



CANNON BEACH HISTORY TIMELINE

Millions of years ago - Lava flows originating hundreds of miles to the east begin the formation of the rocky Oregon Coast, including notable landmarks like Haystack Rock.

15th Century – According to anthropological and archaeological research, the first ancestors of the Native American Tillamook people inhabited the areas in and around what is present day Cannon Beach.

1806 - On hearing news of a beached whale, a party from the Lewis and Clark expedition that was encamped at Fort Clatsop near present day Astoria, visited what is now Cannon Beach in hopes of acquiring blubber and oil. The expedition party, including Captain William Clark and Sacagawea, crossed over Tillamook Head and found the whale near the mouth of a creek Clark named Ecola, the native term for whale. Clark's journals and interaction with the native inhabitants provide the earliest documentation of the Tillamook people that inhabited the region. He described five Indian lodges along the creek.

1846 – The USS Shark shipwrecked while crossing the treacherous Columbia River bar. One portion of the shipwreck containing three cannons drifted south and was found washed ashore in the area of present day Arch Cape. Some wood, iron and copper was recovered from the portion of the shipwreck, but the cannons were lost again after being covered with sand.

Mid-1800s – The first land claims were made in Cannon Beach, then known as Elk Creek, though access to the area was still limited to primitive trails from Seaside.

1880 – Construction began on Tillamook Rock Lighthouse.

1881 – Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was lit for the first time and was, at the time, the most expensive West Coast lighthouse ever built.

1891 – James P. Austin built the Austin House, the first hotel and post office in the area at present day Arch Cape and named the postal stop Cannon Beach due to the story of the lost cannons.

1898 – A cannon from the shipwrecked USS Shark was rediscovered in Arch Cape Creek. It was recovered and positioned in front of the Austin House.

1904 – Hotel Bill is built next to Ecola Creek, then known as Elk Creek.

1907 - The Cannon Beach post office (in present day Arch Cape) is closed.

1910 – A post office called Ecola is established at Hotel Bill in present day Cannon Beach.

1911 – An oiled rock road from Seaside to Cannon Beach is completed shortening travel time to 30 minutes and a bridge is built across Elk Creek.

1912 – The area previously known as Cannon Beach, south of the present day town is renamed Arch Cape.

1913 – Governor Oswald West declared the state's beaches a public highway to the high water line, protecting what was then the only thoroughfare along the coast and laying the groundwork legislation for what would later be known as the Beach Bill.

1914 – President Woodrow Wilson stays at Cannon Beach Hotel (formerly Hotel Bill).

1922 – At the insistence of the US Postal Service, the Ecola post office is renamed due to its similarity to another post office, Eola (near Salem). The name Cannon Beach is selected for the new post office.

1932 – The land encompassing much of Ecola State Park is acquired by Oregon State Parks by the gift and purchase from private landowners. The Coast Highway is finished to Arch Cape.

1956 – The USS Shark cannon is relocated to a site along Highway 101, making it more accessible to tourists. A replica



can now be viewed in this location, just south of Cannon Beach, while the original cannon has been relocated to the Cannon Beach History Center on Sunset in midtown.

1957 – Cannon Beach is incorporated as a city and Tillamook Rock Lighthouse is decommissioned.

1964 – A tsunami from an earthquake in Alaska came ashore in Cannon Beach, flooding the downtown area, washing away the Elk Creek bridge and eliminating the north entrance to the town. The first Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest is held to rally the community.

1967 – In one of the most pivotal events in Oregon history, Governor Tom McCall signed the Beach Bill. A series of dramatic events, that started almost without the general public's awareness, culminated in McCall flying in a helicopter with a team of scientists from Oregon State University to several beaches along the coast, including Cannon Beach, to take measurements in an effort to determine the best area to deem 'public land,' after private entities began cordoning off dry sections of beach, citing a loophole in Oswald West's legislation. Statewide media coverage showed Governor McCall standing defiantly next to the log boundaries set in the sand by a motel owner in Cannon Beach. News coverage of this event rallied public support and the bill passed. At the bill signing, McCall quoted Oswald West, "No local selfish interest should be permitted, through politics or otherwise, to destroy or even impair this great birthright of our people."

1968 – Haystack Rock was added to the Oregon Island National Wildlife Refuge to protect nesting seabird habitat.

1974 – Elk Creek was renamed Ecola Creek as originally mapped by Captain William Clark in 1806.

1990 – Haystack Rock was designated a Marine Garden by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

2008 - Two additional cannons from the Shark were found in Arch Cape, sent to Texas A&M University for restoration and can be currently seen at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria.

2014 – The 50th Annual Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest was held, earning it designation as an Oregon Heritage Event.