



THE BANDON LIGHT

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The Remy Family

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When the Elephants Came to Town: A Tale with a Tragic Twist

By Corrie Gant

"Seeing two elephants and six camels on top of the McKenzie Pass was too much for H.C. Hodgkins of Portland. He ran his automobile off the road and into some rough rocks and punctured his tire," reported the *Roseburg News-Review*, September 13, 1927.

Hodgkins learned that a traveling circus decided to take a short cut and walk across the Cascades via the McKenzie Highway.

"Honest Bill's Circus" traveled by highway, being motorized, and the animals walked from city to city.

The circus marched in a parade and performed two shows in Roseburg on September 17. They traveled 75 miles, walked in a parade and performed two shows in Myrtle Point on September 19. They traveled 11 miles to Coquille and repeated the same on September 20, and again, after traveling 18 miles, performed in Bandon on September 21.



Dr. Roland Leep shot home movie footage of the elephants bathing in the Coquille River and amputated the arm of Oris Fromm, bitten by a lion.

In Bandon, at least, the elephants were allowed to refresh themselves in the Coquille River and this was captured by Dr. Roland Leep and his movie camera. This film of the elephants in the river, after walking all day, reminded me of two old men taking their shoes off and sticking their feet into tubs of hot water and Epsom salts. One of them just laid down in the water. I could hear its sigh, and it was a silent film.

One elephant had a very raggedy left ear, or maybe no left ear at all, it's hard to say. It was also missing its left tusk. What had happened to it? Was it safe now?

The other elephant had chains around each tusk that were linked to a chain around its chest or neck, so it couldn't lift its head very high.

They made their escape as the circus left town. According to an article in the September 23, 1927, issue of the *Oregon Statesman*, William Fouts ran for help after being awakened by two elephants breaking in his door. "They looked mean, so I slammed the door," Mr. Fouts is to have said. The elephants were allegedly pulling up his trees and tearing down his fences.

"A posse was formed and the elephants recovered and after some difficulty they were driven out on the Roosevelt highway and headed toward town.

"At this juncture a man on horseback appeared, identified himself as belonging to Honest Bill's Circus, and was entrusted with the care of the jungle beasts -- to the relief of Fouts."

The circus stopped in Port Orford and the trucks were soon surrounded by a crowd. According to the

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

**Bandon Western World,
 September 15, 1927**

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

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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

Bandon Historical Society
PO Box 737
Bandon, OR 97411
Phone/Fax 541-347-2164
E-mail:

bandonhistoricalmuseum@yahoo.com
Web: www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org
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!

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

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Gayle Hankwitz
Executive Director

**“There is nothing permanent
except change,” Heraclitus**

It's been a busy summer.

We were concerned gas prices might have an im-
pact on our visitor count, but people are traveling
from somewhere because we have been busy.

We received good news that our very own muse-
um board president and the person who cares for our
wonderful displays will be recognized as the Septem-
ber “Volunteer of the Month” by the Greater Bandon
Association. Congratulations Donna Mason! It's a
very much deserved recognition. The museum is for-
tunate to have you here.

We have a busy fall coming up. The Cranberry
Festival is coming soon and we have on display Cran-
berry Festival gowns worn by past queens and prin-
cesses. We offer free museum admission Friday
through Sunday of the Cranberry Festival weekend,
September 9—11.

Since we are still not comfortable gathering an au-
dience in a tight place, we won't have an indoor talk
about the 1936 Bandon Fire but will observe the 86th
anniversary of the Bandon Fire with an afternoon dis-
play of fire trucks in the museum parking lot. You can
check out the fire trucks, then come inside and learn
about the Bandon Fire in our fire exhibit.

Our special fire anniversary event will be Satur-
day, September 24.

Veterans Day is Friday, November 11. The muse-
um will continue a tradition of honoring veterans with
a Saturday event November 12. Look for military ve-
hicles in the parking lot and special displays of mili-
tary memorabilia inside. Board Member Rick Hino-
josa coordinates our veterans' events and he always
provides something special.

Looking way ahead, we will have our members
annual meeting February 7, 2023, at 5:00 pm. This
year we will elect our board members and officers
with a voice vote during the annual meeting, rather
than sending out paper ballots.

It will be a chance to “come check out what we
have done” during our annual January closure when
we work on refreshing our exhibits. Refreshments
will be served.

We encourage all members to attend if possible.
It's a great way to see what we are doing.

Mayor Mary Schamehorn Recognized with Historian Award

At its annual meeting in July, the Coos County Historical Society recognized Mary Schamehorn as its 2022 recipient of the Nathan Douthit Local History Award. The following article appeared in the Coos County Historical Society's summer newsletter.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, you could say that on a morning in the early 1980s, the editor of the *Western World* newspaper, Mary Schamehorn, saved thirty million words of Coos County history that were on their way to the landfill.

Mary, who is now the Mayor of Bandon, arrived at work that day to find a bunch of boxes piled by the door. They contained over thirty thousand negatives that were on their way to the dump because they

were taking up too much space in the newspaper's office. While she didn't have a plan for them at the time, she loaded the boxes into her car, hauled them home, and stored them in her basement. For the next three decades, as she moved, the boxes moved with her.

Eventually, the negatives were scanned and stored digitally. Now many of those photos are enjoyed by the public in displays in the Bandon History Museum, in books, and around the town of Bandon. Since the 1970s, her local history stories and photos ("As I See It" articles) also appear often in *The World*, the *Coville Sentinel*, on line at Bandon.tv, and on two Fa-



Mary Schamehorn at work at the *Western World* in 1991.

cebook sites. Some of the photos she saved that day may even be on display in the Coos History Museum.

Mary's dedication to preserving the history of Coos County (and especially Bandon) goes back to shortly after high school, when she wrote her first story as a reporter and photographer for the *Western World*, which was then owned by her grandfather, L. D. Felsheim. Many of the more recent photos she

saved that day may have been photos that she took. She chronicled history as it happened, and sometimes became part of the story. In January of 1974, an arsonist set fire to the Bandon High School. Mary was one of the first on the scene, capturing photos of the fire that later identified the arsonist.

Mary has been secretary of the Southern Coos Hospital and Health Center board of directors. She also serves on the board of the Bandon History Museum.

Through her influence, the museum was able to secure copies of the newspaper's archives, dating back many years. These archives are valuable tools for researchers and in helping museum staff and volunteers identify the subjects in the rescued negatives.

Bring Us Your McKay's Receipts— And Visit Us More Often

McKay's Markets continue to support local organizations by giving a return on McKay's receipts collected by organizations. The McKay's Market Advantage Sales Receipt Program has been a source of museum funding for many years. The program used to accept receipts up to a year after the purchase date but has reduced that time limit to six months.

So, continue to bundle up those McKay's receipts, bring them to the museum and use them as an excuse to drop in and see us more often.



McKay's Manager Jim Cornish shows off the new dairy case after a remodel in 1973.

Recent Grants Keep Museum Projects Moving Forward

The museum received two grant checks this summer.

The First Interstate Bank Foundation awarded \$2,500 to fund the Free Summer Sundays the museum offers from Memorial Day through the Cranberry Festival. Bandon branch manager Christina Salazar is instrumental in helping the museum secure this grant.

The City-of-Bandon's State Revenue Sharing program awarded the museum \$3,250.

The museum will use the city funds to purchase advertising in regional travel guides, maintain the grounds of the building, purchase photo preservation materials and reprint promotional brochures and pamphlets.

Before It Became a State Park, Mrs. Bullard's Home Was Parklike

Editor's note—One of the best known and most beloved pioneers of this community is Mrs. Malinda Bullard of Bullards, who recently observed her 75th birthday on the very farm where she was born. Western World is indebted to Editor Edgar McDaniel of the Coos Bay Harbor, North Bend, for the following article and picture.

Bandon Western World, October 27, 1938

Mrs. Malinda (R. W.) Bullard, who lives a quarter of a mile north of Bullards's ferry in her large home, with several of her children residing with her, was Miss Malinda Hamblock, whose father, Black John Hamblock, homesteaded land on the north side of the Coquille river at Bullard's ferry has seen the passage of 75 years all the time a resident of the original farm holdings. That is not to say that she hasn't been away



The Hamblock family circa 1868: Malinda, Jane (Long), Mary Ellen, John (aka Black John) and Johnny. All are buried in the cemetery at Bullards Beach State Park.

from home, for she has traveled considerably.

At her age she is the mainstay of the family affairs and has done all the canning for fall, winter and spring. The interviewers saw her just after she had been doing some of the last of her canning. Mrs. Bullard remembers a wealth of historical affairs of the early days. She was born there in 1863 when

Coos county, as regards the white people, was but 10 years old.

Her father's home was the stopping place for many years for officials who traveled the Randolph trail between Empire and Bandon down into Curry county for court sessions.

She has a beautiful home, back of which is an ideal picnic ground where vicinity folks gather and often there are baseball games.

Her son, who was also born on the original farm, has a portion of the homestead and is only a short distance away.

The elder folks of the county remember the odd fact of Red John and Black John Hamblock, being brothers, and it was never brought out to the writer's knowledge of how such a situation happened. Mrs. Bullard explained it. Both of the brothers were sons of the same parents, of course. However, each had a godfather who insisted on the boys being named John, and so the question was solved, though it made a unique condition and was a puzzle to others. Mrs. Bullard's father was of darker complexion and black hair, while his brother was sandy and so was distinguished by being Red John Hamblock.

Mrs. Bullard's six children are alive with the exception of Lawrence, who died of influenza while employed in the Coos Bay shipyards in 1918. The others are Mrs. L. E. Bundy, who with her husband have the store and post office at Bullards; Mrs. Christine Evans, Warren and Chester, of the lower Coquille river and Frank, who lives at Stockton, Cal.

Continued on Page 5.



Robert and Malinda (Hamblock) Bullard with their children Warren and Pearl circa 1886.

New Members:

Individual and Family Members:

**Donna McMahon
Kelly Cooper
David and Pauline Torell
Brian and Penny Miller**



“ . . . Chief stood stolidly and heard his praises sung, . . . ”

Continued from Page 4.

Mrs. Bullard finds much enjoyment in her home surroundings and is a gardener of many accomplishments as her surroundings prove. She takes interest in the farm stock and especially in Chief, the big two-year-old turkey, which if he could get on a woman's bathroom scales would bring the indicator up to at least 35 pounds. Chief is an oddity as being a gobbler which might be expected to

be proud and not friendly, but he is entirely different and a most companionable bird. Likes petting and preens if given attention. Mrs. Bullard spoke of the character of Chief and the writer called to him where he was inspecting the high grass. Chief came up and



The Bullard's Ferry and store. This article was written before the Bullards bridge was built and the highway connected Bandon directly to Coos Bay.



all present took turns in inspecting his iridescent plumage and petting him. Mrs. Bullard explained that he always attends the picnics held a quarter of a mile from the house, and also looks in when there is a ball game. While the gathering was on Chief stood stolidly and heard his praises sung, and when the two visitors started for the gate he gobbled several times, as if saying goodbye.

At Bullards they have a hope the Oregon Coast Highway will pass that way sometime, as under present condition the vicinity is somewhat isolated, though the North Bank highway passes that way and the folks are not wholly out of the world.

Mr. Hamblock was engaged in various occupations in the early days and furnished transportation across the river many years. His successor in the activities was Mrs. Bullard's husband who conducted affairs. He died 16 years ago. They were married when Malinda Hamblock was 18.



Robert and Malinda Bullard (seated) Warren, Pearl Frank, Lawrence, Christine and John Chester, circa 1912.

Bandon Western Word, October 27, 1938
BANDON-BY-THE-SEA

I'll build me a home upon a cliff
At Bandon-by-the-Sea,
And I'll buy me a little sea-going skiff
And turn its helm alee.

I'll sail out into the horizon
And meet the sunset there,
And when I reach the end of the world
I'll come back from nowhere.

Then I'll settle down to a peaceful life
At Bandon-by-the-Sea,
And I'll know no more of the toil and strife
That have, so far, been life for me.

I'll just let my eyes rove toward the West
And think of my life alee,
And the rest of my life I'll spend in rest
At Bandon-by-the-Sea.

Bernice Molthu, Riverton, Ore.

Photo Find: Soapbox Derby Races During the Cranberry Festival

Donnie Goddard recently shared a color slide taken during the Cranberry Festival parade in 1955. Donnie is inside the car he entered in a Soapbox Derby race which was a feature of that year's festival. He can't remember who was pulling the non-motorized soapbox racer during the parade.

Donnie and his father Don built the car together. The body was fabricated out of a military surplus aircraft drop tank, a product that was easy to come by in the post-World War 2 era.

Twenty-four boys entered cars in the race. "Each of the cars in the hot rod race was sponsored by a local merchant or businessman, who paid for the materials the boys used in construction," reported the October 6, 1955, *Western World*. The race was run down Coast Guard Hill on Edison Avenue. Lots of hay bails were piled at the bottom of the street to stop the racers.

Donnie, who was about seven-years-old at the time, remembers winning the race. But the *Western World* reports the event was won by somebody else. The winner received a BB gun.



Airmen carry an aircraft drop tank in this WW2 era photo.

History Minute: Dew Valley Ladies Club Building Turns 100

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

The Dew Valley Ladies Club has been meeting for over a hundred years.

Millie Kreutzer recorded its history.

In 1918, twelve ladies in the Dew Valley community started meeting in each other's homes to sew, visit and do our mending. We were enjoying our monthly "get togethers" so much we decided we would elect officers and draw up a charter.



We would meet in the homes, piece quilts to sell, and sew for needy families. So many ladies joined that we decided to build a club house.

The husbands were right there to help, but us ladies were capable and we did the work.

When we had the rough walls, roof and the floor finished, we gave a ball. We ladies all wore formals and it was great social success, reported Millie.

The clubhouse the Dew Valley ladies built turned a hundred years old in 2022. The club still meets there.

That's a little history from Bandon's Museum.

Editor's Note: Millie Kreutzer passed away in 2002 at the age of 101.

“All Texas wanted was to soak his tired feet . . .”

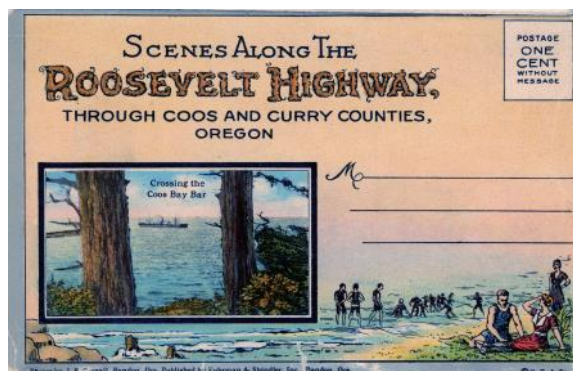
Continued from Page 1.

Blue Lake Advocate on October 1, 1927: “It is said that the cages were boarded up and that show employees had warned the children to be careful around the animals. In one cage, containing three lions, was a small hole, and young (12-year-old Orris) Fromm thrust his arm inside. In an instant the flesh was stripped from the shoulder down and the arm completely severed by one bite from the powerful jaws of the beast.

“The management of the circus killed the lion shortly after the accident in order to prevent a repetition. A boy at Myrtle Point had been scratched by the same beast, but was only slightly hurt.”

Orris Fromm was given emergency care at a local pharmacy and then transported to Bandon, where his arm was amputated by Dr. Leep. As a grown man, he impressed one of his nephews with his ability to roll a cigarette with one hand.

Honest Bill’s Circus continued its march down the Roosevelt Highway, never dreaming that the highway ended around Orick, California. Their



trucks became mired in the mud and the elephants, whose names were Texas and Big Diamond, were put to work pulling the vehicles out of the mud. Big Diamond collapsed after the work was done. Its trainer stayed beside it, and would say, “Come on! It’s show time!”, and the elephant would try mightily to rise, only to fall back to the ground. It took two days for Big Diamond to die, there on the unfinished highway.

And what does one do with the body of an ele-

phant? Big Diamond’s trainer told a man that elephant skins were very valuable in San Francisco, and offered this man Big Diamond’s skin but in exchange, the man had to bury the body. Big Diamond was skinned and the skin was salted, but poorly stored and by the time it arrived in San Francisco it had spoiled.

There is now an historical marker indicating the site of Big Diamond’s grave which is under the parking lot of the Hawg Wild Bar and Grill in Orick.

I wonder what happened to his tusks?

But the show went on, as it must do, with a single elephant and one less lion.

In Colton, California, on December 4, the last elephant in Honest Bill’s Circus met his end.

The *Roseburg News-Review*, December 6, 1927: “The good and evil of the 112 years of life of ‘Texas,’ a circus elephant, promises to be aired in court here when his executioner comes to trial on the charges of cruelty to animals.

“The 9,100-pound beast came to his death yesterday after Ben McFarland, restaurant manager and former army artilleryman, heading a posse of amateur elephant hunters placed ten bullets from a high-powered rifle through its tough hide.

“The attempt of a substitute trainer to load Texas into a box car for the jump from Colton to Beaumont Sunday started the elephant on the rampage that ended in his death. Sixteen-year-old Al McSarin, who was the only person who could handle Texas, had taken a few days’ vacation and the pachyderm was grumpy. The huge beast was said to have killed several trainers and other men during his more than a century of life. He refused to enter the box car, so the circus men left him at the railroad stockyard here.

“Yesterday morning, Texas tore down a length of fence and headed for the Santa Ana River jungle.

“Townpeople said the elephant attacked two automobiles enroute.

“W.C. Dalphyn, owner of Texas, who caused the arrest of McFarland, said the big exhibit was harmless and \$10,000 worth of elephant could have been saved. He accused McFarland of announcing, ‘I have shot everything but an elephant and now I’m going to get me one.’

“McFarland, on the other hand, said he was told the elephant had charged a little girl and that the former artilleryman had taken his gun to protect the town. When he neared the beast, he said, it charged him so he shot in self-defense.”

I am very grateful that humans are almost starting to treat animals with respect. All Texas wanted was to soak his tired feet in the Santa Ana River and remember when he gamboled in the Coquille River with Big Diamond.

Memorial Donations

A memorial donation has been made in the name of:

**Forrest R. Norton
Art and Grace Pederson**

**Patti Strain
David Bamber**

A memorial donation has been made by:

**Darrin Quillen
Tauna Pierce**

**Margaret Wichman
Nels and Cindy Pederson**

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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)

\$20 Individual _____ NAME: _____
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\$250 Life _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
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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