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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## AROUND TOWN



From **The Daily Morning Astorian, Nov. 11, 1882:**  
• Those who have not yet seen the **comet** should embrace the opportunity afforded by these crisp, starlight mornings. The celestial wanderer shows above the pines that skirt the southern horizon ...

**Note:** This would have been the “Super Comet,” the **Great September Comet of 1882**, which Space.com notes was probably “the brightest comet ever seen,” even visible in broad daylight in September. It broke up into at least four pieces, and could be seen in the morning sky for months.

From **The Daily Morning Astorian, Nov. 12, 1889:**

• ... About the **biggest** thing in the way of **spuds** seen in these parts yet (is from) **J.F. Warren** of Knappa ... they are 15 inches long and 3.5 inches through, and are dry and mealy.

**Note:** Guinness World Records judges by weight, and the heaviest is around 11 pounds, but the New York Post says there’s a new contender from New Zealand, **Doug the Ugly Spud**, weighing in at a bit over 17 pounds.

From **The Daily Morning Astorian, Nov. 13, 1888:**

• The British ship **Maxwell**, 14 days from San Francisco, arrived yesterday afternoon ... She is **324 feet** in length. Some say she is the largest ship that ever crossed the Columbia River Bar.

**Note:** The container ships we see so often anchored off Astoria or heading upriver “often exceed **900 feet**,” according to the Columbia River Pilots.

## CRUISING LARGE



As if cruise ships weren’t gargantuan enough already, **Royal Caribbean** just took delivery of what is now the world’s **largest cruise ship, Wonders of the Sea** (pictured, courtesy of Royal Caribbean).

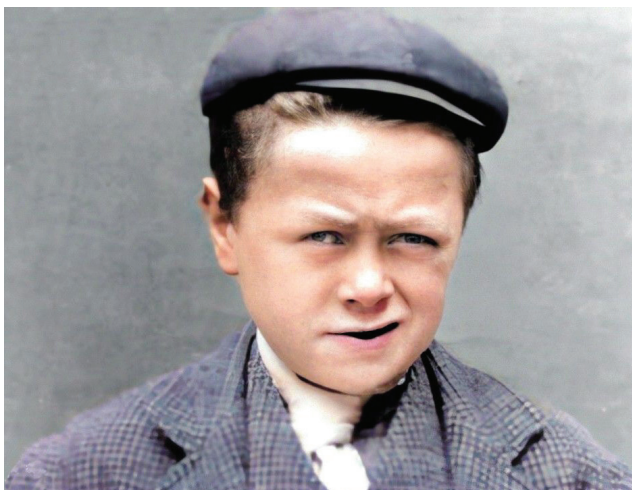
At 1,188 feet long, with 18 decks, she can accommodate a maximum of 5,734 passengers (Warrenton has a population of almost 6,000), along with 2,300 crew members.

She will begin service next March, sailing from Florida. During the summer, she will move to sail from European locations.

Photos on the Royal Caribbean blog show the amenities, which include a boardwalk and carousel, a pool and sports zone, Central Park (trees and all), the Royal Promenade through the shopping zone, a casino, a youth zone, a spa and fitness club, and more. It would be easy to get lost, especially with 11 bars on board.

Astoria is not currently on her route, but maybe someday.

## BAD BOYS



In **The Daily Astorian, Nov. 12, 1884**, an age-old lament, “Concerning the boys,” by **T. T. Caraniss**, hoping to “remedy the evil”:

“The engine house of No. 2 is a place of resort at night for boys who should be at home. It would be doing justice to the parents and the boys, if those who are in authority would stop this practice.

“There are fruit and candy shops also, where dice throwing is done for cigarettes, nuts, etc. The boys of this town are thus taking their first lessons in gambling, and thus unfitting themselves for business, as businessmen will not employ boys who remain out late at night in bad company, or who gamble.

“... I make the suggestion that the city council take some steps to aid parents in ... much-needed police regulation in this town, where there are so many places of resort which are disreputable ...”

## ASTOR GOSSIP



While researching a shipwreck, the following popped up in a **September 1883** edition of **The Daily Astorian**: “Gossip About the Astor Family Name.”

• The New York correspondent of The Philadelphia Record says the Astors do not appear to have kept a very correct list of births, marriages and deaths during the first half century of their stay in this country ...

... Mr. **John Jacob Astor** (pictured) seems to be unaware that the family name was originally “**Ash-door**.” An advertisement in the New York Gazette of April 11, 1783, mentions a “dark brown horse, about 15 hands high,” as stolen from the first immigrant of that name.

“Three guineas reward for the horse, saddle and bridle. For the thief, horse, saddle and bridle, 10 guineas will be paid by **Henry Ashdoor**.”

Henry died childless and left half a million dollars (\$13.6 million now) acquired by the art and mystery of butchering to his nephew, **William B. Astor** (1792–1875, John Jacob Astor’s son and heir).

The change of name appears to have been made prior to 1790, for in May of that year the inhabitants in the neighborhood of the Fly Market petitioned that the stall of Henry Astor, butcher, be removed to the lower market ...

**Note:** Henry Astor (1754–1833) was John Jacob’s older brother, and came to New York with one of the Hessian regiments hired by the British to fight in the Revolutionary War.

The brothers were born in Germany, and their father, Johann, was also a butcher. John Jacob joined Henry in New York in 1783.

What about the name Ashdoor? Well, apparently it wasn’t gossip at all. According to a 1913 issue of Americana magazine:

On Sept. 1, 1784, land records show “Henry Ashdoor bought three lots ... for £360. He signed his name Ashdoor to an advertisement of a reward for a stolen horse in April 1783.

“He ... was the first of this German name in New York, now so well known under its Anglicized form of Astor.” (bit.ly/JJAfam)

## SAVING FALLS OF CLYDE



FALLS OF CLYDE

From **The Daily Astorian Nov. 11, 1893:**

• The four-masted ship **Falls of Clyde** came down the river at 3 p.m. yesterday ... She will go to sea today.

**Note:** Believe it or not, this iron-hulled tall ship, built in **1878** at the port of **Glasgow, Scotland**, is still afloat, and moored in **Honolulu**.

But not for long, if the **Honolulu Harbors Division** has anything to say about it. They impounded the ship in 2016, calling it “derelict,” and unsuccessfully tried to auction it off.

Their plan is to scuttle (sink) this historic vessel, which has been a Honolulu landmark and museum ship. In 1989, she was even named a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

She was the first, and now last, of eight sister ships; the others were lost at sea or destroyed during the world wars. The Falls of Clyde is also one of the last sail-driven oil tankers. She is pictured in her former glory.

After a close call in 2008, she was rescued when a local group, the Friends of Falls of Clyde, a nonprofit, was formed to buy her. But now the vessel has come full circle, is in poor shape again, and is threatened with being scuttled again.

However, another organization, the **Falls of Clyde International LTD**, in Scotland, wants to save her, and is raising money to do so. If you’re interested, you can donate at foci.scot

Saving her from being destroyed — which is imminent, if the Harbors Division auctions her off — would then mean getting her back home to Scotland.

The plan is to rebuild her and restore the rigging, making her a green energy teaching ship to “sail the oceans of the world.”

## A RARE EVENT



‘On Friday evening, Oct. 29, around 7:10 to 7:15 p.m., I was out raking leaves off the driveway in the dark.” **Wallace Hummasti** wrote, “when I saw a very bright meteor-like object descending toward the northeast as it burned up in the earth’s atmosphere.

“It was so bright that it lit up the ground around me as if it was daylight. I wonder if anyone else saw this object, and if part of it might have reached the Earth’s surface intact.”

Actually, it was a **fireball**, and 36 people in Washington and Oregon reported seeing it to the American Meteor Society, and the International Meteor Association.

The meteor society says while 10 to 50 meteorite drops happen over the earth daily, two thirds happen over ocean, and another one fourth over uninhabited lands, which leaves only about 2 to 12 meteorite events discoverable by people ... if they look up. There’s no word on the Oct. 29 fireball landing, but just so you know, the largest meteorite found on the ground weighs 66 tons.

As for fireballs, the meteor society says “the brighter the fireball, the more rare is the event,” making the one Wallace Hummasti saw rare, indeed. (Image courtesy of the American Meteor Society)

## LITTLE BITS



**Robert Dziak**, a scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, who is based at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, has wanted to find out if trees in Oregon were affected by the **1700 earthquake and tsunami** for the last decade, according to an Oregon State University press release.

The challenge was to find old-growth trees in the tsunami inundation zone. Luckily, a stand of **Douglas firs** was discovered just south of **Newport**, about three quarters of a mile inland, which had somehow escaped being logged. A tsunami model showed the area could have been under almost 33 feet of water during the 1700 inundation.

Using core samples to examine the rings (which didn’t harm the trees), they discovered the firs dated back to around 1670. Dziak found what he was looking for: In 1700 the trees grew “significantly” slower.

“Getting these little bits of the picture,” Dziak explained, “helps us understand what we might expect when the next ‘big one’ hits.”

## GOING HOLLYWOOD?



**Fun rerun:** The internet music sensation “Gangnam Style” by Korean rapper **Psy**, real name Park Jae-Sang — with more than 150 million views on YouTube — has sent the **University of Oregon Duck**, pictured with several cronies, over the edge.

Astorian **Andrea Larson Perez** pointed out to the Ear that the Duck, **Oregon Cheer**, Sluggo, Bigfoot and a watermelon (honest) are all listed as stars in a tribute/parody to the catchy tune, also on YouTube, which has garnered more than 3 million views.

The Duck, disputing rumors of temporary insanity, claims the video was created as a result of being bored one day.

Psy wound up with a high-powered Los Angeles music talent agency, prompting the burning question of the week: Will the Duck go Hollywood, too? (*In One Ear, 9/14/2012*)

**Note:** Apparently not. But ... the Duck’s video now has almost 7.6 million views; Psy’s has been viewed an astronomical 4.2 billion (yes, billion) times.