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BANDON, OREGON  
Capital \$25,000.00

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## BANDON IN EARLY DAYS

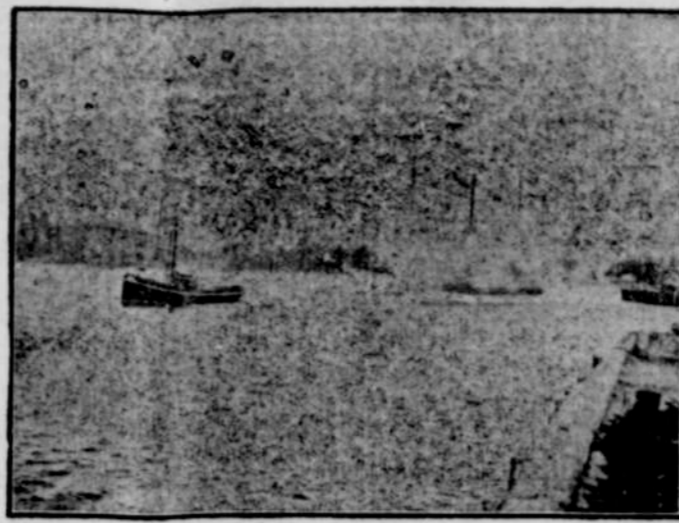
An Article Written by the late George Bennett, taken from the "Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties."

The first donation claim taken up south of the Coquille river on the coast and extending almost as far south as Port Orford, was taken in the year 1853 by Thompson Lowe, better known as Tommy Lowe, who came here from New Orleans; and the second by Chris Long, a Canadian. Tommy Lowe's was the first house built in all the extensive country just mentioned, and Chris Long's the second; both of these were on the Bandon Beach. After these, and at the close of the same year, the site of the town of Bandon was taken up, not for there was none; but because it was a convenient place for a ferry, and from its admirable position for commercial purposes, must, in course of time, necessarily become very valuable. The first to occupy this was an Englishman named William Wyke-wike, alias Billy Buckhorn, and a man named James Sanders. They were succeeded by A. H. Thrift and Louis Turner. They sold out to Chris Long and Edward Fahy, and these to John Lewis and Neil. Lewis bought Neil out and was sole owner until 1886, when he disposed of his interest to Averill and Alberson; the latter sold to Averill who then became sole owner, but subsequently he disposed of a half interest to George Dyer. They divided, and Dyer became the owner of the town site. The first cattle introduced into this part of the country south of the Coquille river were brought here in '53 by Chris Long, all the way from Illinois. He arrived here with twenty-five cows, three yoke of oxen and two span of horses. The cows he sold at from \$65 to \$100 per head, a yoke of oxen for \$250, and a span of horses for \$350.

In 1858, Annie, eldest daughter of Judge D. J. Lowe, was born in April at Myrtle Grove, opposite where Parkersburg now stands. She was the first white child born on the Coquille. Her cousin, eldest daughter of her Uncle Yelveston M. Lowe, was the second.

It was in the summer of the year 1859 that the Twin Sisters sailed into the Coquille. She was of about twenty-ton burden and had a small stock of merchandise on board. She was received all along the line with vociferous applause. Everyone living on the banks, together with their wives and children, cheered and cheered until they were hoarse. They all naturally looked upon her as the forerunner of a big and prosperous future. She was like the gate of a great canal that was now opened for the first time to let in the flood. She showed unmistakably that vessels could not only sail into the river, but that in addition she could make her way up to the forks, a distance of forty miles, unaided. Hurray! Now there was an outlet for their agricultural produce, their coal, iron, copper, platinum and other minerals, and for an almost inexhaustible supply of the tallest and best firs, the largest and most beautiful myrtle, and the choicest white cedar in the world. Hon. Com. Commander. Capt. Backliff deserved every credit for his confidence, daring and skill. He was accompanied by his son William, and came here from the Unquaga, and so pleased was he with the prospects of the country that he sold out all his property there and permanently settled on the banks of the river near Myrtle Point, which he bought from Mr. Ben Figg. In 1873 George Bennett, accompanied by his two sons, Joseph W. Bennett and Geo. A. Bennett, and George M. Sealy, arrived at Empire City per steamer Eastport, Capt. Whitney. We left Bandon, Coos county, Ireland, on May 25th, 1873, per City of Baltimore, and arrived at New York in June, then soon left per rail for San Francisco, thence, as formerly stated, for Empire City. We were indeed to come here from what we had read of the climate and resources of this part of Oregon, and after an experience of many years, we believe there are few more equable climates to be found anywhere, and that its agricultural, mineral and other resources are all that could be reasonably required.

We left in a day or two after for the Coquille. We arrived in due time at the mouth of Bear creek, and from thence to Harry Baldwin's place; there we remained a few days and from thence to the ferry at the river mouth. This is now the site of the lively and flourishing town of Bandon. It was a gloomy looking place at that time. There was only one dwelling house there and that was a small one and situated at the foot of a small bluff. The adjoining lands were covered with dense brush; there were no wharfs lined with shipping laden with the choicest lumber, and with their big white sails lazily flapping in the breeze quietly await-



Tug Triumph Towing Schooner Ruby to Sea.

ing their turn to be towed out to sea. There were no hotels, no saloons, no drug store, or stores of any kind, no war-houses, there were no wagons heavily laden with exports and imports plodding their weary course to and fro, there was no sawmill or steamboat whistle to intrude upon the monotony of the solemn silence that prevailed everywhere; there was nothing save the croak of the raven as it slowly sailed through the sky, or the circles of whirling sea birds overhead, who dived down, and flying close to where we stood, uttered such untired, shrill and melancholy cries that were enough to surpass the feelings of the most resolute and fill the minds with erroneous forebodings. Nevertheless we thought it was just the very place for a town, and that it was only a question of time when there would be a large and thriving one there. It was the month of a large river, and all vessels passing in and out must pass its doors. The people, resident for a long way down the coast, must do all their exporting and importing there, and the immense country behind with its almost inexhaustible supply of rare and valuable timber, and its hills and vales, whose numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle would be fed when the country was cleared and settled, must have this as their shipping port. We made our way to Thompson Lowe's. He was the first settler here and took up the first donation claim. The moment we saw the place we liked it. After being reared and residing in a large town all our life, we could not bring ourselves to live in the brush, with nothing to meet our gaze from morn till night but incessant, eternal brush. Here was the ocean, the great commercial highway of the world before us by day, and its soft, gentle murmurs to soothe us to sleep at night. The soil here and along the coast is a black loam and is very productive. It is true that although Indian corn grows as high here as it does anywhere else, yet it doesn't mature well owing to our summer temperature being so low, but we grow citrons and muskmelons, the product of a semi-tropical climate alongside potatoes and turnips, the products of a temperate climate, cucumbers and tomatoes, pumpkins and squash, onions, parsnips, carrots, cauliflower and cabbage all grow on the same soil and side by side. We attribute all this not only to the soil but to the equability of our climate. The monthly mean difference between January, our coldest month in the year, and that of August, our hottest, being only thirteen degrees. This is probably owing to the north west wind which prevails in the summer, and the southwest wind in the winter, and very materially aided by the Japan current which flows in between Cape Arago and Blanco, and between whose arms, stretching out from the mainland, it is sheltered from all winds save the west, and also with considerable more warmth in its waters than it has in the colder and more exposed portions of the coast. We were greatly pleased with the beach and its surroundings. Its picturesque rocks, caves and arches, have very few, if any, rivals, and as a health resort we need only mention that the fresh and invigorating breeze that comes in there over an ocean expanse of nearly four thousand miles, the nearest land to it on the opposite side being Yokohama in Japan. We bought out Thompson Lowe and others, and also bought out the beach fronting on the lands of T. Lowe's donation claim from the government, and which was formerly a resort of black sand mines, and our purchases extended on the north up the line incorporating the town of Bandon, and in the south beyond the only road leading to the beach.

In 1874, a petition was sent to the County Court to have this portion of the Randolph precinct formed into a new precinct and for which we unanimously selected the name of Bandon. It was granted by the court and the first election held in June 1874. The judges were Judge M. Dyer, Olof Nelson and Louis Turner. The first man to record a vote was Col. Thos. Johnson. There were only 12 votes cast and nearly all of them for the democratic candidate.

In 1875, the first steamer, the Myrtle, was brought up from San Francisco by Capt. Farlong and Mr. Brag. This was the first steamer that ever ran regularly on the Coquille. She ran from Bandon to Myrtle Point one day and returned the next. Sometime previously Alfred Machado put a little boat, "The Mary" with some steam machinery in her, on the river but she did not make regular trips and soon ceased to run.

By this time several new colonists had arrived from old Bandon, in Ireland, and its vicinity, among whom were Joseph Williams and his three sons, Tom Popham, James Ellis, R. E. Shine, Mrs. E. M. Joyce, Miss K. Abbott and subsequently Dr. Vance and George Lombard.

In 1878 the first justice of the peace was duly sworn into office for the Bandon precinct. We were unanimously elected. Our duties were very light consisting principally of declarations and performing the marriage ceremony. A justice in the far west sometimes comes across an incident in the tying of the nuptial knot that is not uninteresting, such as the former husband objecting to the marriage, but also unusual and significant. A bride and bridegroom present themselves before us, and, having handed us the necessary documents, we commenced. As we were from the old country where great importance is attached to the ceremony, we always read most of the solemnization of matrimony according to the ritual of the Church of England, and particularly that portion of it where the woman promises to obey him, love, honor and keep him in sickness and health. When we were after repeating the words just mentioned in a slow and solemn manner, "Say judge hold on there awhile," exclaimed the fair bride, "as for keeping me 'tis he's bound to me, as for to love and honor I have no objection to do so, so long as he loves and honors me, but as for obey, obey be damned! Look here," said she in a very impressive manner and with an imperative shake of the head that could not be misunderstood, "I never obeyed any one since I was born and may I be damned if I am going to begin now." Here the bridegroom refused and told her he didn't want her to obey him unless she liked and turning to the astonished justice he asked him to leave that part out. He did so and the rest of the service proceeded smoothly and uninterrupted to the end.

In 1883 the first sawmill in Bandon or vicinity was erected by R. H. Ross. It was built about two miles inland and in a country abounding with the best spruce, fir and white cedar.

The first Christian church ever erected on the lower Coquille and in all that extensive country lying between it and California and how far down that way we are unable to say, was built in Bandon this year. It was consecrated on the 12th day of August, 1883, by Archbishop Seghers, assisted by the Rev. J. Heinrich, of Roseburg.

In 1886 our first newspaper "The Bandon Recorder" was established by P. O. Christrom and J. M. Upton.

In 1888 the first schooner was built at Bandon. She was the Ralph J. Long; cost \$7,000 and was owned by Chris Long, R. H. Ross, Chris Danielson and Capt. Jensen.

At the first election of town officers J. M. Upton was elected recorder; E. A. Bedillion marshal; the five trustees were W. H. Averill, Geo. M. Dyer, Robt. Walker, D. E. Stitt and J. B. Marshall.

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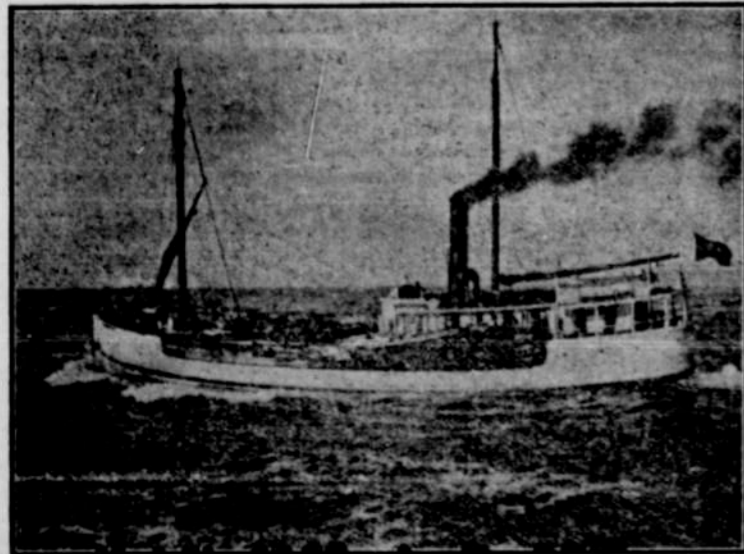
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