

THE BANDON LIGHT

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A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A Bottle Opener is the Key to the History of the Randolph Hotel

By *Mary Russell*

“As we move to the west side of our little hamlet, Randolph, at the end of the road from Empire, stood the little old hotel which could accommodate few guests, but could provide entertainment—having an upstairs dance hall which was probably the only one between Bandon and Coquille. An occasional traveling troupe would put on a show there, then dances for the fun lovers. I am reminded of an amusing incident at a dance there one night when my partner, a young man, and I were having an especially good time. Time came for a mid-night supper. A whole chicken came our way with no disposal for the bones. My partner sat beside a man we both knew, well-attired in a suit with regulation coat pockets. My partner laughingly



used one of the friend’s handy pockets as a bone disposal. In high spirits, and everyone in a gay mood, on went the party,” recalled Ruby Pershbaker, who described growing up in Randolph before the turn of 1900.

Embossed with the name Randolph Hotel, a bottle opener donated by members of the Hultin family sparked the museum’s interest in when and what kind of a hotel operated in Randolph. Randolph today is just a spot on the Coos County map, a spot that has moved a number of times.

From the information I’ve found, it appears that the hotel at Randolph stood from at least 1880 until at least September 1899. Alas, my data collection is necessarily partial because the historic newspaper archives are partial. That said, the existing newspaper collection still reveals some information about the hotel.

The hotel existed in Randolph as early as 1880: a March 13 news item published by *The Coast Mail* that year announced that “Joshua Wright took charge of the hotel at Randolph last Monday.”

A year and a half later, the *Coquille City Herald* reported that “John D. Bennett is building an addition to the Douglas hotel at Randolph.” Mr. Bennett was a well-known carpenter in the county; the news article must mean that he was contracted to build the addition for Mr. Douglas, the presumed owner of the hotel.

There was a stabbing incident at Randolph in September 1884 and the drunk, injured man took himself to the hotel. This story was first published in the *Coquille City*.

In a description of the local area published in the *Coquille City Herald* May 19, 1885, the town of Randolph is described as having a post office, general store, hotel, brewery, and sawmill under construction nearby.

Ruby Pershbaker supplied the most vivid account of the hotel. “In this little settlement of Randolph, one of the few small places of activity in the county, there was a hotel, a real mining town type, and the saloon in connection was a gathering place for card players and tipplers.



Early Randolph had a brewery in addition to the saloon at the hotel.

Continued on Page 7.

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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

It's been a very busy summer,
which we are thankful for.

We had a fun time at our vol-
unteer potluck August 17 with a
great group of volunteers that I appreciate very much.

Our August Museum Board meeting was produc-
tive. We emerged from it with a proposed plan for the
new event space to be funded from the estate of Don
Lynam. We hope to have drawings and blueprints to
share soon.

We will be doing our program commemorating the
1936 Bandon fire a little differently this year. We are
presenting the program on the actual day of the fire
rather than on an adjacent weekend. Mayor Mary
Schamehorn will be presenting the free program
Tuesday, September 26, at 7:00 pm, in the museum,
87 years after the fire.

After a three-year hiatus, we are again going to
have a "Night at the Museum" in October. A ticket to



Nena Minkler

this fund-raising event on
Wednesday, October 18,
from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, will
include adult beverages via
Lori Osborne and The
Beverage Barn and hor-
d'oeuvres by Sharon Haga.
It will be a great time to
socialize and tour the mu-
seum after hours. Be pre-
pared for a special
"History Detective's Challenge" for those who dare to
take it.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our summer student
employee, Nena Minkler. She has been busy scanning
documents, making copies, keeping the flowers wa-
tered and trimmed, and transcribing newspaper arti-
cles. Her work has been especially helpful to a project
to make Langlois, Port Orford and Pacific High
School yearbooks available online. Student employ-
ment is sponsored by The Remy Family and Joseph
Bain Insurance.

A busy summer will move into a fall season that
promises to be just as busy with the Cranberry Festi-
val weekend in early September, the 1936 fire anni-
versary program late September, "Night at the Muse-
um" in October, a Veterans program in November.

It's always fun and interesting. That's why I feel
like my job isn't work—because I enjoy it so much.
Hope to see you at one of our coming events.

Readers Get to Meet the Author of the Port Stirling Mysteries

“Bandon’s my total inspiration. It’s where everything started. Very atmospheric,” said author Kay Jennings, dispelling any mystery about whether Port Stirling, the setting of her series of mystery novels, was really Bandon.

Kay spoke to an appreciative audience at a “Meet the Author” event at the museum August 20. The talk came not long after the release of *Mourning Bay*, the sixth Port Stirling novel.

Kay told about her career in communication before she “retired” and began writing mystery, or more specifically, “police procedural,” novels. Her career included work in the Oregon governor’s office, Lane County, Nike, and McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center before she founded her own firm, Paris Communications. Kay currently lives in Estacada with her husband Steve, a technology entrepreneur.



Author Kay Jennings

When she wrote *Shallow Waters*, she wasn’t planning a series of novels. As she was considering writing more, Kay, who grew up in Coquille, talked to a retired Coos County sheriff who assured her that Coos County had enough crime to sustain a mystery series. She credits Bill Smith with telling her about the drug raid at the Storm Ranch on New River in the late 1970s which became the nucleus for her second book, *Midnight Beach*, and has been a recurring incident in subsequent novels.

Kay told the group about her learning curve as an author, talked about the development of each novel, and about the business side of writing and marketing her books.

“Like a parent is not supposed to have a favorite child, a writer is not supposed to have a favorite book,” said Kay, who then admitted *Phantom Cove* was her favorite.

Audience members asked questions about characters, scenes, and places and Kay assured the group that books 7 and 8 were underway. She tossed out a few plot teasers.

All six Port Stirling novels are for sale in the museum’s book store as will be all future volumes.

Striking Gold Again!!!

The gold-panners were back after a pandemic pause. Steve Gant and Jeff Haga taught the kids to separate the gravel from the gold on a Free Summer Sunday in July. Every panner struck paydirt. Earlier in July, Sharon Haga and Cindy Gant treated Sunday visitors to a “Build Your Own Cupcake” afternoon. Another hit.

Free Summer Sundays at the museum are sponsored by Best Western Inn at Face Rock and First Interstate Bank. Sunset Oceanfront Lodging provided the gold.



Emma searches for gold under the watchful eye of Steve Gant. Photo provided by her mother, Jennifer Kleiner.

Only Off by a Hundred Thousand

In our June edition, we ran a story about scanning photos from the *Western World* collection of photographic negatives. In the story, we reported we had scanned over a hundred and seventy thousand photos from that collection so far.

That number was off by a hundred thousand. So far, that collection has yielded a mere seventy thousand images. We are halfway finished scanning and labeling the collection.

An Open Question: A Great Name

By Jim Proehl

The first time I encountered Percival Wixon Ferris, the name caught my ear. I was searching the internet for more information about the Seeley and Anderson train wreck that occurred outside of Bandon in 1912. A website gave Ferris credit for taking the same photographs of the wreck that we have on display in the museum.

This summer, Beve Hammer, from Bellingham, Washington, reached out to us via email. She offered to share photographs taken by and information about Percival Wixon Ferris.

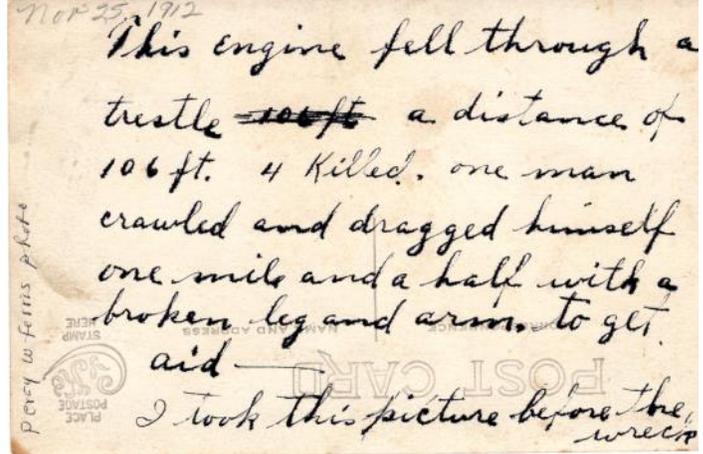
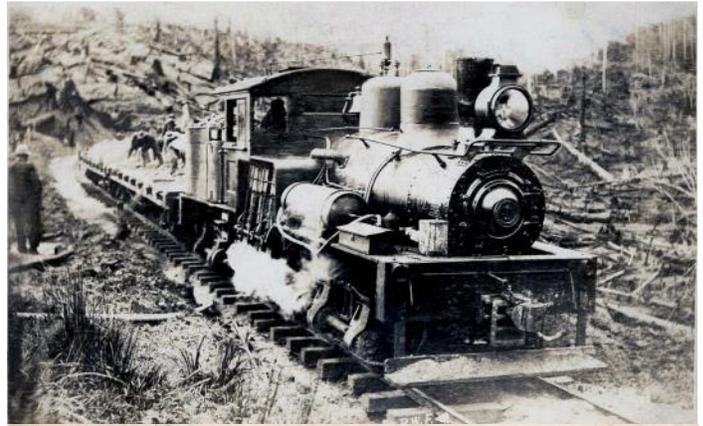
One photograph of a train engine is clearly labeled as the engine involved in the wreck and clearly identified as a Ferris photo.

She wrote, "Grandfather Percy Ferris died when I was around three so what I learned about the train wreck was through grandma, his children and the photos I inherited. He was a steam donkey fireman at several logging camps in Oregon and Northwest Washington. He and his family lived at Coos Bay and he was employed there at the time of the wreck. Horrific news like the train wreck traveled fast and Percy hurried to the site, camera in hand. I know that grandfather did a lot of photography and assumed the photos he saved were all his. One that I posted (*on the internet blog I found*) had his name printed on front and writing on the back instructing the photos be returned to him when he sent them to his family in Michigan."

I shared with Beve an item in a Marshfield newspaper announcing the birth of a child to Mr. and Mrs. P. W. Ferris in 1912, suggesting he was indeed in the area during the year of the train wreck.

Beve replied, "The baby girl was their second child named Gertrude Norene. I knew her well."

I emailed Beve the museum's collection of train wreck photos. None of the train wreck photos, in her or our collection, bear a photographer's name. She shared a thought about the post wreck photos that



The note on the back of this photo leaves no doubt Percy Ferris took the photo and that it was related to the Seeley and Anderson train wreck. Did he also take photos of the wreck?

had also occurred to me: "Because they were in Grandfather's possession does not mean he was the photographer." Could the family lore about Percy hurrying to the site of the wreck have been constructed to explain the photos in his collection?

On the other hand, there is no evidence Ferris did not take the well-known photos of the wreck. It's still an open question, but now we have some new photos to add to our collection, clearly identified as the work of Percival Wixon Ferris.



A photographer captured the Seeley and Anderson train wreck in 1912. Was it Percival Wixon Ferris?



History Minute: “Keep Your Seats Boys, We’re Gone”

Here’s a little bit of history from the museum in Bandon.

‘Keep your seats, boys. We’re gone,’ said, the engineer, Jim McDowell, as a loaded logging train plunged 70 feet off the trestle and into the gulch below. The locomotive exploded so loudly that people in Bandon, six miles away, thought the train was loaded with dynamite.

Six of the seven people aboard the train lost their lives.

It was the first time a loaded train tried to cross the 300-foot-long trestle over Ferry Creek, in November of 1912.

The train belonged to the Seeley and Anderson Logging Company.

After they started over the trestle, those aboard felt it wobble. The engineer threw on the brakes and the trestle buckled, then collapsed.

The sole survivor of the wreck, Rol Anderson, a brother of the company’s owner, realized what was going to happen. He turned to the Engi-

neer and said, ‘Good-bye Jim.’ Engineer McDowell replied in a husky voice, ‘Keep your seats, boys. We’re gone.’

And that’s a little history from Bandon’s Museum.



Listen to Bandon History Minutes on 96.5 FM KBDN, and other Bicoastal Media radio stations.

Photo Find: The “Other” Branch of the Hamblock Family

A photograph of “Red” John Hamblock and his wife Mary Ann is among the prizes found in a set of five albums donated by Cheryl Justis to the museum this summer.

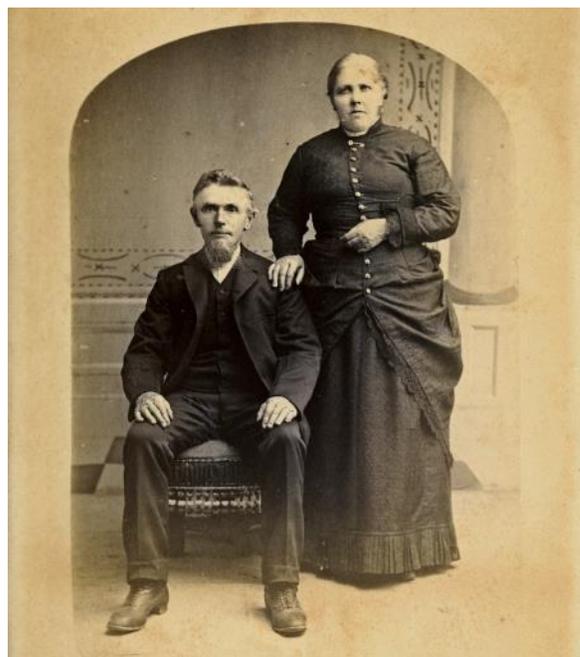
“Red” John was the younger brother of “Black” John Hamblock, who homesteaded the property that became Bullards Beach State Park. (The “Red” and the “Black” are references to beard color.) Both men immigrated to Missouri from Prussia in the late eighteen-forties.

“Black” John followed the California Gold Rush to the west coast, which eventually led him, via Port Orford, to the mouth of the Coquille River.

“Red” John stayed in Missouri, married a widow with a farm, and was prospering when the Civil War broke out. In the waning days of the war, the Confederate Army showed up on “Red” John’s doorstep and he became a prisoner of war, first of the Confed-

erates and then of the Union Army. The war destroyed “Red” John’s health and livelihood.

The Hamblock family worked to bring “Red” John and his family to join his brother in the paradise he had found along the Coquille River. In time, “Red” John acquired farm land a bit upstream of his brother and became a pillar of the Parkersburg community.



“Red” John and Mary Ann Hamblock

New Members:

Life Members:

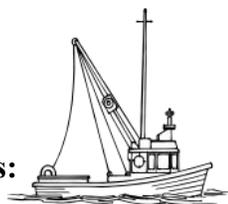
Jeff and Sharon Haga

Individual and Family Members:

Susanna Neal Duke

Randal and Lynn Schulhauser

Jace and Tammy Menezes



Model Car Collector Shares His Treasures with the Museum

Just in time for this summer's Classic Car Klatch, fifty-two, 1:18 scale, diecast metal vehicles went on display at the top of the museum's entrance ramp. The cars are a new addition to the museum's collection.



It started with a call to the museum about a year ago. The caller had a large collection of die-cast model cars and another collection of radio-controlled cars. His hope was to find a place that could keep intact and display his entire collection. Director Gayle knew we didn't have the space for his complete collection.

The two talked about other potential places.

The donor (who has asked we not use his last

name at this time) explained that he always wanted to have a car collection like Jay Leno's, but collecting models was as close as he could come.

This spring, the donor contacted the museum again to talk about which portion of his collection would work best in our museum setting.

Gayle and Board President Donna Mason selected the models, mostly of cars from the fifties and sixties, that would fit best with the rest of our collection.

Most important to the donor is that the cars be in a place where people can enjoy them. We've certainly enjoyed putting them on display and sharing them with guests. Visitors love them.



Board Member Rick Hinojosa organized this year's Classic Car Klatch, which took place August 20 on a Free Summer Sunday.

Receipts from McKay's Markets Help Us

McKay's Markets supports 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.

Bundle up McKay's receipts obtained within the past six months, bring them to the museum, and use them as an excuse to drop in and see us more often.

Memorial Donations

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Kathy Dornath Carole Cameron Fairchild
James and Mary Gauntlett Mars
Elizabeth Gauntlett Mars

Memorial donations have been made by:

Joanne Bailey Jeannette Todd
Sandra Handsaker Mary Ellingson
Kathy Dornath's BUNCO playing group

“Hoity Toity, My Son John, Went to Bed with his Breeches On”

Continued from Page 1. An old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, coarse and uncouth, sort of on the ‘Hill Billy’ type, operated the hotel which consisted of perhaps eight or ten guest rooms, dining room and the saloon with a dance hall overhead—Also a dark, rustic-like, crudely furnished, lounging room with an old stove, more like a bar room, this was in the main building adjacent to the bedrooms and dining room...A room where the guests (men) could rest, find comfort, smoke and recover from over-indulgence in the saloon next door.



Randolph Hotel!
Randolph, Oregon,
H. F. Tennisson,
Proprietor.

TABLES are supplied with the best the Market affords, and the beds neat and clean. Having purchased this hotel, I shall endeavor to merit the good will and patronage of the public. Give the house a trial.

v7n4tf H. F. TENNISSON.

“Mr. and Mrs. Douglas were old and jolly. They were the earliest proprietors that I can remember. At times when drunken brawls broke out in the saloon, the old lady, heavy and of rugged stature, would intercept the fracas, break up the argument, chasing the participants, usually including her own husband, off to bed, and then lock up the establishment.

“Mr. Douglas was a happy old fellow and when in that frame of mind, when my sister and I approached or were around, he would sing a little ditty for us that went like this, ‘Hoity Toity my son John, went to bed with his breeches on.’ There was not much to it but I guess he liked its rhyming.”

Mr. Douglas appears to still own the hotel in 1887. The hotel has a new proprietor in 1888: H.F. Tennisson. He placed an advertisement for the hotel in the *Coquille City Herald* which implied the new owner would bring the hotel a little more class.

One year later the *Coquille City Herald* reported “The Randolph Hotel has been crowded the past week.”

The hotel was mentioned at the end of the report of a “Fearful Disaster:” that is, the February 1890 land slide at Randolph that resulted in the death of John Thrush and his granddaughter Mary Russell (*a distant relative of the author of this article*).

With the hotel documented, I had one further question: Why did the Hultin family have a spoon from the hotel?

Fortunately, I found a newspaper announcement in *The Coos Bay Times*, May 15, 1937, that gave me the clues necessary to answer my question: “Fifty-eighth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Tennisson was celebrated with a surprise gathering of relatives at the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Hultin on Four



Though the photo is not labeled, the building in the center matches many of the descriptive details of the Randolph Hotel. For example, a Coquille Herald correspondent made facetious remarks about Mr. Douglas’s “900 foot” flag pole. The building is no longer there. The property belongs to the Hultin family.

Mile Creek. Present were their son, Lloyd Tennisson of Randolph and children, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Hultin and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hultin, Mervil, Donald and Kenneth Hultin.”

The Tennissons, the one-time owners of the Randolph Hotel, and the Hultins are related.

The spoon — an artifact which spurred the above research — has been a family heirloom for over 130 years.

Mary Russell, daughter of desk volunteer Carolyn Russell, has become our go-to researcher for information about the communities on the north side of the river.

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)

\$20 Individual NAME: _____

\$30 Family ADDRESS: _____

\$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 \$ _____

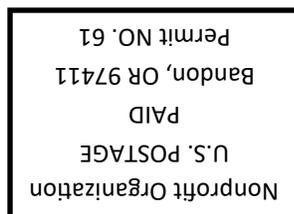
Please make check payable to BHS and mail to:

Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon OR 97411

For more information on benefits of memberships go to

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

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E B A N D O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y



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