

# THE BANDON LIGHT

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Museum Memories...by Mary Capps

**The museum celebrated Mary Capps Appreciation Day on November 29. We are reprising an article Mary wrote in 1996 for this edition.**

I've been researching the history of the Old City Hall. The following information I obtained from old *Western World* newspapers and from **John Fasnacht**, who was manager of utilities for the City of Bandon at the time of the Bandon Fire Sept. 26, 1936. The City Council consisted of **Otto Shindler, Ralph Moore, Clay**

**Garoutte, Geo. Kronenberg, Bob Ward, Chas. Schroeder and Mayor Ed Capps.**

John had been Supt. of Schools in Bandon for several years and the city had asked that he take a leave of absence for six months and help them with their problems. The school board agreed to let John go and he was with the city at the time of the fire. He told us the Old City Hall was the second building constructed after the fire. The first was the Arcade Tavern where La Jean Rose is now located. At the top of the Arcade roof, on the corner facing Chicago and on 2nd St. were signs reading: "Up from the ashes, Bandon's Oasis."

The city hall building was constructed with WPA funds and cost the City of Bandon not one cent. Coos County sponsored the project as this was a requirement set forth by WPA and they hired needy people to work on the project. It was very strongly and soundly built on concrete blocks with excellent building materials. John at 90 years of age was able to sketch out for us the floor plan of the building. There were no architectural drawings used because of the time and money factor. They knew what they wanted and the approximate space needed, so they drew the plans accordingly. The outside dimensions of the building 60' x90', are the same today as when it was built. It contained the following rooms: Recorder's office 22 x30 feet, with a walled-off private enclosure 9 x 12 feet; council chambers 22 x 30 feet



City Hall building, ca 1940s.



City Hall building, 1961.

which was also to be used as a meeting room for the community; library 20 x 30 feet; (John said they made a mistake and should have had a larger library but had not realized how great the demand would be.) city truck garage; store room 16 x 45 feet; lavatory complete with hot water heater, firemen's recreation room 12 x 18 feet; four bedrooms for firemen, each 11 x 14 feet, heated by individual stoves, and fire hall 30 x 30 feet. The northeast corner of the building contained the city offices, recorders office and a room for the city attorney; also a council chamber. To the rear was the library entrance on Filmore. The west side contained the fire department with space for two fire vehicles and equipped with an automatic door and behind the garage were firemen's quarters. Between the office entrance and the garage for the fire trucks on highway 101 was an entrance leading to a

(Memories continued on page 5)

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Bandon Historical Society

### Bandon Historical Society Museum

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Native American Consultant... Reg Pullen

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Doreen Colbert	Mary Schamehorn
Donna Mason	Carolyn Russell

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

#### Newsletter Layout

Bob Coraor



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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 generations, 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! Located on the corner of:  
270 Fillmore Ave. & Hwy 101

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## From the Desk of the Director

Gayle Nix

It has been a busy and fun last couple of months.

We had "Long Timer's Day" on November 21 with a nice sized group of people. The main topic was about all the old gas stations that used to be in the area. Our next get together will be in February. If you would like to be included in this group of long-time residents, please let me know.

It's fun to talk about the days gone by and share our memories of Bandon.

**Mary Capps Appreciation Day** was very successful. We had 91 people show up to honor Mary Capps for all she has done for preserving Bandon's history.

Our new flooring (thanks to a grant from Trust Management) will be installed on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our new exterior signs (grant from the Michael and Lindy Keiser fund) are halfway done. They look very classy! During our down time, Dec 23-to Feb 2, we will be updating exhibits, moving our very heavy cannon (donated by Esther Millard from the Millard school) and giving it a proper home in our military area.

I would like to thank all of you who donated money in response to our fund raising letter, our sponsors who made it possible to have our events and programs, our members and all of our volunteers. You have all had a huge part in the success of "OUR" museum.

We appreciate everyone who brings us McKay's Market receipts. However, the store will now only accept receipts from within the last six months. This is a change in the program that affects every group that receives a cash back donation through McKay's Advantage Sales Receipt Program. So keep those receipts coming but use them as an excuse to visit us more often.

We are looking forward to 2020! Thank you all.

Gayle Nix

## Donations and New Members

**Donations In Memory of:** Harvey "Skip" Longanecker, Frank Conn, Shirley Langlois Ward, Theresa Manicet Langlois, Larry Doss, George Domenighini, Beverly Tresidder, Donald "Don" Goddard, Newton Haga, Dick Mason and Robert Hundhausen.

**Memorial Donors:** Becki Johnson, The Sorenson Family, Barbara Dodrill, Doug and Sharon Ward Moy, Bob and Emily Capps Hall, Betty and Merle Tomminger, Kathy Dornath, Judy Knox, Jeannette Todd, Kristy Bowman, Mary Egy, Gloria Haga, Jim and Alyce Cawdrey, Ann King and Rick Toth.

**New Patron Member:** Jill Titus

**New Life Member:** Joanne Fetterman Belmont

**New Members:** Patti Strain, Annessa Dehart, Bruce Held, Bill and Faye Rylander, Jeff Longshaw and Gail Love.

## Veterans Honored at Bandon Historical Museum

A special Veterans Day Military Exhibit was on display in November at our Museum. **Dr Jason Bell** gave a talk about “Medics in the Middle East” and **Dave Hankwitz** spoke about how Air Force fighter pilots wear special suits during flight. Dave’s own flight gear is on display in the Museum. In addition to the permanent military collection, there were a variety of military vehicles parked in the Museum parking lot. Museum volunteer **Rick Hinojosa** did all the coordination and planning to pull this event together. Rick is also a member of the group at VFW Post 3440 who recently installed the Veteran’s Memorial in City Park.



Dave Hankwitz with his flight suit.

### Grants Help Keep the Lights On

A grant from **Trust Management Services** will pay for the materials and labor to install new flooring in two rooms while the museum is closed in January. **The Braemar Charitable Trust** is the source of the museum’s \$9,450 grant. Grants from Trust Management, which can be applied for every other year, have supported museum projects for many years.



The museum also received a \$1,800 grant from the **Oregon Community Foundation Small Arts & Culture** grant program. The Bandon museum’s grant was provided by the **Fred W. Fields Fund**. The Small Arts & Culture grant supports operating funds for non-profits with budgets under \$100,000 per year.

The **Mr. and Mrs. Michael K Keiser Fund** recently awarded a \$3,500 grant to finance an “Interior Facelift.” The money will pay for fix-up and paint projects to complement the new flooring, purchase new display cases and upgrade lighting and electrical fixtures. A 2019 Keiser Fund grant purchased new signs for the museum.



Dr. Jason Bell speaks about his tour as orthopedic surgeon in Iraq .

# Mary Capps Appreciation Day November 29, 2019



Ann Remy and Mary Capps (right) at the Museum celebrating Mary's many years of support and service to the Bandon Historical Society.



Mary Capps with well wishers.



Mary Capps at work on exhibits when the Museum moved into the old City Hall building, ca 1996.

**CITY OF BANDON  
PROCLAMATION  
Mary Capps Appreciation Day**

**WHEREAS:** Mary Capps, along with her husband Edgar, was a charter member of the Bandon Historical Society; and

**WHEREAS:** She is a living bearer of much of the history of Bandon, Langlois, and northern Curry County; and

**WHEREAS:** She devoted her career to educating the children of our community; and

**WHEREAS:** She played an instrumental role in the design and organization of our present museum building; and

**WHEREAS:** She has conducted countless tours of the museum and is always ready to lead another; and

**WHEREAS:** She has been the heart and soul of the Bandon Historical Society since its inception in 1976; now

Therefore, I Mary Schamehorn, Mayor of the City of Bandon, Oregon, in recognition of her years of service to the museum, to the community and to the preservation of the historical record, do hereby proclaim November 29, 2019 as **Mary Capps Appreciation Day**.

*Mary Schamehorn*  
Mary Schamehorn, Mayor

(Memories continued from page 1)

hallway which ran the length of the building. This provided access for firemen and restrooms and showers. Behind the building was a garage to house three city trucks. This was used until the new city storage and garage was built on Third Street.

Work had begun on the city hall in October but was abandoned by Nov. 19 when the city hall was only 22 percent complete. The WPA crew instead worked on the 36 cabins built in East Bandon to provide housing for those who had been living in tents since the fire. By early Dec. they had finished those cabins and they again worked on the city hall, completing it for occupancy on Jan. 15, 1937. The WPA crews had been paid 44 cents an hour for common laborers who worked 100 hours a month; 65 cents an hour for building trades workers who worked 76 hours a month; and \$1.00 an hour for the skilled laborers who worked 140 hours a month.

The exterior of the building was covered with black building paper, held down by battening strips. The interior was finished with half-inch composition board, which might have been plywood. The interior has received extensive remodeling at various times through the years.

Some firemen slept in the building and John laughed when he said two of them were **George Coburn** and **'Curley' Helferstine**, neither of whom were young enough at the time, to be any help fighting fire. Maybe they answered the phone. Edgar recalls that **Gale Dethridge** and **Al Weddle** (an uncle to **George McNair**) lived there while working at Capps Motor Co. and also worked constructing their own sleeping quarters.

By May of 1941, just five years after the fire, the city council asked for bids to remodel the city hall. The plan was to improve the outside appearance and they hired **Kenneth C. Legge**, a Portland architect. The present Mayor **Judy Densmore** will be pleased to know her father, **Vern Brown**, bid \$1470; and **John Scott** (whose son, **Gene**, is now a local contractor) bid \$1560. Both bids were said to be somewhat in excess of preliminary estimates. It was believed possible to cover the entire cost of remodeling, architect fees, sidewalk and other items with an appropriation of \$1500. The bids were not rejected but the matter was held over until the next council meeting. In the meantime they would study the project for other alternatives. By their next council meeting they had decided to put on fir siding, instead of cedar, to further reduce the cost of remodeling. With this change, Vern Brown was able to reduce his bid from \$1470 to \$1382, placing it within the amount budgeted for the purpose.

The contract provided for changing the roof effect on the northwest side, recessing entrances to the fire hall, the city office and the council chamber, and the library. It also called for covering the exterior walls with siding and painting them, building decorative shutters for the windows and building a cupola to offset the facade.

Occupying this historic building has given a huge boost to the Bandon Historical Society. It has brought an out pouring of support. We hope this will help start a much more positive outlook for our community.

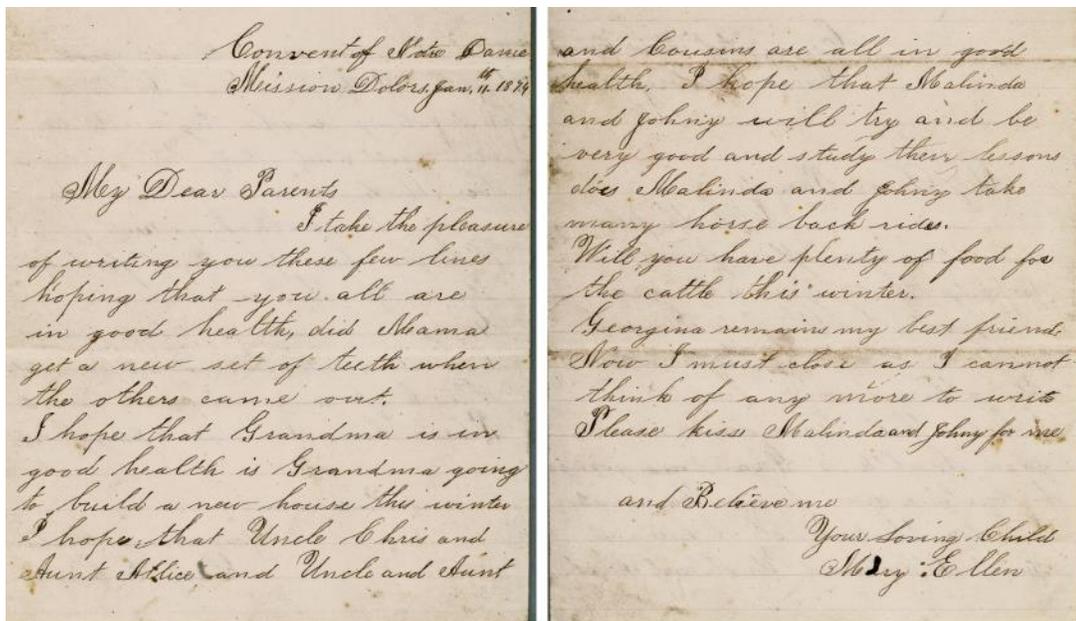


City Hall building in 1978 when it was the Old City Hall Tavern.



City Hall building in December 2019 as the Bandon Historical Society Museum.

## Hamblock Family Letters Donated



Letter from Mary Ellen Hamblock to her parents, January 11, 1874.

The museum received a significant contribution to its document collection, a collection of dozens of letters connected to the Hamblock family, most dating from the 1870s. Jill Titus of Mendocino, CA delivered the Hamblock letter collection to the museum in October.

The letters provide a window into life in the Coquille Valley during the earliest years of American settlement and illuminate the local area's relationship to the wider world.

**John and Jane Hamblock** claimed the property on the north shore of the Coquille River after the period of Indian removal in the late 1850s. The Hamblocks built a home, milled lumber, farmed and established a post office. They raised a family.

In hindsight, we

know the story is going to take a tragic turn.

Because there were no schools in the area, the Hamblocks sent their oldest daughter, **Mary Ellen**, to the convent boarding school at Mission Dolores near San Francisco. She contracted an illness and died there in 1874.

The letters include exchanges between Mary Ellen and her parents during her time at school and correspondence between the Sisters at the school and the Hamblock family after Mary Ellen's death. After their eldest



Hamblock family—Malinda, Jane, Mary Ellen, John and John Andrew, ca 1868. Photo#28473.



Hamblock home on the site of present day Bullards Beach State Park. Photo# 43910.

Hamblock(Continued on page 7)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday, December 23, 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** — The Museum reopens for the 2020 season.

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



## “A Visit from the Belsnickel”

*“It is 8 O’clock now, the evening is stormy, but still the bellsnicle came, and brought the children goody’s. The children want me to tell you that he looked ougly,”* wrote John Hamblock



~ Belsnickel ~

to his daughter Mary Ellen on January 1, 1874. The sentence gives us a glimpse into how local families celebrated the holidays in the pioneer days.

John Hamblock immigrated from Prussia in the 1840s and found his wife Jane, an immigrant from Canada, in Port Orford in the 1850s. His spelling and usage reflect that Hamblock was not a native English speaker, but his letters are rich in detail and lively in expression.

The Belsnickel is a figure from German folklore who brought holiday treats. By tradition, the Belsnickel was frightening in appearance, but more comical than threatening. Did the younger Hamblock children, Malinda and Johnny, conjure the Belsnickel in their imaginations or did someone in the household dress up and play the Belsnickel? The letter does not tell us, but her father assured his daughter Mary Ellen, away at boarding school, that the holiday tradition was honored.

*Hamblock (Continued from page 6)*

child’s death, the Hamblocks hired **Robert Bullard** to teach their and the neighboring families’ children. He later married **Malinda Hamblock** and helped develop the community that came to be known as Bullards.

Would we have these letters if Mary Ellen had not died? We have to think her parents preserved these pieces of paper, now nearly 150 years old, to maintain a connection with their daughter. Her sister Malinda passed that connection to following generations.

**Jill Titus** is a Hamblock descendant. Her great grandparents were Robert and Malinda Hamblock Bullard and her grandparents were **Warren and Leafy Kendall Bullard**.

Bullards Beach State Park now covers most of the Hamblock homestead. In 2017 **Christopher Evans**, another Hamblock descendent, gave the museum the land deed which formalized the Hamblock claim to the property and is signed by Abraham Lincoln. The letters are another rich addition.

The first step in preserving the letters is to put each sheet of paper in a clear, archival L sleeve. Then each letter is photocopied and digitally scanned. Further work with the letters is done with the copies or digital images. Volunteers are creating an index and typing copies of the hand-written letters. “A few of the letters are written in German,” said volunteer **Jim Proehl**. “We need to find someone to translate. We can use some help with typing. We’ve just begun to explore this collection but it’s a treasure.”



Belsnickel

## 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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