

Submitted Photo  
A photo taken at Cannon View Park near the site of the first post office in Arch Cape, where the cannon was found.



## SAVING CANNON BEACH'S NAMESAKE

### When is the cannon coming back?

By DANI PALMER  
EO Media Group

The Cannon Beach History Center and Museum is working to save the city's namesake. So if you're one of those who's stopped by the museum wondering where the cannon is, the relic is in Astoria awaiting a new, permanent home.

"People ask every day, 'Where's the cannon? When's the cannon coming back?'" said Elaine Trucke, executive director of the center and museum.

The cannon is at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in storage. The Cannon Beach History Center and Museum is raising money to install an exhibit that will preserve extensive conservation work, and hopes to have it back by January. The exhibit will be presented in a microenvironment that will help protect the antique in a climate-controlled area.

#### Off the Shark

The cannon was on the USS Shark when it foundered on the Columbia River Bar in 1846, and had been used in border disputes and the West Indies. It washed up onto a beach in Arch Cape but was lost in the tide and not seen again in the area until 1898.

The cannon sat in front of Arch Cape's post office for years before moving in the 1940s, ending up in private hands and eventually being given to the museum in 2005, Trucke said.

In 2010, while comparing it to other cannons found in Arch Cape, a representative from Texas A&M University discovered the underside was falling apart and was severely rusted from sitting outside for more than a century. Pieces were falling off.

The museum decided then to raise the money to restore the cannon and the capstan. They shipped it to College Station, Texas, in 2012, where repair work began.

The restoration cost \$50,000 between the conservation process and shipping. Coaster Construction had to tear down a wall to get the one-ton cannon out of the museum for repair.



A crew from Coaster Construction works to get the USS Shark cannon out of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum.

The Shark's capstan, used to raise and lower the anchor of a ship, had not been treated well, either, Trucke said.

#### Chemical bath

Leading the way in marine conservation, staff and students at Texas A&M gave the cannon a special chemical bath to remove rust. They used dental tools on the capstan because it was so delicate, Trucke added.

The cannon and capstan were both later dipped into wax, which soaks into the objects and creates a protective seal, she noted. It was returned to Cannon Beach last fall. "When they got here and we opened up the

crates, the cannon and capstan looked like they were brand new off the ship," Trucke said.

But the museum did not have the facilities for properly storing or displaying the cannon. Trucke said the cannon and capstan need a humidity level of 40 percent or lower. The museum has a humidity level of about 60 percent.

While planning began for a future exhibit, scheduled for January, the cannon and capstan were shipped to the maritime museum. They now await a return to Cannon Beach.

A GoFundMe account called "Save Our Cannon"

seeks to help pay for the design, construction and installation of the new exhibit, estimated at a cost of \$30,000. The museum plans to hire Formations, a design company in Portland, to construct the microenvironment. The Braemar Trust recently awarded the museum \$10,000 for the project. Remaining funds are being sought through contributions.

"What a great cause for something so important to our history," wrote Kelly Mauer, who made a donation on GoFundMe.

#### Cultural identity

The cannon, Trucke said,



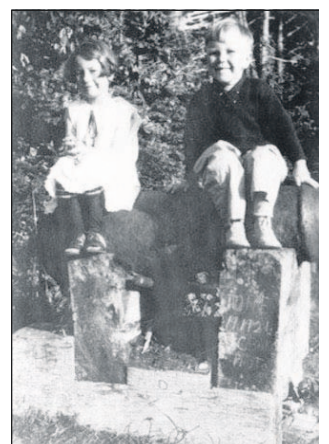
Submitted Photo  
The USS Shark's cannon was red, rusted from years in the elements, before being sent off to Texas A&M.



Submitted Photo  
The original cannon of Cannon Beach was found in 1898 and has resided in a variety of locales, from in front of the post office in Arch Cape, to along Highway 101 at scenic vistas.



Submitted Photo  
The Cannon Beach History Center and Museum's capstan after a chemical treatment at Texas A&M.



Submitted Photo  
Juanita Kincaid and Robert Kenney sit on top of the cannon in Arch Cape in 1926.

has become a part of the city's cultural identity and an international tourist attraction. "It's almost as iconic of an image as Haystack Rock," she said.

It even has a cocktail named after it. If the funds are raised

and the exhibit moves ahead as planned, the cannon will be a celebration for not just Cannon Beach, but for Arch Cape and South County.

"It's the community's," Trucke said, "it's not the museum's."