



# THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by: The Caryl M. and Norman F.

Sprague Foundation

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Bandon Beach: The Scenic Beach of Oregon

We sometimes are asked to weigh-in on what the “official” name is for a given rock formation along Bandon Beach. *(There has been an especially heated social media debate lately on whether “Howling Dog” or “Wizard’s Hat” is the correct name for a rock near the Sunset Motel.)* The article that follows provides a vivid, early, picture of Bandon’s beaches but may not clear up the issue of “official” rock formation names.

*Oregon Daily Journal*, Portland,  
September 8, 1907  
By Irving S. Bath

Oregon scenery has gained more prominence in the past few years than in all the past, and people are just commencing to realize that they have the Alps at home, and for ideal summer outing, the trips in the woods and to the coast, are the nearest perfection. Down along the southern coast of Oregon the silvery Coquille river winds its way through the thick timber in the fertile valleys onward, ever increasing in size until it reaches the great Pacific Ocean, a large river. The Coquille River is only about 30 miles in length but it passes through a valley producing more timber and shipping, several times over, than the great Coos Bay river and its adjoining territory.

The majestic cedar towers upward, waiting for the axe of the homesteader, and to be sent on its way in lumber over the broad Pacific.

One of the oldest and most noted landmarks along this section of the coast was Tupper Rock. It stood on the crest of the hill and was seen for many miles out at sea, where it was used as a guide. The recent harbor improvements by the

government have nearly obliterated this historic rock. It has been blasted and broken to make the jetties with, and at this writing there yet remains but a small portion of the original landmark, and it will shortly be all removed, as the harbor operations will recommence again in a short time.



*Tupper Rock, also known as Grandmother Rock, was “blasted and broken to make jetties” by the time this article was written.*

The north coast for several miles is a level stretch of sand that enjoys the full sweep of the winds. On this side of the river, directly opposite Bandon, still remain two of the Indian kitchen karrens, where the curiosity hunter will find arrowheads and many old Indian curios. The lighthouse is built on a huge base of solid rock, of concrete, and is very strong. Here its rays send out the warning to the passing vessels at night, and in foggy weather its enormous fog horn sounds its warning to shore bound vessels. Visitors are permitted to go through the lighthouse and it contains many things of interest to them. The United States Life Saving Station is also located on the river and



*The Life Saving Service lookout on Coquille Point.*

Continued on Page 4.

# THE BANDON LIGHT

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

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

## **Board of Directors Board Officers**

President.....Elaine Stohler  
Vice President..... Mary Schamehorn  
Secretary.....Faye Albertson  
Treasurer.....Jim Proehl

## **Additional Board Members**

Rick Hinojosa	Donna Mason
Nancy Murphy	Reg Pullen
Brian Vick	Berta Dargen
Sheri Wright	

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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Bandon Historical Society  
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Bandon, OR 97411  
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[bandonhistoricalmuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:bandonhistoricalmuseum@yahoo.com)  
Web: [www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org](http://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 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!

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

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Gayle Hankwitz  
Executive Director

Come visit our gift shop. Members get 20% off after Thanksgiving through December 21. We will be closed December 22 until we reopen February 3, 2025.

We have a big project planned for our winter break. Supported by a grant from the

Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation, our exhibit team, headed up by Donna Mason, will rebuild a display wall on the north end of the Pioneer Room.

We've had a great fall. For the first time ever, we had our volunteer appreciation dinner at the Bandon Warehouse Coffee Café. It was so enjoyable to have a nice, relaxing evening in a pleasant venue with live music in the background and great food on the table. The best part was that we could honor our volunteers without asking them to set up chairs and take down heavy tables. When the evening was over, we just walked away, knowing someone else would do the clean-up.

The "Night at the Museum" in October was great fun. Sharon Haga provided the hors d'oeuvres and Lori Osborne provided the adult beverages. Once again, Jim Proehl came up with a difficult and fun "History Detective" challenge. Everyone had a great time. If you did not make it this year, make sure to attend next year. You won't be disappointed.



Speaking of fun, mark down Tuesday, February 4, for our "Member Open House" from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. We'll share some tasty snacks and non-alcohol beverages. Members will get a chance to see what's new after our winter work session. Members will share some other fun things including plans for the new Joan and Don Lynam addition to the museum building.

Please try to attend this first-of-its kind event and see what's happening at your museum.

We are hoping to break ground in March. Here's looking forward to 2025 and having our new addition become a reality.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season. See you in February.



## Sprague Foundation Helps To Share Bandon's Story

The museum was pleased to receive a \$3,000 donation from The Caryll M. and Norman F. Sprague Jr. Foundation at the request of Kirk and Elizabeth Day.

A note that accompanied the donation said, "As trustees, we particularly admire the goals of the Bandon Historical Society Museum and we appreciate all that you have been able to accomplish in the past."

The museum will use the funds to find ways to share Bandon's History such as supporting our ***Bandon Light*** newsletter.

## Board Elections Set for February

The Bandon Historical Society will hold its annual board member and board officer election at our "Members Open House" on Tuesday, February 4, 2025. A vote of members will be taken to affirm the slate of officers for the coming year and the election of four board members for a three-year term.

At the November board meeting the board recommended a slate of officers for the coming year. The recommendation for officers is: President, Elaine Stohler; Vice President, Mary Schamehorn; Secretary, Faye Albertson; Treasurer, Jim Proehl.

Board members are elected to serve a three-year term and positions are staggered so that four positions are elected each year. The board recommends re-electing Elaine Stohler, Donna Mason and Nancy Murphy to three-year terms and electing Sharon Haga to fill the position formerly held by Mary Stewart.

Sharon Haga has lived in Bandon for 40 years and worked for the Bandon School District for 33 years, and is retired. Generations of students know her as cook, coach, cheerleading advisor and sometimes the person inside the Tiger mascot. Sharon and her husband, Jeff, have a 20-acre cranberry farm that keeps them busy. Sharon enjoys visiting the museum and continuing to learn about the history of our area. She has been an active volunteer, helping with school groups and events. Her enthusiasm and knowledge of Bandon will make her a valuable addition to the board.



***Sharon Haga***

## Members Invited for Food, Friends, and Fun

Mark your calendar for the "best ever" ***Museum Member Open House*** on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. This free event will begin with a very quick introduction to the evening's events: then you will have the opportunity to explore our special displays which will highlight 2024 achievements and preview events in 2025.

You will not want to miss the display featuring the construction plans for our new Joan and Don Lynam Annex.

Join us for food, friends and fun. Hope to see you there.

## Receipts from McKay's Markets Help Us

McKay's Markets has supported the Bandon Historical Museum for years by giving us a return on receipts collected. In 2023, we received \$1,168.03 from the McKay's Advantage Sales Receipt Program. Please continue to save McKay's receipts that were issued within the last six months and drop them off at the museum. We will do the rest! We appreciate everyone who has helped us collect receipts and most especially McKay's Markets for their continued support!



***Manager Jim Cornish receives a "Thank You" plaque from local Girl Scouts in 1983. The museum extends a "Thank You" to McKays and to shoppers who bring their McKays receipts to the museum.***

## *“is a cluster of rocks known as the Hen and Chicken rocks”*

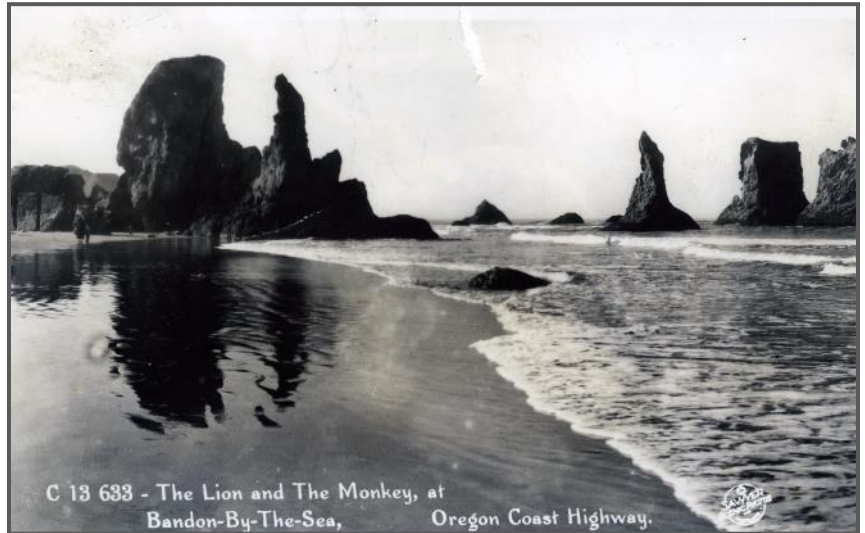
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has done considerable good work in assisting unfortunate vessels.

To go south down the coast, one must see a wonderland of nature's greatest creations. Nature assisted by old Neptune has prepared an art gallery unexcelled. The old rocks, which have withstood the beatings of centuries of the ever-active waves, stand out majestically against the background of the blue sea, in grandeur truly sublime. Many have old legends and are named after their connections. Between some of these pillars are found quiet pools that the yearly campers find excellent for bathing.

The first of the series of rocks south from lighthouse that is off particular interest is called the Dragon and Cub rocks. Viewed from one side the resemblance is striking to the dragon and the smaller rock at counterpart of the larger one, that they are named in this fashion. Directly out, off shore, is a cluster of rocks known as the Hen and Chicken rocks. The largest rock of this cluster is called Father Abraham, and this rock figures quite prominently in an old legend.

Below are the Seamue rocks. Here the eggs of the seagulls and sea pigeons are gathered in great quantities, and around the base is a favorite resort of the campers to hunt for crabs, some of which are enormous. Lookout Rock is a little south, and is so



called as the United States has a life saving lookout situated on it. There is a cave through this rock and at high tide the waves dash through the openings in a perfect frenzy, throwing the spray high in the air. Persons may sit hour after hour looking at the odd formations and the splendor of the waves as they dash against the rocks and break on the beach. Here and there, out several hundred yards, are low ledges that cannot be seen, but when the swells strike them the spray is thrown high in the air and is carried along by the winds, drenching everything before it.

Another historic rock, called the Monk Rock, lies just below, near the shore. The old legend runs that a certain old monk was turned into the shape of a rock and placed here to pray for rain. The frequent rains along this section of the coast are supposed to be in answer to Monk Rock. The “Dead Indian Rocks,” a short distance south, is well known to all campers and people living in the vicinity on account of the excellent rock oysters and mussels found at its base. An Indian chief was buried on the top, and its resemblance to an outstretched Indian, lying face downward, has given it its name.

Barnacle Rocks lie inshore still farther down the beach. These are not very large, but are picturesque. The photo shows the “Sphinx” rock in the distance. A view on the opposite side gives a distant outline of a girl's head, showing the eyes and mouth very clearly. This rock is well known along this part of the coast and is a target for the invariable kodak view hunter.

The Lion and Monkey Rocks lie inshore, and received their names on account of their resemblance to these animals. Close by and

**Continued on Page 5.**



*Howling Dog or Wizard's Hat Rock? The Wizard's Hat name seems to come from the Harry Potter generation. Komax, the howling dog, is part of "The Legend of Face Rock," which the writer of this 1907 article does not seem familiar with.*



*“The photo shows the ‘Sphinx’ rock in the distance.”*

Continued from Page 4.



in this group is the Chums Rocks. They are not only located in a very picturesque position, but contain the fossils of all of the animals native to this coast many years ago. Probably there are fossils that are very rare and much sought after within its massive depths. A cave in one of these rocks makes it distinctly prominent, as the sight seer is not satisfied until its interior has been explored.

A very beautiful rock is some distance south down the coast, and is known as the Nun Rock. This represents a kneeling nun, clearly showing her in a kneeling posture, with her veil thrown over her head. Here she remains praying for the storm-driven sailors at sea.

One might go on down the coast describing its many places of scenic beauty, and its many inducements to the tourist and pleasure seeker. Some of the most pleasant hours of the writer have been spent on these rocks, watching the odd formations of the never-still waves, never twice alike. They hold a fascination that draws one out on all the pleasant days to see the sun's rays sparkling over the waves and the rainbow hued spray as it is dashed onto the rocks. And one thing that more than repays a visit is to watch the sun set on a clear day. A majestic ball of fire slowly sinking to rest behind the billows, throwing its golden rays out all over in every direction, on the water, and as it finally disappears, leaves a blood-red sky, which slowly recedes and night fall has commenced.

## Museum Gets New Shoes for Jim Jackson's Birthday

As part of the celebration of Jim Jackson's 93rd birthday in October, his family donated an artifact to Bandon's History Museum. Board members Jim Proehl and Mary Schamehorn represented the museum at the birthday celebration at Bandon's Senior Center in City Park.

The donation was a pair of bog shoes, made of wood and the tin cans, from the St. Sure Cranberry farm. Jim Jackson purchased the St. Sure place in the early 1970s and the Jackson family continues to operate the farm today. Linda Jackson Taguchi organized the birthday celebration. Rick and Dawna Jackson made the donation of the shoes. Along with the bog shoes, the Jackson family shared several photos for the museum to scan into the collection.



*Bog Shoes*



*Cranberry pickers in the “Big Ole Bog” of the St. Sure farm in 1937 with the trees charred by the 1936 Bandon Fire.*

# Bandon Playhouse Production Draws on Local History

An elderly woman, living with her grandson, is visited by four ghosts from Bandon's past: Henry Baldwin, Ruby Pershbaker, Geneva Shindler and her old friend, Ruthanne. Can they help her complete her own life's story?

That's the question posed by *Coquille River Anthology*, a Bandon Playhouse production written by



*The cast of Coquille River Anthology: Nameer El Kadi (Henry Baldwin), Corrie Gant (Geneva Shindler), Bobbi Neason (Trudy), Amy Moss Strong (Ruthanne McSurdy-Wong), Meara Stadelman (Ruby Pershbaker), and Grant Goodwin. (Todd).*

Neal Davis and directed by Mike Dempsey.

The production played to full houses for two November weekends in the Gallery Room in the Wheelhouse Restaurant building and sparked a lot of discussion about local history.

Davis drew his historic characters from primary

sources in the museum including letters, memoirs, newspaper articles and *The Bandon Light*.

Henry Baldwin, played by Nameer El Kadi, was born in Bandon, Ireland, and arrived in this area as a shipwrecked soldier during the Rogue Indian Wars of the 1850s. Ruby Pershbaker, portrayed by Meara Stadelman, was a child during the 1880s when new communities were developing on the lower Coquille River. Geneva Shindler (Corrie Gant), married to pharmacist Otto Shindler, recounted her role in a notorious kidnapping episode in the 1930s. Ruthanne (Amy Moss-Strong), based on Ruthanne McSurdy-Wong, an artist who produced sets and costumes for the Bandon Playhouse, passed away more recently. Her character is the "ghost" that links the contemporary story to the more distant past.

Bobbi Neason and Grant Goodwin played the grandmother and grandson whose relationship grounds the plot of *Coquille River Anthology*. This is the third local theater production Davis wrote in collaboration with the museum. The previous shows were *Bandon Burns!* and *Murder at Two Mile*.

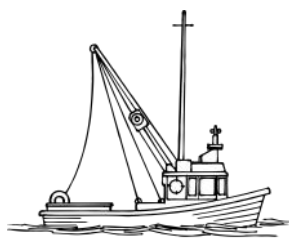


*Ruthanne McSurdy-Wong applies make-up for a play at Ocean Crest School in 2011.*

## New Members:

### Life Members:

Mark and Trina Johnston  
Kathy and Larry Merritt  
Martha Lane



### Individual and Family Members:

Lori Loshbaugh      Geraldine Dauby  
Gary Shaffer      Jon Traud  
Toni Oliver      Deborah Pietrzak  
Michell and Rick Felkins  
Charis McGaughy and Jeff Croissant  
Scott and Edith Vierck

## Memorial Donations

Memorial donations have been made in the name of:

Edwin Swenson	Jeanne E. Joyce
Mary Stewart	Dr. John Abbott
Don Lynam	Julita Fong
Kathy Dornath	Richard "Dick" Handley
Norma Lou Handsaker	

Memorial donations have been made by:

Judith Swenson	Donna Reilly
Linell Seegall	Barbara Coulsom
Jim Proehl	Gayle Hankwitz
Sandra Handsaker	Sam and Lorena Woods
Dr. and Mrs. Joe Sejvar	
Franz and Kathryn Shindler	



## ***History Minute:*** Ruby Pershbaker Remembers Randolph

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

Today, Randolph is just spot on the Coos County map.

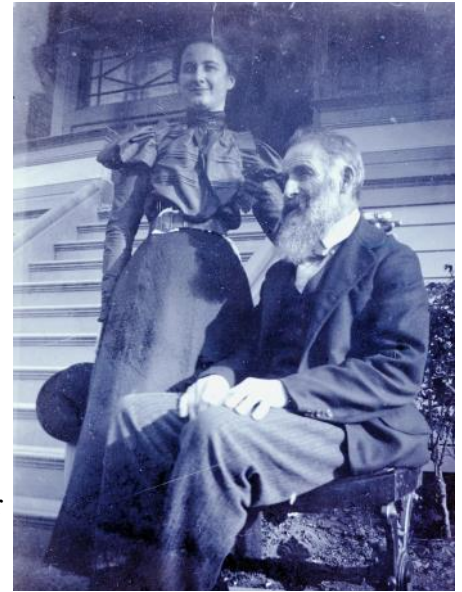
Ruby Pershbaker, who lived there in the eighteen-eighties, remembered:

"In this little settlement there was a hotel, a real mining town type, and the saloon in connection was a gathering place for card players and tipplers. An old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, coarse and uncouth, operated the Randolph Hotel which consisted of perhaps eight or ten guest rooms and the saloon with a dance hall overhead.

"Mr. and Mrs. Douglas were old and jolly. At times when drunken brawls broke out in the saloon, the old lady, heavy and of rugged stature, would break up the argument, chasing the participants, usually including her own husband, off to bed, and then locked up the establishment."

Preserved along with Ruby's account is a bottle opener, embossed with the hotel's name, the last physical trace of the Randolph Hotel.

***And that's a little history preserved in Bandon's Museum.***



***Ruby Pershbaker with her father Adam Pershbaker.***



***Henry Baldwin***

## ***History Minute:*** The Baldwin Cypress

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

The Baldwin Cypress towers over Ocean Drive.

Henry Baldwin was born in Bandon, Ireland, in 1825, went to sea at 16, joined the US Army and was sent to defend Port Orford.

In 1852, his ship, the *Captain Lincoln*, missed Port Orford in a storm and wrecked on the North Spit of Coos Bay. The captain chose Baldwin and three others to walk to Fort Orford to arrange a rescue. They swam across the Coquille River.

Baldwin served fifteen years in the Army, fought in the Civil war, then returned to homestead along Bear Creek. In 1896, he retired to a house in Bandon with an ocean view and planted a cypress.

In 1927, the Shindler family bought that house. Their home burned in the big fire of 1936. But the tree survived and generations of Shindlers took care of it.

So, the Baldwin Cypress still towers over Ocean Drive.

***And that's a little history from Bandon's Museum.***



***Nameer El Kadi portrayed Henry Baldwin and Corrie Gant played Geneva Shindler in the Bandon Playhouse production of Coquille River Anthology. Corrie is one of the voices of "History Minutes" on local radio.***

**Bandon "History Minutes" play on station 96.5FM and other Bicoastal Media stations.**

## 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>

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