

CONTACT US
ewilson@dailyastorian.com
(971) 704-1718

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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

IREDALE AGROUND



Monday marks the 115th anniversary of the wreck of the steel British bark **Peter Iredale**, which ran aground on **Clatsop Spit** at 7:45 a.m. **Oct. 25, 1906**, with 27 (including two stowaways) aboard. The next day the grounding was, of course, the lead story in **The Morning Astorian**.

Capt. H. Lawrence became disoriented in the fog and mist during a heavy storm, and sailed too close to the shore. By the time the lookout called “breakers dead ahead,” it was too late.

When the ship hit the sand, the force was so great, most of the spars snapped immediately, and the sails sagged desolately. The anchors loosened, and hung by their chains from the bow. She was stuck hard and fast.

Capt. Lawrence gave the order to abandon ship, but before he had completed his instructions, the **Point Adams lifesaving crew**, under the command of **Capt. Wicklund**, had pulled up alongside in a surfboat. Before long, everyone aboard the Iredale was safely ashore. They were only able to save the ship’s chronometers and instruments.

The timely arrival of the Point Adams crew was the result of a herculean effort. It was made possible because **Col. Walker** at **Fort Stevens** sent a team of mules to Point Adams so the lifesaving boat could be dragged 2 miles across the “soggy” sand to a spot where they could launch it for the Iredale rescue. Incredibly, they arrived at the wreck almost within the hour.

Most of the crew enjoyed Col. Walker’s hospitality for a bit at Fort Stevens until they were dispatched by train to Astoria, where they were given board and lodging, and had a visit from **Dr. Holt**, the government quarantine officer. Three of the crew stayed at Fort Stevens, and four stayed to keep an eye on the wreck.

At the end of the day, the ship was lost, but all hands were safe and sound. It was her ninth voyage to the North Coast. (Photo by Elleda Wilson)

MOBY RICK

Chinook Observer editor **Matt Winters** spotted this photo by **Kendra Smith** posted on the **The Dalles Happenings** Facebook page, and passed it along.

No, she’s not an albino raccoon, because she has a black nose and dark paws — instead, she’s **leucistic**. The **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife** describes leucism as “a lack of pigment that keeps an animal from having a uniform coloration.”

The photos of the critter were sent to state Fish and Wildlife, along with the question of how unusual sighting this raccoon in the wild is. State Fish and Wildlife replied on their Instagram page:

“... When this raccoon showed up in our ... messages, we started calling it **Moby Rick** for obvious reasons ... So, how rare is this? It’s difficult to say. There are probably many leucistic raccoons, but ... few would make it to adulthood ...

“No, really, how rare is this? In short, nobody at ODFW has seen a nearly completely white raccoon in the wild before.”



CREATURE COMFORTS



Also on **Oct. 26, 1906**, The Astorian revealed that news of the imminent grounding of the **Peter Iredale** made the coastal rounds quickly, “in some telepathic way,” and people began to swarm to the wreck’s location, despite the awful weather, to help, or just watch.

Astorians were not among them, however, although several took the train down to Fort Stevens. However, the prospect of a 2-mile walk from the train stop to the wreck, on the wet sand, in a full-blown gale, dampened their enthusiasm, and the rest of the trip was abandoned.

Those who did arrive wanting to assist at the wreck site had honorable enough intentions, but unfortunately, most of them came loaded with large and small **bottles of liquor**.

“Liquor ... under certain circumstances may have done a certain amount of good,” The Astorian noted, “but ... in the instance under consideration, was altogether too generously applied, and to the ultimate discomfiture of several of the Iredale’s crew, who were too drunk to make good with the rest of their fellows in reaching this city.” Presumably, this refers to the three who were left at Fort Stevens.

“A bottle of whiskey is the most tempting of all creature comforts to a sailor,” The Astorian proclaimed, “afloat or ashore, safe, or in a stress, and this was proven all too plainly yesterday.”

A FLUKE



Fun rerun: **Rachel Krotzer** was mentioned in a Clatskanie Chief article as having seen a funnel cloud over Clatskanie. She took photos (one is shown) and film of it from her house on the top of Stewart Creek Road.

It happened around 6 p.m. July 17, while Rachel was sitting at the kitchen table, facing a window, talking on the phone. Even without her glasses, she could tell something strange was happening in the sky.

Rachel saw the funnel for about three minutes, but she heard from others that it lasted about 10 minutes. While she was watching, it constantly changed shape, but never touched the ground.

“It’s kinda scary,” Rachel admitted to the Ear. “What a fluke to see that.”

Her photos were featured on KATU News. “My son, Iolaus, and daughter, Lillian, thought it was really cool to hear my name on the news,” she added.

“I’m now constantly looking at the view for more than sunsets or rain warnings.” (*In One Ear*, 7/29/2011)

DASTARDLY OUTRAGE



On **Oct. 27, 1906**, The Morning Astorian reported that the Peter Iredale had been “**plundered**” by a gang of 12 “**West Side** (aka Warrenton) **toughs**” on the 25th, at low tide, calling the theft “one of the most dastardly outrages ever committed in Clatsop County.”

Capt. Wicklund of Point Adams put four men in two shifts on guard at the ship. The thieves were aware that the watch changed around midnight, so they hopped on board during the shift change and “commenced their depredations.”

They grabbed anything loose, ransacked the personal trunks of the captain and crew, and the desks and lockers, and made off with over \$1,000 worth of valuables (about \$30,000 now) before leaving the ship.

They tarried too long, and the incoming tide was strong when they headed for shore. One of the 12, **Malcolm Grider**, was crippled, and couldn’t keep up. Despite his cries for help, the others ignored him, and he drowned. Capt. Wicklund discovered the body the following morning.

An investigation revealed the names of the other 11 involved. The thievery would be construed as “voluntary salvage” if all of the items were returned; if not, “a term in the penitentiary” was in order.

LIFE IS PRECIOUS



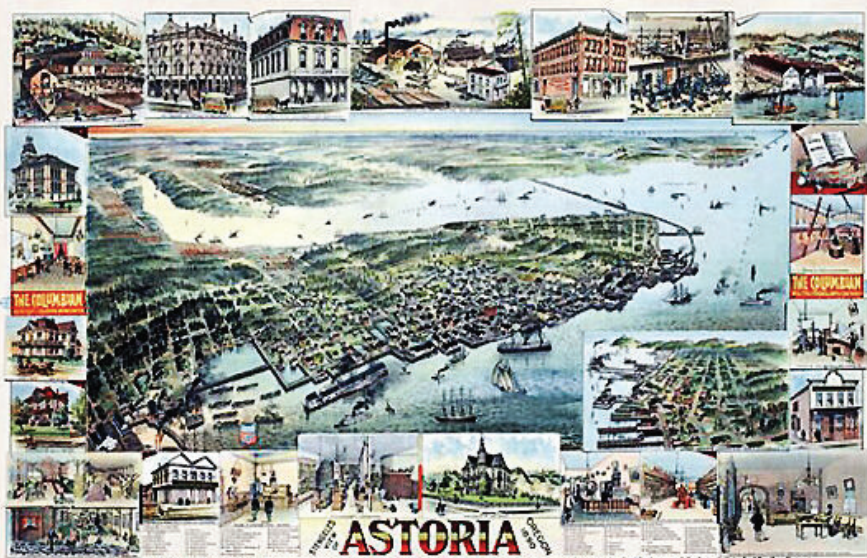
A Pacific Northwest oddity: **Ruth Hamilton**, of Golden, British Columbia, was fast asleep when she was awakened by a loud crash, and debris landing on her face, the **Pipestone Flyer** reports.

After jumping up and turning on the light, she saw that on her pillow, near where her head was a minute ago, there was a rock. There was also a large hole in her ceiling. To her amazement, the rock turned out to be a **meteorite**. Her photos are shown. She loaned the rock to Ontario’s Western University for study.

“When we first heard this story we were pretty surprised, but also pretty convinced that it was a meteorite, and we certainly had a pretty good idea of the fireball that was related to it,” Peter Brown, a researcher at the university, said. “The chances of a meteorite big enough to penetrate a roof and hit a bed are about one and 100 billion per year.”

“I’m just totally amazed over the fact that it is a star that came out of the sky ...” Hamilton marveled. “... Life is precious, and it could be gone at any moment, even when you think you are safe and secure in your bed. I hope I never ever take it for granted again.”

NO FURTHER DANGER



A morsel to consider from **The Morning Astorian**, **Oct. 21, 1899**:

• No further danger of the **smallpox** spreading is apprehended, and the school board has decided to remove the prohibition against unvaccinated pupils next Monday. **Mr. Sloop**, the patient, is getting along finely.

Note: Oregon and the Pacific Northwest were not exempt from major diseases in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and were subjected to the ravages of smallpox, malaria,

measles, influenza, cholera and typhoid fever — some recurring periodically, some annually. The first documented smallpox virus epidemic in Oregon occurred around 1781; western Oregon experienced a smallpox epidemic in 1870.

However, according to the Public Health Reports (1896-1970), there were only seven smallpox cases in Oregon in 1899 — as opposed to Texas, which had 188. Only one of those seven was reported in Astoria, on Oct. 11. It was undoubtedly the recuperating Mr. Sloop.

A BOW OF GRATITUDE



I would like to give a shout-out and a standing ovation for the **Warrenton Fire Department**,” Warrenton resident **Sam Blair** wrote.

“Recently, my rescue cat, ‘**Moose**,’ either fell or jumped into the furnace ducts for my house, which was being remodeled,” Sam explained. “Nobody I called had any ideas of what to do to save him from whatever fate awaits a cat in the bowels of a three-story home.

“In desperation, I called 911, and explained I had a potential life-threatening situation involving a cat. The dispatcher couldn’t have been nicer, and said she would have someone there soon.

“Within 12-13 minutes, two of Warrenton’s finest were in the driveway, lights blinking in a

massive truck. Bottom line, after over an hour of various attempts, they cut a hole in the soffit to get access to the ductwork, then cut a hole in the ductwork to give Moose a place for egress.

“**Ron Dugan** of Dugan’s Heating Solutions by now was also adding excellent ideas. Bottom line, I had to remove part of the furnace, exposing the end of the duct system, and there Moose was, within reach. Dusty, whining and wide eyed, Moose waked away.

“Just wanted to give a huge thank you to the Warrenton Fire Department, and Fire Chief **Brian Alsbury** and volunteer firefighter **John Sleutel**, for their truly incredible commitment and dedication to service.”

“The community, and all our cats, are in safe hands,” Sam added. “A deep, dusty bow of gratitude!”