

HISTORIC

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

SHIPWRECKED

By **ELAINE TRUCKE**
Special to The Daily Astorian

In early January 1881, the British ship *Lupatia* wrecked on Tillamook Rock, a wreck that killed 16 sailors and had only one survivor — a shepherd dog that accompanied the crew.

The *Lupatia* met its doom 130 years ago this month, and we need only read a newspaper to be reminded of other ships that never came back to port again. For example, the remnants of the 1908 wreck of the *Emily Reed* in Rockaway Beach recently resurfaced only last month, after the less-than-hospitable Oregon Coast weather shifted sands that hide the wreckage for decades at a time.

Only eight crewmen from the *Emily Reed* were claimed by the tumultuous waters of the Pacific, but over 1,000 lives have been lost on the northern Oregon Coast alone due to the unfavorable weather, dangerous coastline, and treacherous river crossings seafarers dealt with year-round, but especially in winter.

The *Lupatia* was known as a bark ship, or a ship with three masts, and wrecked a mere three weeks before Tillamook Rock Lighthouse went into full operation. Capt. Wheeler, who was in charge of construction of the lighthouse, roused his crew when startled by the sound of voices outside.

"The weather was thick, with a strong southwest gale," says Lewis and Dryden's "Marine History of the Pacific Northwest." "They at once sighted the red light of a ship inshore, and heard a terror-stricken voice give the order, 'Hard aport.'"

Wheeler ordered his crew to place lanterns in the uncompleted tower and began building a bonfire to warn the vessel of the rock only 600 feet away. Unfortunately for the *Lupatia* it was too late.

"Her yards were aback, and she seemed to be working out of the dangerous place, but soon afterward the red light disappeared, and no further cries were heard from those on board," says Lewis and Dryden.

The lighthouse workers were optimistic that perhaps some crew had survived the incident, but the following day 12 dead bodies were discovered on the nearby beach. Whining amongst them was the dog, more fortunate than his human companions.

Not every shipwreck on the Oregon Coast claimed the lives of sailors. In fact, the wreck of the *Peter Iredale* in 1906 left all 27 people on board unharmed, including two stowaways.

By the time the *Peter Iredale* reached Tillamook Head in October 1906, Tillamook Rock Lighthouse had been in operation for nearly 25 years. The ship's lookout sighted the lighthouse at 3:20 a.m., so the course was altered, but

the wind shifted, a heavy north-west squall struck the vessel, and the ship ran aground.

"We consider that everything was done by the master to get his ship out of danger," said P.L. Cherry of the British Vice-Consul in November 1906. "The set of the current and the sudden shift of the wind drove him so close in that in the act of wearing around to get his ship's head off shore, she stranded."

Most coastal residents have seen the wreckage of the *Peter Iredale* at Fort Stevens State Park, formerly a military outpost, where the rescued sailors from the wreck were fed, clothed and housed after the incident.

Not all shipwrecks occurred in poor weather, however. On Oct. 1, 1913, a beautiful day with calm seas and nearly no clouds, the *Glenesslin*, bound for Portland, was sighted sailing unusually close to Nehalem shores.

Cannon Beach's Paul Bartels recounted his impressions of the wreck in a 1978 oral history.

"The *Glenesslin* came in at Neahkahnie Mountain," Bartels

told the Cannon Beach History Center. "I took the picture with one of those old-timey cameras, you know the kind that you have to throw the black rag over your head."

"The day was nice and the old sea captain, he had been hittin' it pretty heavy, because they were coming ashore. You see, they wanted to get rid of the whiskey," Bartels said. "They were all pretty well loaded up, and he said he was going to lay down a while. At 2 o'clock he was woken up and they had changed course. They were coming up on the rock and there was no wind so they just plowed right into the rock."

The Court of Inquiry held to determine the cause of the wreck confirmed the suspicions of helpful beachgoers who helped tie lines to the rocks on shore and pull the 21 drunken crewmen to safety.

There was no mistaking the odor of liquor on many of the survivors, reports said.

For his negligence, Capt. Owen Williams, master of the ship, as well as his second mate John Colefield, were suspended for six months. The first mate



Submitted Photos

Glenesslin

F.W. Harwarth got off with a reprimand.

No matter the cause of the tragic ends of the thousands of vessels that have met their deaths on the Oregon Coast, one thing is for sure, the

Graveyard of the Pacific holds the ships' ghost stories somewhere in her stormy depths.

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



Peter Iredale



9-1-WHAT?

THE BEST OF THE WORST CALLS TO ASTORIA 911 DISPATCH

Chicken at large, Part II

Chicken can't be stopped ...
From 911 dispatch: "Chicken at large in U.S. Bank parking lot. Chicken has been roaming for three months, and is too hard to catch."

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.

9-1-WHAT? Following

{7/21 @ 5:49 p.m.} Report of someone throwing apples at vehicles. #Astoria

7:19 AM - 27 Jul 2016

9-1-WHAT? Following

{7/22 @ 9 a.m.} Report of a naked man in the men's restroom. #Warrenton

7:19 AM - 27 Jul 2016

9-1-WHAT? Following

{7/25 @ 10:50 a.m.} Chicken at large in U.S. Bank parking lot. Chicken has been roaming for three months, and is too hard to catch. #Astoria

7:28 AM - 27 Jul 2016

9-1-WHAT? Following

{7/23 @ 10:26 p.m.} Complaint of loud subjects. Deputy arrived to a bachelorette party. They were not loud, advised of complaint. #Seaside

7:26 AM - 27 Jul 2016

9-1-WHAT? Following

{7/25 @ 12:49 p.m.} Car wash has stopped working and caller's truck is stuck inside. #Astoria

7:30 AM - 27 Jul 2016

our coast

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