilian flights. Occasionally,

something appeared suspicious enough that they would report it to the Air Defense Direction Center, which had pilots ready to investigate. The Air Force produced training videos and guidebooks. Observers met for training sessions.

Bandon's post formed about the time the Defense Department launched a recruiting drive labeled Operation Skywatch, with the goal of having all observation stations manned 24 hours a day.

The centerpiece of Bandon's Ground Observer Corps program was the observation post building on Coast Guard Hill.

A “Post of the Month” article in a GOC publica-

tion reported on Bandon.

“The new Post was built during the summer of ‘55 with most of the construction work being done by the Post Supervisor, Mr. Bob Brady. Most all of the materials used in the construction of the Post were donated by local businesses and business men.

“Prior GOC activities were started on July 17, 1955, in the Naval Reserve Building in Bandon. The move to the new post was made in late August.

Lights and water for the Post are furnished by the

city of Bandon and fuel is furnished by City Transfer.

“The Bandon Post has approximately 70 active Observers and several alternates. Despite the high wind and low clouds that are encountered along the coast making plane spotting a very difficult task, much praise is to be given the Bandon Volunteer Observers, who faithfully man their shifts on the Post regardless of the adverse weather conditions which are so common to the area.”

Operation Skywatch may have been an attempt to give civilians a way to contribute during the Cold War, much as growing victory gardens or collecting



scrap metal did during World War Two.

While Civil Defense authorities liked to stress that the GOC observers could also help in cases of private or commercial aircraft in trouble, Post Supervisor Bob Brady summed up what people really signed up for in a December 8, 1955, *Western World* column.

“Behind the Iron Curtain are hidden intentions of the Kremlin. What they are, we do not know, but this we remember: On many occasions in the past, Communist leaders have said, ‘There isn’t room on this

## Photo Finds

The museum has been especially fortunate to receive several new collections to add to our photo archive recently.

Mary Schamehorn bought us a collection of beautifully restored, high-resolution photographs of beach scenery, waterfront activities and street scenes. Wayne Campbell donated the collection of pictures that illustrate our story about the Ground Observer Corps. Cheryl Lemon Laffranchi sent us a collection of photos that feature River-



ton. Doug Moore of Roseburg mailed a collection of photographs to Bandon High School, which passed them along to us. We recognized them as the original photos used in the production of the 1948 Bandon High Yearbook. This donation, high quality photos coupled with thorough identification provided by the yearbook captions, is the "holy grail" of a photo archive. (*Above right: basketball awards assembly, Bandon High, 1948*)

We are fortunate to have a new volunteer, Berta Dargen, who is interested in learning about photo preservation. She's had a lot to do.

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## "Watch the Skies"

Continued from Page 6.

earth for both our system and theirs.'

"If we are to survive, we must have warnings. Today, our military forces are on guard 24 hours a day. We have radar, but radar has limitations which can only be countered by a vigilant, trained civilian ground observer.

"So, if you are not already one of the many thousands of patriotic civilians in Operation Skywatch, join now. The need is very urgent.

"Hope for peace, pray for peace, but never forget that as long as the Iron Curtain exists, we must be on guard, we must stay on guard! Volunteer today!"

Late in the 50s, a new system of radar stations, dubbed the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line went online. After months of hemming and hawing, the White House announced that the GOC would dissolve at the end of January, 1959.

The Cold War wasn't over, but volunteers were no longer needed in Bandon to, "Watch the skies."

## *A History Minute on KBDN, 96.5 FM* **"Gold Found in Gizzard"**

*Here's a little history from the museum in Bandon.*

"Gold Found in Gizzard" was the headline of a newspaper story with a Bandon dateline in October of 1923. "Killer of Duck Would Like to Find Its Feeding Place."

The story continued: Thomas E Thorn of Ban-

don recently killed a drake mallard duck near his home.

In cleaning it he discovered shiny particles in the gizzard. They turned out to be pieces of gold. Panning the contents of the gizzard, Mr. Thorn recovered between 80 and 90 coarse flakes of pure gold. Finer particles floated off with the water. An effort is being made to find out where the duck came from, particularly where it had been feeding.



particularly where it had been feeding.

Thomas Thorn worked as an engineer in Bandon at the Nestles Milk Condensory, raised mink, took his traveling aquarium, Davey Jones Locker, on the road, and did deep sea fishing, before his death in 1950. All of which suggests he never found the feeding place of the duck with a gizzard full of gold. *And that's a little history from Bandon's Museum.*

## 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)

\$15 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
\$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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