

# HISTORIC

## PHOTOS OF THE WEEK



NO. 35 GOVERNOR WEST'S SUMMER COTTAGE, CANNON BEACH, OREGON.

Photo courtesy of Cannon Beach History Center and Museum

Former Gov. Oswald West's summer retreat in Cannon Beach.

# WILD, WILD WEST

By ELAINE TRUCKE  
Special to *The Daily Astorian*

**D**id you know that Oswald West had a summer retreat in Cannon Beach?

First, who is Oswald West? West was born in Ontario, Canada, in May of 1873. At the age of 4 he moved to Salem, where he attended school and eventually ended up in banking in 1889. After several years as a banker in Salem and Astoria, a position as the state land agent in 1903, and a stint with the Oregon Railroad Commission, he gained the Democratic nomination for governor in 1910. He defeated his opponent, Jay Bowerman, and ended up taking office in 1911 until 1915.

During West's term, women's suffrage was approved, a new parole system for prisoners was instituted, capital punishment was abolished, and prohibition came into effect.

West's most important and recognizable legacy was the 1913 beach highway law, which declared the entire Pacific coastline to the high tide mark to be a public highway.

The source of West's inspiration for protecting the tidelands and his love for Oregon's beaches can be traced to his retreat in Cannon Beach. With the whole coast to choose from, the governor selected what was then a remote wooded

section south of Cannon Beach in 1911.

The last leg on the journey from Portland to his proposed house was on horseback. It may have been that the rough ride contributed to the governor's later decision in making the beaches a highway.

In 1912, West and his wife Mabel purchased an acre of land just south of Cannon Beach. The property sat on a basalt precipice with a breathtaking ocean view that included Haystack Rock.

In 1913, West had finalized plans for a log house, barn and spring house, which was a small building used for refrigeration. West's weekend retreat was completed in July of 1913. The cabin sat 80 feet above sea level and was a rectangular, one-story Adirondack-style log cabin that was situated with a wide covered front porch, exposed Sitka spruce log construction, and split cedar shingle roof with two patios, one in concrete and another in flagstone. A spring house, carriage house, and barn were also on the site.

The cabin, however, would not have been complete without a massive 9-foot fireplace constructed of rounded beach stones that took over the center of the western wall.

The retreat was used for many family vacations before West sold the home in 1926.

While the log cabin still stands, it isn't

the original. In May of 1991, the home

was burned nearly to ash by an arsonist. Fifty-five years of family history had gone up in smoke. After realizing the extent of the damage, it deemed infeasible to reutilize the original materials with the exception of the main fireplace chimney stone, a few of the lower logs, and the wrought-iron door. Because of the special meaning the home had to the family and citizens of Cannon Beach, they deemed it necessary to create an exact replica of the cabin. To recreate the original retreat, the family went with the Portland architectural firm of Fletcher Farr Ayotte.

The reconstruction began with extensive field documentation and salvaging samples, and the cabin was authentically recreated. Virtually all of the materials used in the original cabin were repeated in the recreation including the logs and porch columns, which were made out of Sitka spruce logs obtained near Tillamook. The reconstruction of the cabin was technically completed in 1995, but the fine-tuning continued.

The spectacular results of the recreation earned the cabin second prize in the exterior rehabilitation category of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 1996 Great American Home Awards.

*Elaine Trucke is the executive director of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum.*

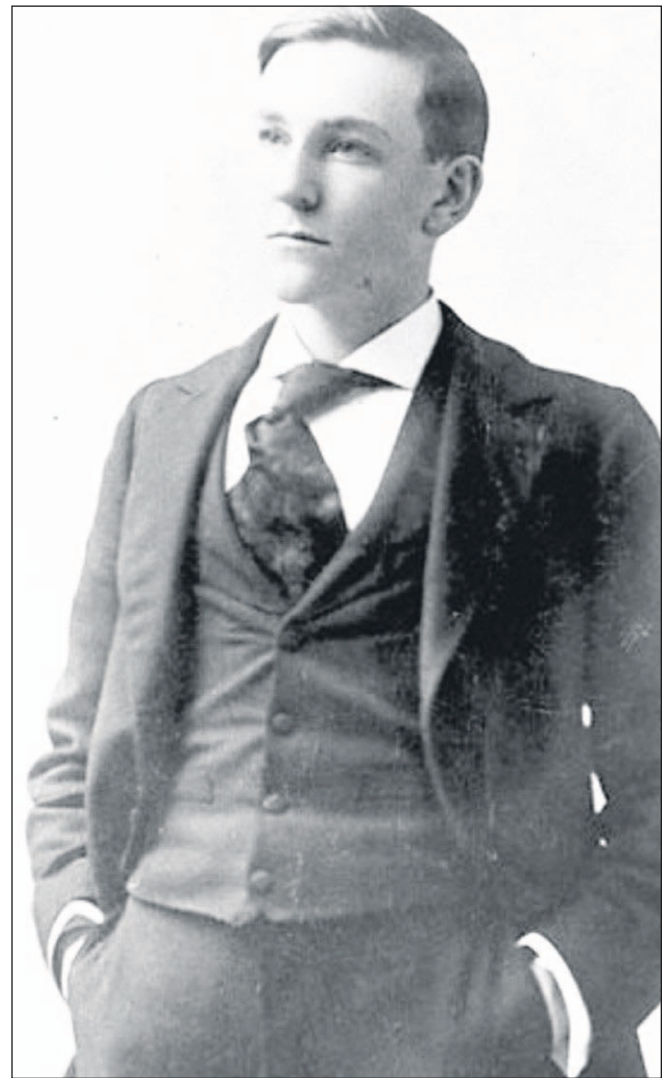


Photo courtesy of Cannon Beach History Center and Museum  
Oswald West as a young man.



## 9-1-WHAT?

THE BEST OF THE WORST CALLS TO ASTORIA 911 DISPATCH

## School daze

**J**ust so we're clear: When your child refuses to go to school, call 911. It's fine. It's not like there are any real emergencies going on, like a man walking around aimlessly swinging a sword, or folks crabbing by a sewer plant, or a woman who wants your wine, or cows ...

Follow reporter Kyle Spurr on his 9-1-What? Twitter watch, where a few of the sometimes head-scratching calls to area dispatch take center stage. The full feed is at [www.twitter.com/9\\_1\\_WHAT](http://www.twitter.com/9_1_WHAT).

9-1-WHAT? @9\_1\_WHAT Following

{9/28 @ 8:41 a.m.} Caller requested assistance for his 5-year-old refusing to go to school. #Warrenton

6:48 AM - 1 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? @9\_1\_WHAT Following

{9/30 @ 8:34 p.m.} Man with a sword, walking around and talking to himself, aimlessly swinging the sword. #Astoria

6:51 AM - 1 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? @9\_1\_WHAT Following

{10/4 @ 4:54 p.m.} Woman outside a business asking patrons if she can drink their wine. #Astoria

RETWEET 1

9-1-WHAT? @9\_1\_WHAT Following

{10/3 @ 12:57 a.m.} Suspicious activity reported by the sewer plant. Just a large group of people crabbing. #Seaside

7:24 AM - 9 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT? @9\_1\_WHAT Following

{10/4 @ 6:56 p.m.} Report of cows out on Youngs River Road. #Astoria

7:27 AM - 5 Oct 2015

# our coast

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