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# COMMUNITY

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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## PIECES OF HISTORY



**Y**ou know you're from Astoria when you dig up a coin from the Qianlong Emperor's time," Don Kelly posted on the "You Know You're From Astoria Oregon When ..." Facebook page. "This coin is older than the settlement itself." If you will recall, Astoria was settled in 1811.

Mr. Wikipedia says: "The Qianlong Emperor (September 1711 – February 1799) was the sixth emperor of the Manchu-led Qing dynasty, and the fourth Qing emperor to rule over China proper." (<http://tinyurl.com/qingking>)

Don found the coin in Astoria with his metal detector — a hobby he's pursued since he was 14 — but don't bother asking him where. "Exact site is a secret!" he declared.

Is the coin valuable? According to CoinQuest.com, a coin like this one in great shape was worth around \$160 in 2009. Rare mints could be worth \$1,000. However, coins that are heavily worn are only worth from \$2 to \$10 (<http://tinyurl.com/qingcoin>).

So how did such an old coin wind up in Astoria? Especially since the Chinese came to Astoria to work in the canneries much later, in the 1870s (<http://tinyurl.com/astchina>). Two possibilities come to mind: Perhaps it belonged to a long-ago Astoria coin collector; or, maybe it was brought here on one of the merchant ships that passed this way, starting in the late 1700s. Maybe even Capt. Robert Gray's ship, the Columbia Rediviva, here in 1792 (<http://tinyurl.com/capt-gray>). After all, he traded with both the local Native Americans and China. It's fun to speculate, anyway.

"It's the second Chinese coin I have dug up in Astoria," Don recalled. "The first one I found was dated 1820-1850. The Chinese had a major influence in this area, and I'm honored to find these rare pieces of history!"

## FINN FILMS



**E**very now and then someone posts a link on Facebook to the series of short films, "Finns in the U.S. in 1948" (<http://tinyurl.com/finnfilm>). Of particular interest, naturally, is the episode about the West Coast, and Astoria, specifically. A screen shot from that episode is shown.

The film is narrated in Finnish, but never fear, there are English subtitles, starting with: "Astoria is a center for Finns in the West. The first Finns came here in the 1860s. About 4,000 Finns live in Astoria. You can go shopping in Finnish ..."

Scenes of the fishermen with their boats and nets, horse seining, both men and women working in a cannery and on the old Astoria docks are all nostalgic glimpses of Astoria almost 70 years ago. For a history bon-bon, take the time to watch.

## PULL UP AND TUNE IN



**I**f you haven't checked this out yet, and your Halloween spirit is clamoring for some fun, try this: **Mike and Teale Adelman**, who own the **Daniel Knight Warren house**, 107 N.E. Skipanon Drive in Warrenton (pictured), are putting on an amazing **Halloween show** every night from 6 to 10 p.m. daily. It's got a kazillion lights, all synchronized to music — just pull up and tune the car radio to 95.7 FM to get the full effect.

"As always," Teale requests, "respect each other (and our neighbors, who deal with our obsession)." Boo!

## IT'S IN THE BAG



**I**am trying to date this bread bag (pictured) I found partially buried in the sand under Breakaway Lodge in Gearhart," Jeff Johnson wrote. "The sand under the building seems to preserve things well, and can mummify dead squirrels. The structure was built in 1924 as St. Margaret's by the Sea Convent, a summer retreat for Holy Names Sisters. It was built right over the dune vegetation, and the roots are still well-preserved."

A little research revealed the **Butter-Nut Baking Co.** was owned by **James H. Kelley** and **B. Rupert Koble-garde**, a name that can be found in Portland even now (<http://tinyurl.com/butterbake>).

The Ear suspected the bakery bag probably dates prior to the 1922 fire — which started under nearby **Thiel Brothers pool room**, at what was then 532 Commercial St., and wiped out most of downtown Astoria (<http://tinyurl.com/Ast1922>). If so, 616 Commercial St. would not be the same address now, as the city was re-platted after the fire.

"You are right," **Liisa Penner**, archivist at the Clatsop County Historical Society, said. "The numbers roughly doubled. 616 Commercial would be about 1440 Commercial today." (Sweet Relief Dispensary is now at 1444 Commercial St.)

"At 616 Commercial (the bakery) would have burned in the December 1922 fire ..." Liisa explained. "The 1920-1921 Astoria City Directory lists Dixie Bakery at 626 Commercial, close to the 616 address, maybe adjacent to it." After the fire, "in the September 1924 Astoria Phone Book, the **Oregon-Dixie Baking Co.** was located at 221 Seventh St., almost across the street from what is now the Flavel Carriage House. ... It is later listed at the southwest corner of Seventh and Duane." So, the bag definitely predates the 1922 fire.

Bonus history tidbit: Also before the fire, "in 1904, **Bridget Grant**, who is noted for her shanghaiing activities, was living at 614 Commercial St., upstairs," Liisa noted, "and was still living there, according to the 1920-1921 directory, almost over the Dixie Bakery."

The only mystery remaining is how the bread bag wound up in Gearhart. A picnic at the beach, perhaps?

## LOCAL BREVITIES

**N**ewsy tidbits from the **Saturday, Oct. 13, 1888** edition of **The Daily Morning Astorian**:

- The individual with the dark and roguish eye who stole three suits of clothes from Flynn's Tailor Shop last Thursday night is still at large.

- **Frank Surprenant** has been appointed a trustee of the Northwestern funeral directors association. They will raise rates January 1st. If you want cheap burial, now is the time to croak.

**Note:** Mr. Surprenant built a morgue on the first floor of his "undertaking establishment," F.H. Surprenant & Co. in January 1888, the same year he ran for county coroner on the Republican ticket. It was a Republican victory all around, even the presidency (Benjamin Harrison), so he probably won.

However, in February 1885, he almost required the services of an undertaker, himself. He left Fort Stevens in a rowboat, but one of his oars broke. The current pulled him toward the deadly Columbia River bar, but luckily he was rescued by the crew of the Geo. S. Homer.

- Many of the **Mishawaka** people who realize the need of good roads have organized in road district No. 13. ... They have levied a \$5 assessment as a starter, and the intention is to build a passable road to Astoria as far as practicable. When people take hold of a thing themselves, there is some chance of having it done.

**Note:** The town of Elsie actually began as Mishawaka in 1876, but has been Elsie since 1892, according to "In Search of Western Oregon," by Ralph Friedman (<http://tinyurl.com/mishaOR>).

- A San Francisco woman sued her dressmaker for damages for furnishing her with a bustle which burst with a muffled report when sat upon, and the court awarded a judgment of \$11.50 (about \$286 now). A woman may not care how loud her clothes are, but she wants a still bustle.

**Note:** The bustle was a ridiculous fashion rage, a cage-like contraption that attached at a woman's waist and extended out past her derriere, creating a most peculiar profile (see drawing). One can only imagine how disconcerting an exploding bustle might be.



## TREASURE TROVE



**I**f you like any or all of these — books, libraries, Astoria history, treasure hunts — then I urge you to take a **tour of the library basement** led by **Jimmy Pearson**, the **Astoria Public Library** director," Laurie Caplan wrote.

"Oh my gosh, what a treat! He and his staff — assisted by archivists, **John Goodenberger**, other local experts, the college's historic preservation students, and others — are discovering, cataloging, and rejoicing in a treasure trove of furniture, documents and memorabilia."

A Purple Heart citation is just one of the many treasures that has been found, along with wills, letters, old photos and fishermen's ledgers. Pictured, a 1728 family Bible, courtesy of Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian. Interested in a tour? There are only two slots left: At 11 a.m. Oct. 23, and at 1 p.m. Oct. 30. You can sign up by going to the library or by calling 503-325-7323.

"And, Jimmy is a wonderful guide," Laurie added. "I think our tour of 10 would've stayed in the basement for way longer just to share in his excitement."

## A CHALLENGING RIDE



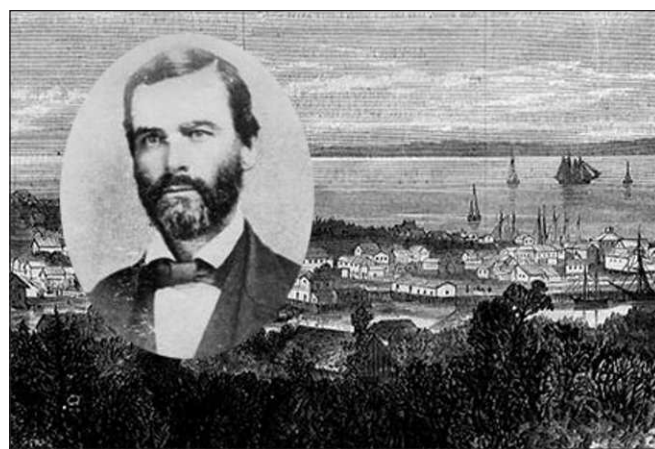
**A**storian **Peter Marsh** is back from his four-week bicycle journey, having completed the second leg of his travels, the "**Kansas City to Salt Lake City**" ride.

"I biked from Kansas City to Wyoming, and stopped in Rawlins (elevation 6,900 feet) for the weekend before revising my plan because of early snowfall in the high country on the way to the Tetons," he wrote. "Instead I rode west along Interstate 80 in Wyoming for 250 miles to Salt Lake City."

"Overall, it was a challenging ride along the historic route blazed across the country by the wagon trains, Pony Express, railroad, etc., with lots of small museums to explore. I didn't pay attention to the distance, but it appears to be about 1,100 miles — the same as I rode in 2016 from Virginia to Kansas."

Welcome home! By the way, Peter's touring bike is now on display at Bikes & Beyond.

## THE OLNEY LOTTERY



**D**id you know that in 1867, several Astoria families acquired their land through a lottery? **Judge Cyrus Olney** (pictured) had acquired the John McClure land claim, known as McClure's Astoria, which consisted of several lots around town.

The judge, wanting to encourage residential development, came up with the scheme, known locally as the **Olney Lottery**. Tickets cost \$50 each (about \$790 now), and entitled the ticket holder to one Astoria city lot — which one, was a matter of chance — plus a shot at winning the grand prize, two lots and McClure's original house. The lottery was considered a great success, and several houses were built in the eastern half of McClure's old claim (<http://tinyurl.com/judgeo1>).

At Olney's death only three years later in 1870, one biographer noted "he has accomplished much for (the Astoria) community, and there his loss will be deeply felt (<http://tinyurl.com/olney2>)."

## COMMUNITY NOTES

### SATURDAY

**Lower Columbia R/C Society** — 8:30 a.m., back room at Uptown Cafe, 1639 S.E. Ensign Lane, Warrenton. Local Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) chartered radio control model aircraft club meet for breakfast and business. All model aircraft enthusiasts are welcome. For information, call 503-458-5196 or 503-325-0608.

**Clatsop County Genealogical Society** — 11 a.m., 350 Niagara Ave.

New genealogy methods shared to help get a family tree started. Stephanie Miller unveils a new book, "Early Clatsop County Schools." Information on inexpensive autosomal DNA testing is available. All are welcome.

**Chinook Indian Nation Council Meeting** — 11 a.m., Netul Room, Fort Clatsop, 92343 Fort Clatsop Road. Meeting open to all tribal members; attendees are reminded to bring a potluck item. No refrigeration or cooking facilities.

For questions, call the tribal office at 360-875-6670.

**Sit & Stitch** — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Homespun Quilts & Yarn, 108 10th St. Bring knitting, crochet or other needlework projects to this community stitching time. All skill levels welcome.

**Pug Socializing Club** — 1 p.m., Carruthers Park, Warrenton. For pugs and their owners. For information, call Dave Kinney at

415-827-5190. Join online at <http://tinyurl.com/socialpugs>

**Columbia Northwestern Model Railroad Club** — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Carter at 503-325-0757.

**Spinning Circle** — 1 to 3 p.m., Astoria Fiber Arts Academy, 1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to <http://astoriafiberarts.com>

### SUNDAY

**Cannon Beach American Legion Women's Auxiliary Breakfast** — 9 to 11:30 a.m., American Legion, 1216 S. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach.

**Line Dancing** — 5:30 to 8 p.m., Seaside American Legion, 1315 Broadway. For information, call 503-738-5111. No cost; suggested \$5 tip to the instructor.

**Seekers Group** — 6 to 7:30 p.m., Pioneer Presbyterian Church,

33324 Patriot Way, Warrenton. Group discusses issues facing religious faith in the modern secular world. All are welcome. For information, call 503-861-2421.

### MONDAY

**Chair Exercises for Seniors** — 9 to 9:45 a.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. For information, call 503-325-3231.

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