

word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Holladay [hal•i•dei]

noun

1. *Ben Holladay*: (1819-1887) This Kentucky-bred firebrand first came to Oregon in August 1868 and would become seen as both one of the state's biggest successes and failures of the era. Having already made a fortune in the overland stagecoach business, Holladay went all in on the Willamette Valley railroad fight of the time and won big, even as he was accused of bribing Oregon legislators. His Oregon & California Railroad dominated the area, first reaching west of Portland to Hillsboro in 1871. All in all, he built about 240 miles of railroad in the state, getting as far south as Roseburg. Holladay first visited Seaside in 1870 on a hunting expedition. He constructed an opulent Italian-style villa hotel called the Seaside House in the shade of Tillamook Head near the cove (on what is now the Seaside Golf Course) in 1871, well before Seaside was incorporated in 1899. An extravagant spender who owned multiple mansions on both coasts, Holladay lost his railroad when he began to default on debts in 1873. He died in Portland on July 8, 1887, at the age of 68.

2. *Holladay Drive*: A 2-mile, north-south road-way in Seaside that begins at 24th Avenue and closely follows the east bank of the Necanicum River to terminate at U.S. Highway 101 just south of Avenue M

Holladay is a variant of *holiday*, which both arrive from the Old English, *hālig-dæg*, a compound of *hālig* (HOLY) + *dæg* (DAY), first noted in 950. As a surname, it is Anglo-Saxon and traces back to the practice of anointing someone born on a holy day or festival with this name. The first reference to this surname is attributed to Suein Halidai in 1188, at a time when the British were acquiring surnames to pay personal taxes to King Henry II following the Norman Conquest.

Holladay Drive in Seaside, which used to be known as Seventh Street, is one of many streets in Oregon that commemorate Ben Holladay, including streets in Portland and Corvallis. Despite its obvious proximity to the Pacific Ocean, the city of Seaside apparently

derives its name from Holladay's resort, when the name of the local post office was changed in 1873 to Seaside House.

"On this plunder Holladay came to the Pacific Coast, bought the line of ships to Oregon and got into the Oregon railroad. He was a man of splendid physique, fine address, and knew well how to manage the average human nature. He was energetic, untiring, unconscionable, unscrupulous, and wholly destitute of fixed principles of honesty, morality, or common decency."

—Joseph Gaston, "The Genesis of the Oregon Railway System," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1906, P. 119

"The Farmer confesses that it did not expect, so soon, to see any contingency arise that would make the memory of Ben Holladay smell sweet to the people of Oregon."

—*The Daily Astorian*, Monday, June 19, 1876, P. 1

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Photo by Matt Love

The view from Coffee Girl on Astoria's Pier 39 is inches from the river.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

Coffee Girl

Rain fell. The river rolled gray. Two freighters decorated the channel. I sat inside Coffee Girl, the venerable coffee joint located at Astoria's Pier 39. I drank black coffee in a white cup with a saucer. Drinking coffee from a mug with a saucer seems civilizing to me, and Coffee Girl is a very civilizing place to hang out.

I sipped the coffee and went to work — reading my students' writing. It's my favorite part of being a high school English teacher. And I especially love doing it outside of Coffee Girl, sitting at a table inches from the river.

That wasn't possible today, however: too much rain.

I had given my English Credit Recovery students the prompt From the Heart: Write what's in your heart this very moment. I wanted 200-250 words in 20 minutes. They all delivered.

I read the pieces at Coffee Girl and annotated them. How could I not? There is much to learn from the hearts of teenagers. Here are a few of my favorite lines that made me think.

• In the past I've had so much pride in my apathy. Just recently I realized the value of being true to yourself.

• You can take the most malicious animal on Earth and you will find that that animal is only trying to provide aid for its survival and is not nearly as dangerous as a person and their hidden motives.

• I want people to understand that I am human. I make mistakes, I'm not perfect and I don't have to be!

• Something has happened lately that's got me thinking, made me reevaluate my values, and do something!

• It's good to let things go because holding grudges isn't healthy, but repeatedly, we let them back into our lives expecting different results each time, and it's madness.

• I understand: school, tests and all the stuff like that are important to me, to prove my knowledge, but I feel that those are only pieces of paper, and videogames are more than paper.

• The truth is I'm starting to love life again, and it feels good inside.

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Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon. His books are available through coastal bookstores or his web site, nestuccaspitpress.com

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