



THE BANDON LIGHT

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A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Short, Eventful Life of Chauncey Carpenter

By Jim Proehl

One of the first times Chauncey Carpenter's name showed up in a Bandon newspaper was in a story about a boat wreck.

"Last Friday night, Rev. F. J. Chatburn and daughter Kate, and Chauncey and Eunice Carpenter had a narrow escape from drowning in the Coquille River just below Prosper, by the up-setting of a small gasoline launch in which they were riding, and only for the fact that Mr. Chatburn and Chauncey were both excellent swimmers, the whole quartet would probably have gone down," reported the *Bandon Recorder*, August 4, 1911.

An artifact recently put on display in the museum, a radio restored by volunteer Bob Coraor, gives us an occasion to explore the sometimes-sad story of Chauncey Carpenter. It illuminates an era when "The River was the Highway" and, for that matter, the ocean was too.

In 1904, Chauncey's father Dewayne and his older brother Asa left Arroyo Grande, California, in July and traveled by buckboard up the coasts of California and Oregon arriving in Bandon in December 6. They were headed for Myrtle Point but found work in Bandon, so stayed. They worked many jobs, earned enough to build a small house and almost a year later sent for the rest of the family, who came by ship.

In January of 1906, Chauncey was a new fifth grade student in Bandon's grade school.

Dewayne Carpenter built the Two Mile School and for a time was the teacher. Then he purchased The Racket Store, proudly listed as being owned by Carpenter and Sons.

Chauncey helped with the store but preferred to work on the water.

In April of 1915, Chauncey was a crewman aboard the *Randolph* when it wrecked on the Bandon bar.



A radio restored by volunteer Bob Coraor is a physical link to the story of Chauncey Carpenter.

The *Bandon Recorder* for April 27, 1915, reported: "The schooner *Randolph*, engaged in the coast wise trade of Coos and Curry Counties, met with wreck Saturday afternoon in an effort to pass over the Bandon bar of the Coquille River at low tide.

"Her deck house was torn away but her hull continued intact."

Three lives were lost. Most famously the captain and engineer were saved when the Life Saving Service crew chopped a hole in the overturned hull of the boat in the surf and freed them.

Carpenter's escape from the wreck also received notice.

"All of the men of the boat had made some protection against the inevitable shock when she

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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

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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 Saturday 10-4
and 7 days a week June through September.

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

We are moving forward with the plans to add an auditorium to the museum with funds provided by the estate of Don Lynam, who passed away in September. The board is working with property development specialists. We'll share updates as the plans progress.

We had our first program of the year, "Ask the Experts Your Local History Questions," Saturday the 20th of May. Reg Pullen, Mary Schamehorn and Jim Proehl fielded audience questions. Chas. Waldrop Real Estate was the sponsor. It was successful and it was fun to have a program again.

Our next program is titled "Mayor Drane is Missing and the Shindlers Have Been Kidnapped with Live Music." Bob Shaffar and friends will provide the



*Experts Mary Schamehorn and
Reg Pullen.*

live music to accom-
pany some "True
Crime" stories from
the 1930s shared by
Jim Proehl. The pro-
gram will be in the
museum Saturday,
July 22, beginning at
1:00 PM.

Free Summer
Sundays are under-
way courtesy of First
Interstate Bank and
Best Western Inn at
Face Rock. We are

planning several Free Summer Sunday events includ-
ing "Building a Cupcake" with Sharon Haga June 25;
Gold Panning Sunday with Jeff Haga and Steve Gant
July 16; a Model-A car show in the parking lot Au-
gust 13; and a book signing with Kay Jennings Au-
gust 20. Don't be surprised if we offer a Free Sundae
on a Free Summer Sunday. Watch our website and
Facebook page for full details.

On a personal note, I just want to say how much I
miss Kathy Dornath. I've worked with her at the mu-
seum for seven years. I've known her for over 26
years, beginning when I worked at the medical clinic.
Kathy and I were in the same BUNCO group for 25
years. To say I will miss her is a huge understatement.

We hope to have a busy summer season. It's al-
ways fun to chat with our visitors and see where they
are from. We get so many compliments on our muse-
um—we must be doing something right.

Remembering Kathy Dornath

The Bandon Historical Society Museum lost a piece of its heart when Kathy Dornath passed away April 12, 2023. Most of us last saw Kathy at our museum board meeting in March. She was the longest serving member of our board of directors.

Kathy was born in West Virginia in 1936 and never quite lost the twang in her voice or her hill country sense of humor. She met and married Bandon's Art Dornath when he was in the service and joined his family in Bandon in the mid nineteen fifties. They had four children.

Kathy joined the museum family about the time



Board President Kathy Dornath and director Judy Knox conduct a museum annual meeting in 2008.

we moved into our current building in the nineteen-nineties. She served eight terms as board president and much longer as the museum's volunteer coordinator. More important, she was the calm voice of experience and the glue of the museum's social life. Kathy was a Cranberry Festival Queen of the Kitchen. At the museum, she was the Lord of the Potluck.

"We'll have to ask Kathy," has been a working phrase for a new generation of volunteers. With her passing, we'll have to become Kathy to carry on her good work.

Friends and family are invited to a Celebration of Life for Katherine Dornath Saturday, June 10, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at Laverne County Park, Fairview Road, east of Coquille. Bring your lawn chair and a side dish for the potluck picnic. Main dishes and drinks will be provided.

**Enjoy Free Summer Sundays
at Bandon's Museum**

**Memorial Day through the Cranberry Festival
courtesy of First Interstate Bank and
Best Western Inn at Face Rock.**

New Kay Jennings Mystery Novel Coming This Summer

"A prominent local woman, Hannah Oakley, drives to beautiful Mourning Bay State Park on the rugged southern Oregon coast, leaves her glasses and a mysterious note on a piece of driftwood, and then walks into the bay, committing suicide – or does she?"

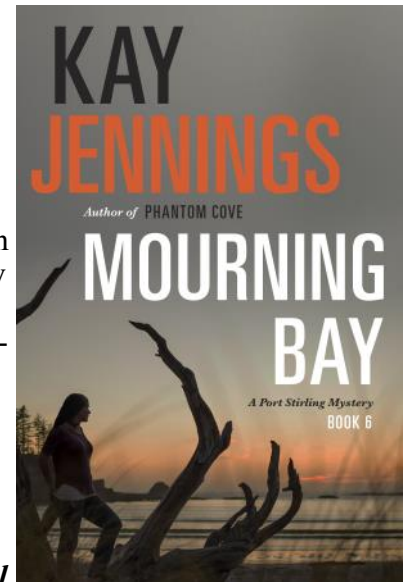
That's the question raised on the Amazon web site about *Mourning Bay*, the sixth installment of Kay Jennings' set of mystery novels that take place in Port Stirling, which any local knows is a stand in for Bandon. Kay Jennings grew up in Coquille.

"Is it suicide or is it murder? And if it's murder, is Hannah's disappearance just the beginning of a new evil in their community?"

We won't know until the book is released July 27. While a reader could load up the Kindle version at that time, we hope you will instead buy a copy in the museum's gift shop, which already carries the five earlier installments.

We hope to host author Kay Jennings for a "Meet the Author" book signing event in late August. Watch our website and Facebook page for details.

"From its puzzling, mysterious opening to its shocking conclusion, Mourning Bay, book 6 in the Port Stirling Mystery series, will remind you to not accept life at face value."



Family Researcher Responds to a Story

In an earlier edition of the newsletter, we shared a photo of a distinguished looking man aboard a ship and the conclusion that he must be Captain Rosenblad of the *Alvarado*. Anay Hausner, from Sweet Home, Oregon, recently contacted us by phone and email to confirm our conclusion.

"I am the oldest Grandchild of Mark Albert Rosenblad, the youngest child of Karl and Mathilda. It was wonderful to come across the article in *The Bandon Light* from the December 2022. The photograph on the far right is my Great-Grandfather, Captain Karl A Rosenblad. The middle photograph is very familiar to me, so I will do some research and see if I can dig up some information."

“Carpenter, by the way, does not use tobacco nor intoxicants . . .”

Continued from Page 1.

should enter the breakers. Carpenter was in the rigging.

“Spectators who witnessed the accident say that when the boat went over, they saw two men swimming in the water. One was Carpenter. The other was seen no more. Carpenter is an expert swimmer and a man of good judgment. Due to these facts, he was enabled to get around the jetty to where he was rescued by Life Saver Roseburg.

“Swimming has been one of Carpenter’s favorite pastimes. He has made it a point to get all the exercise he could in this manner and usually has had a swimming exercise every day winter and summer. Besides he is strongly built, but was called on to exercise all his skill in his battle with the waves Saturday afternoon. The rescue came none too soon and he was thoroughly exhausted when he had been pulled to safety.

“Carpenter, by the way, does not use tobacco nor intoxicants and gives this fact a part of the credit for his successful battle with the breakers,” reported *The Recorder*.

That Carpenter attended the Church of the Latter-Day Saints may have contributed to his reputation for abstentious living. (The Carpenter and Chatburn families feature prominently in newspaper accounts of Latter-Day Saints church programs.)

A year after the wreck of the *Randolph*, the *Bandon Recorder* reported, “Chauncey Carpenter went to Port Orford the first of the week and it is reported that he is to return with a bride.”

He was actually headed to Gold Beach.

The Port Orford *Tribune* reported, “The residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Hill was the scene of a quiet home wedding on Monday, April 24, when Miss Alice, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hill, and Chauncey Carpenter of Bandon, were united in marriage.

“Both parties have many warm friends at Gold Beach, the bride having been a student of the High School, while the groom spent several months in this vicinity last year.

“Mr. Carpenter is employed on one of the Coquille River boats, and the young people are expected here this afternoon on the way to their future home in Bandon.

“The (Gold Beach) *Globe* joins the many friends

of Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter in wishing them much happiness and prosperity along life’s journey.”

The wedding celebration was dampened by the news that Chauncey’s sister, Eunice, wife of P. H. Poole of Port Orford, died in childbirth two days before the wedding.

Now a family man, Chauncey worked for Elmore Drane who ran freight and tow boats up and down the Coquille. A job on the river, rather than at sea, allowed him to stay closer to his wife and home.

Florence A. Carpenter was born to Chauncey and Alice Carpenter February 21, 1917.

Just months after the birth of their daughter, the young couple was ready for an outing. The circus was at the fairgrounds in Myrtle Point. Chauncey borrowed the boss’ boat. The couple invited Chauncey’s little sisters to come along.

“One of the most pathetic tragedies in the history of the Coquille valley occurred about noon Monday, when the gasoline launch *Superior*, operated by

Chauncey Carpenter of this city, capsized and Mr. Carpenter’s wife and his two sisters, Clare, aged twelve, and Ruth, aged five, were drowned. The party was enroute to attend the circus at Myrtle Point,” reported the *Western World*, May 10, 1917.

“The accident occurred near the McNair ranch one and one-half miles below Myrtle Point. The launch was going at average speed when it ran onto a submerged piling, one of several which remained from an old dike that formerly extended along the river at that point. As the bow ran onto the piling the stern of the boat became submerged and quickly

Continued on Page 5.



The gas launch Superior owned by Elmore Drane.

New Members:

Life Members:

Donna and Mark Hannah

Gary and Karol Faules

Carol Ventgen and George Perkins

Individual and Family Members:

Jen Procter Andrews

Bruce and Chris Row

Mike and Pam Jenson

Annette and Chuck Weisenseel

Tim and Karrolee Tomcheck

Todd Bruno

Phillip Lux family



“One of the most pathetic tragedies in the Coquille Valley”

Continued from Page 4.

filled with water as it slid off sideways and sank. The position of the vessel was about 50 feet from the nearest bank. The water is between 12 and 15 feet deep.

“Realizing that the boat was sinking Mrs. Carpenter told her husband to save the baby. Telling the others to hang on until he returned for them Mr. Carpenter held the baby by his teeth and started for shore. The swift current carried him down stream



Alice and Chauncey Carpenter

for a considerable distance, although he is an excellent swimmer. When he reached the bank, he saw that the others had disappeared.

“But determined to find them, if possible, he started back into the water and heroically swam and dove for two hours before he gave up completely exhausted.

“Realizing there was no hope of finding any of the others alive he carried the baby to the McNair home and spread the alarm,” reported the *Western World*.

The baby, Florence, was raised by Alice’s older sister.

In a collection of memories, Dewayne Carpenter wrote, “My wife Lida went to California in her grief for a rest with her mother and in a couple of weeks I too gave out and left.” He sold the Bandon store to the Chatburns.

The month before he lost his wife and sisters in the accident on the Coquille, Congress voted to declare war on Germany. A month after the tragedy, Chauncey Carpenter was listed among those registered for the draft.

The following year, word reached the community that Chauncey had died in service to his country. It was not so.

“The Coquille *Sentinel* last week published an item about the death of Chauncey Carpenter at Camp Lewis. Chauncey is in the Coast Artillery at Fort Stevens, and although recuperating from a siege of the “flu,” is very much alive. In fact, he would probably resent being called a dead one.”

After some time in California, the Carpenters moved to Curry County and brought property be-

tween Gold Beach and Brookings. Dewayne and sons Asa, Chauncey, and Ray built a mill and founded a town they named Carpenterville. Chauncey married again and had four more children. In 1932, he died during an appendicitis operation. He was 37 years old.

Though he died in a town that bore his family’s name, Chauncey was buried in Bandon in the Knights of Pythias Cemetery (today VFW) where his first wife and sisters are buried.

Carpenter family lore is that Chauncey also wanted some prized possessions to be returned to Bandon, the place he considered home. Not long ago, Genny Lynn Carpenter donated the radio to Bandon’s museum. With its restoration and display, we’ve gained a significant artifact and honored Chauncey Carpenter’s request.

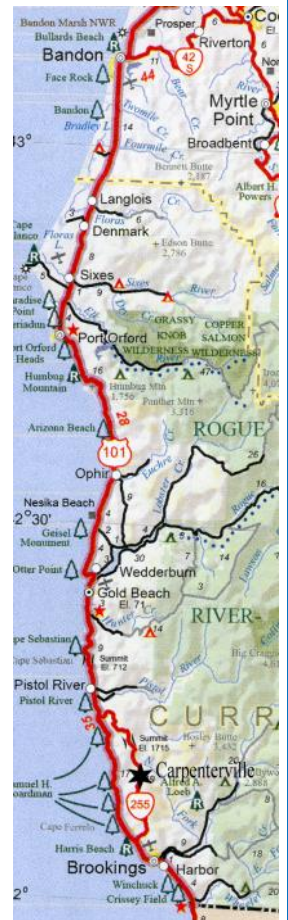
Where is Carpenterville?

Carpenterville is an unincorporated community in Curry County, Oregon, United States. It is located on the former alignment of U.S. Route 101 known as the Roosevelt Highway (now Oregon Route 255 or the Carpenterville Highway), about 16 miles north of Brookings. Carpenterville was the highest point on the former main coastal highway and the area is known for its views.

D. W. Carpenter and his family settled in the area in 1921. The family ran a sawmill the produced lumber for fences.

Carpenterville post office was established in 1932 and named for the Carpenter family. In 1940, Carpenterville's population was 35. The post office closed in 1944. When Carpenterville was still on the main route of the Coast Highway, there was a public school, a store, tourist cabins, and a lodge, the Skyline Lodge and Restaurant. The realignment of the highway cut the community off from the main coastal road. By 1990, there was only one house to mark the location of the community, however the USGS still classifies Carpenterville as a populated place.

https://kids.kiddle.co/Carpenterville,_Oregon



Fun Photo: Face Rock Run

We posted this photo on the museum's Facebook page in April.



Jacob Pestana, owner of the Langlois Market, posted this comment: "I remembered trying to catch that kid the whole way... I almost got him at the end but he saw me coming and out kicked me to the finish! Ahhh silver is not as sweet as gold:)." "

Eva Andersen Varga posted, "#35 is my brother, Eron Andersen, I believe."

Of the two dozen photos the *Western World* photographer took of the Face Rock Run in 1987, this was not the one that made the paper. Our Facebook post was likely the first time it has been publicly seen.

In 2016, the *Western World* newspaper donated the negatives that photographers took from 1982 until the paper switched to digital photography in 2001. (Mary Schamehorn preserved another collection of negatives spanning 1955 to 1981) Volunteers have worked continually to scan the negatives into digital images and cross reference them with the newspapers to identify the subject matter of the photos.

The project of scanning this collection is about half finished and so far has yielded about 170,000 images.

The ones that didn't make the paper are often the most intriguing.

Museum Volunteers Decorate "The Barn" in City Park

"Decorating the Barn" is the title of a project funded by the Coos County Cultural Coalition and sponsored by Gold Coast Properties Real Estate. The project was completed in April with the installation of two display spaces in Bandon's Community Center in City Park.

The idea for the project originated in a discussion with Jeff Norris when he was the manager of "The Barn" about how to preserve and share the story of the community building, which was originally built to house horse patrols during World War 2.

During the pandemic, the project went into hibernation but volunteers kept it in mind and applied for a Cultural Coalition grant in the fall of 2022.

The project includes a display just inside the front entrance of the building that shares history of City Park and The Barn.



Another installation further into the building provides space for changing picture displays.

Volunteer Jim Proehl wrote the grant and printed photos and text. Volunteers Donna Mason and Nancy Murphy designed, assembled and installed the displays.

Park hosts Avery Richards and Dan Simons were instrumental in finishing the installation.

Memorial Donations

A memorial donation has been made in the name of:

Tom Smalley
Bev Tresidder

Kathy Dornath
Edith Winters

A memorial donation has been made by:

Carolyn Russell
Mary Ellingson
Judy Knox
Horty Joyce
Carol Acklin
Donna Mason
Jim Proehl
Faye Albertson
Marianne Larson
Dr. James R. Smith, PhD., and Paula Smith

Kristy Bowman
Sharon and Doug Moy
Jim and Alyce Cawdrey
Gloria Haga 5Js Farm
Jane and Robert Gibbs
Bob and Susan Coraor
Therese and Kevin Kent
Gayle Hankwitz
Tauna Tiscornia

A History of the Bandon Concert Band from 1901-1936

By Gary Topping

It is difficult for us in the mid-twenty-first century to appreciate the importance of community concert bands in American cultural life one hundred years ago, particularly in small to medium sized towns. Far more than just a medium of musical entertainment, bands were a focal point of community cohesion and pride, much like the role played by high school football teams in our day.

The Bandon Concert Band was born in 1891, at almost the same time as the tiny city of 300 people was incorporated. Its creator was City Engineer Charles S. McCulloch, himself a cornet player, who pounded into performable condition a set of junkyard instruments and clad his players in redesigned military surplus uniforms. More accurately described as a brass quintet with percussion than a “band,” the ensemble might have been a source of community pride, but its musical quality would not have been impressive.

A musical revolution occurred in 1901 when an enterprising young lawyer and cornet player named George P. Topping somehow talked the city fathers into purchasing a complete set of band instruments and uniforms, then set out to recruit, and probably teach, people to play them. The Bandon Museum collections include a photograph of that band, proudly seated in formation down at the beach. One is impressed, in the first place, by its size—twenty-three members drawn from a municipal population of barely six hundred. Equally impressive is its balanced instrumentation, evidence of its having been created from the ground up rather than, like most community bands, fashioned from whomever showed up with whatever instrument they might have had



back in the closet. That band, given reasonable competence of its players, would have sounded great.

Before long, the band began to assume something of its ultimate function in Bandon life, performing occasional concerts and assisting in various patriotic celebrations. The 1914 fire, though, was a big setback for the band as it was for the city itself. Although the fire was a relatively small one, it unfortunately took place right

in the commercial center. Businesses either failed completely or had to rebuild, and the result was a large-scale out-migration of people looking for jobs. Those emigrants included a large number of band members and caused a two-year hiatus in band activity.

By 1916, Topping and some of the other band stalwarts like the Manciet brothers George and Herb and tubaist William TenBrook were able to regroup and recruit new members, but the lack of a good conductor limited the band’s capabilities. Fortunately, in 1924 appeared Charles Atwood, a conservatory-trained cornet player and conductor who brought the band to its highest level of competence and influence in Bandon life. Atwood introduced the band to much of the standard concert band literature, rehearsed them twice a week and performed weekly summer concerts.

The infamous 1936 fire that destroyed virtually the entire city also destroyed the band. When one’s very home is burning up, rescuing a trombone or a tuba is not going to be a primary concern. Although some of the stalwarts put up a feeble attempt to rescue the band, its conductor at the time, Sol Driscoll, elected instead to put his efforts into building up the school band programs and the schools henceforth became the center of Bandon musical life.

[The entire text of this article, with full documentation, is available on the Bandon Museum’s website. Use this link: <https://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/band.html>]

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(please check one)

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For more information on benefits of memberships go to

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

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