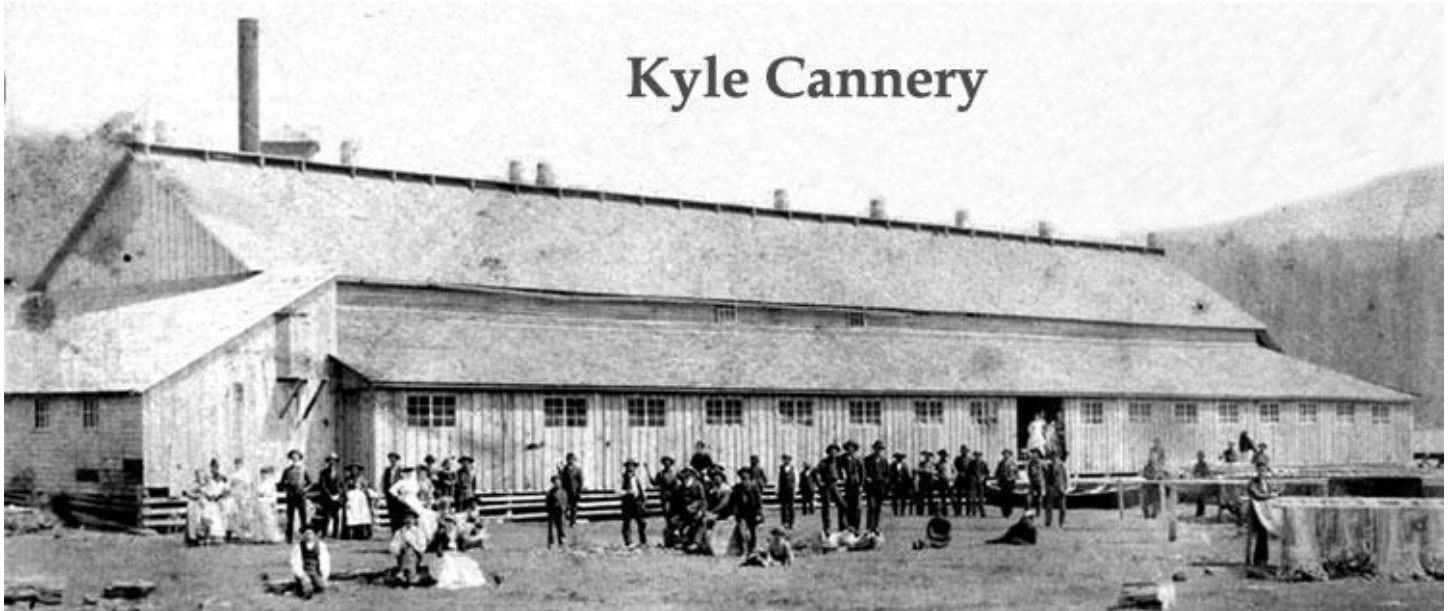




Siuslaw Pioneer Museum



Kyle Cannery



Above is a photo of the Kyle cannery 1894 and left photo is employees of the cannery.

Files pertaining to the canning industry in the Siuslaw Valley are available for public research in our Kyle Research Library at the museum Tues/Thurs 11-3 p.m.

<https://www.siuslawpioneermuseum.com/canneries/>

At the time, there were no laws regulating fish/game management. San Francisco suppliers shipped in sheets of tinsplate, solder, soldering tools, seine twine, and rope. Salmon canning production on the Siuslaw River:

1887	18,146 cans
1888	13,946 cans
1889	12,189 cans (2 canneries)
1890	4,077 cans (1 cannery)
1891	2,121 cans (1 cannery)
1892	18,283 cans (1 cannery)

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, EVENTS

The *Lane County Historian* booklet put out by the Lane County Historical Society has some interesting information in its Summer, 1971 issue Vol XVI, No.2 about the canning industry in the Siuslaw region. Page 32 covers the emergence of the first cannery by a man named Duncan in 1877, built near the mouth of the river where later a Coast Guard station was located. In 1884, William Kyle arrived and opened a general merchandise store and a cannery on the river front which produced 350 cases of salmon daily or 15,000 cases annually. Astoria merchants furnished supplies used by the Florence Packing Company for their seining and canning operations; salt, tan bark, cedar net floats, coal tar (barrels), fish knives, presses, crimping machines, pig tin, copper wire, and rope.

It's Not Just Family History

Most people think a museum like this is just filled with a bunch of old clothes and housewares... well, that's a little bit true! BUT... we have thousands of artifacts that tell a story of all the different types of things our ancestors used to farm, do business, fish, hunt, construct things, teach, cook, etc.

If you know someone who is interested in fishing, lumber, hunting, medicine, cooking, preserving food, taxidermy, building houses, bridges, and just about anything else... then this museum is worth a visit. Our research library also has hundreds of files on historic information about the Siuslaw Valley!

The story of Florence involves many settlers and we will be introducing other families as the timeline unfolds. You'll meet the HURD family soon. OW Hurd and WM Kyle were very competitive businessmen!

As we continue the story of the families Kyle and Bergman this year, it will become evident that these people were industrious, adventurous, and innovative. Those traits define successful exploration and settlement. Their careers intertwined with each other and had a large impact on the communities they serviced along the Pacific coast of Oregon and the rivers in the Siuslaw Valley. We hope you are enjoying the history we're presenting! See you soon...

Merilee Mulvey- KRL volunteer Editor
Kyle Research Library at SPM

Astoria to Florence

Around the early 1880s, Captain John Bergman and William Millree Kyle started exploring the coast south from Astoria, ending up in Florence on the Siuslaw River. At this point in time the native tribes vastly outnumbered the white explorers. They portrayed a peaceful coexistence, kept to themselves, and the bounty of game and fish was plentiful. These groups of natives knew the area better than anyone and had their own perils and struggles of everyday life to contend with.

PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, EVENTS

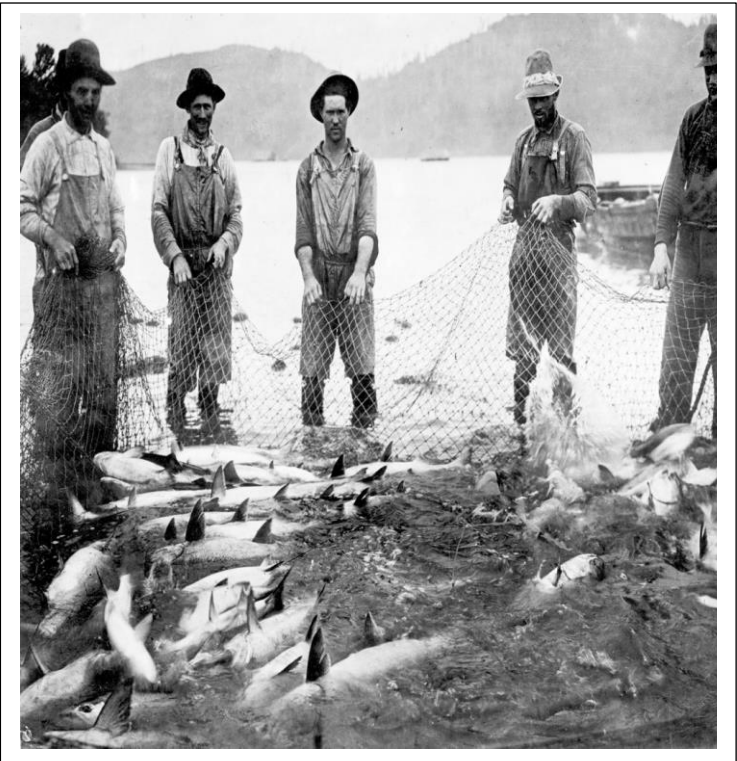
Local author **Judy Fleagle** paints a wonderful picture of Florence history in her book "*Around Florence*" which is one of the *Images of America* series from Arcadia Publishing. A section on fishing highlights the subject of fishing the Siuslaw... here is an excerpt:

"The fish were so plentiful that fishermen quit only when the tide changed or their boats filled, and seine fishing brought in huge catches."

As far back as the 1890s, there was a fishing season for salmon, but there was no limit. Seiners brought in everything their nets encircled. The most efficient method was gillnetting. A fisherman would spread his net across the river like the seine netters, but could do it with one or two people per boat instead of a whole group. After a couple of hours, the fishermen would haul in the net, picking the fish off as they went. At times there were 30 to 60 gillnetters fishing at the same time.

To cut down on overfishing, seining and gillnetting were later outlawed on the coastal rivers, and today all fish, including shellfish, have seasons and require permits.

Below is an image of men utilizing gill-netting Salmon along the Siuslaw River.



Seine Fishing

For much of their fishing history in Oregon, Indigenous peoples used hand-operated haul seines. A fish seine is a horizontal net that has floats holding the top line of the net at the water's surface. The net extends down in the water due to weights placed on the net's bottom.

Seine nets were often made from spruce root fivers or wild grass, weighted by stones. Floats were made of cedar which moved in a way that frightened the fish and helped keep them together. Cork was also used as floats and lead for weights.

The beach seine could be anchored on the shoreline and then dragged into the water, surrounding the fish before pulling it ashore. Another style was the purse seine. Along the bottom of the net were rings. A line was passed through the rings and when pulled would draw the net closed preventing the fish from "sounding" or swimming down to escape the net.

This type of fishing method dates back before 3000 B.C.

The earliest Oregon coastal canneries sent fish to San Francisco where they were widely distributed. **Pictured below** is an example of a label from Wm Kyle & Sons Florence Canning Company. Florence became known for its canned salmon, and the early labels were works of art.

Source:

https://books.google.com/books?id=i7y8AwAAQBAJ&pg=PA72&lp_g=PA72&dq=acme+flag+brand+choice+red+salmon+florence+oregon&source=bl&ots=taM_fbJ_wE&sig=ACfU3U0TgO842jf5GjX10u6tX79jdPWnaQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewj_-v_m5uCGAxWPIzQIHycqDb8Q6AF6BAgjEAM#v=onepage&q&f=false

Early Salmon, Lumber, Sea Trade Development

In the **1880s** fishing developed on a commercial scale on the Siuslaw river as Florence began to achieve stature as a promising seaport.

From September into November each year fishermen would ready their gear and spend autumn nights on the river, seeing the comings and goings of Chinese Cannery workers and schooners laden with canned and salted fish sailing to distant coast cities.

Some of the Chinese workers arrived early in August and were at work making fishing nets before canning operation began. Following late September rains, the salmon run increased. Persons from the Willamette valley camped on the Siuslaw for the purpose of salting Salmon for their winter use.

A market in California aided the development of the lumber industry in this area, and local construction was benefited. Though several schooners came into the bay for lumber, some making two or more trips within a year, the opinion was that half a dozen more could easily be loaded by the Siuslaw mills.

As commercial flowed in larger volume in and out of the Siuslaw the importance of a stable channel at the entrance grew. As early as 1891 it was noted big seas and high tides made changes in the bar. The relatively straight south channel had been the one favored for development. By 1892 government construction of a jetty was begun with the installation of a receiving wharf, a tramway and locomotive, a fifteen-ton hoisting derrick, a pile driver scow, all at the river mouth, and the development of a quarry up the river at Point Terrace as a source of rock for the jetty, and the construction of scows for transporting the stone to the jetty.



HERITAGE PLAYERS

The museum's cast of seasoned actors recently performed at Shorewood Senior Living and the Rotary Club. Their portrayal of early Siuslaw settlers provide entertainment with historical stories and characters using drama, humor and mystery.



To schedule a performance at your next event, contact Annie Schmidt at (541) 997-1023.



SATURDAY WEAVING DEMOS

On most Saturdays throughout the year, visitors will find Brenda Gilmer conducting weaving demonstrations in Jean's Sewing Room on the museum's second floor. Brenda invites visitors to give it a try as she guides you through the steps. The loom was used by three generations of the Alice Peckham family before donating it to the museum along with a generous supply of weaving yarn.

The full article can be read on the blog at:
<https://www.siuslawpioneermuseum.com/floor-loom/>



William Millree KYLE continues:

The route William most likely would have sailed from England to the west coast of America was by clipper ship from Liverpool to New York and then around the horn of South America and north towards San Francisco.

Once landing in **Astoria** at about age 17, William needed to earn money to survive. His first known jobs were as a net mender for a local fisherman. As his presence and knowledge of the local maritime and fishing industry grew, he adapted and began to flourish in the fishing and canning business. He probably started with one boat and fished the plentiful Columbia River for the Salmon canning business.

From there he moved into the Cannery industry, working his way to manager of the **Seaside Fishery & Cannery** Company. He and his close friend Captain John Bergman eventually broke away and started their own small fishery/cannery business.



Captain John BERGMAN continues:

Sometime around 1882, Captain John Bergman sold his cannery shares and used the proceeds to purchase the passenger steamer “Favorite” which he used (for the next 3 years) mostly for government work projects from the Columbia River to Marshfield, Oregon. William Millree Kyle would be on the steamer on many of these trips down the Oregon coast.

It was during these forays, on 29 Jan 1883, when they were docked at Umpqua, that the wreck of the ship “Tacoma” occurred. His leadership efforts in saving lives from that event earned him the Congressional Gold Medal for acts of bravery. Soon after that event he sold his steamer and received an appointment to the **Life Saving Station** at the Umpqua Lighthouse. This was a defining event that probably helped Captain Bergman make the decision to relocate to the southern Oregon area from Astoria.

Later in 1883, William Millree Kyle and Captain John Bergman teamed up to start another cannery and fishing business in the small town of Gardiner Oregon on the Umpqua River at the location of an old Indian Salting site.

William Kyle and the Pacific Lumber Trade – A Study in Marginality

Source- Excerpt: Journal of Forest History by Thomas R. Cox; copy in the Kyle Research Library, SPM; Filed Mills/Sawmills Wm. Kyle Sawmill

The Pacific Seacoast of North America has been forbidding. Before harbor improvements and steam power, it tested to the utmost the skill and persistence of those who sailed its waters. Ingress and egress at river mouths were always dangerous, often impossible. Many a vessel was lost even after steam tugs were put into operation to aid sailing vessels over the bars. In spite of the hazards, dozens of sawmill operations sprang up along the coast between San Francisco and Puget Sound during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

William Kyle was a small-time entrepreneur who resided in the village of **Florence**, Oregon at the mouth of the Siuslaw River. His business interests at one time or another included a salmon cannery, stores in Florence and Mapleton, the bar tug **Robarts**, a smaller steamer for hauling goods on the river, the three-masted schooner **Bella**, and the **Florence Lumber Company**. But, while Kyle’s ambition was great, his supply of capital was not. The Robarts monopolized service in the area. Poor though the service was, mill operators continued to employ the Robarts.

Lacking the capital to buy their own tugs, the operators of these tiny coastal mills had no practical alternatives. Both they and Kyle realized the absolute necessity of towing service. As Kyle said, the tug was what made everything else possible. When owners of a mill on the nearby Alsea River sounded out Kyle regarding the possibilities of stationing the tug there, he replied by pointing out that the four small mills on the Siuslaw cut twice as much lumber as the plant on the Alsea and that the operators on the Siuslaw had signed a contract giving Kyle exclusive right.

How the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum Began

1876 - The Siuslaw Indians were a friendly people who welcomed the homesteaders in 1876. **Mrs. Clara Gamble Haring** was the first white woman to settle on the North Fork and the second white woman in the Siuslaw region. Born in London, England, she came to America when she was a young lady and lived in Iowa before moving to Oregon and settling in the Siuslaw in 1879. She married Amos L. Harings and they had nine children. In 1920, a gathering of friends met at the home of Clara in honor of her 66th birthday. Plans were made to perpetuate the memory of the men and women who laid the foundation for the cultural history of the Siuslaw region.

1920- **The Siuslaw Pioneer Association was formed** and Clara Haring was elected president. Every year since, a pioneer meeting and picnic has been held on a day dedicated to the memory of the Siuslaw Pioneers. The objective of the Siuslaw Pioneer Association was to hold reunions of the early settlers of the Siuslaw Valley at such times and places as may be agreed upon by the society or when called together by the officers of the society. All persons who have resided in the Siuslaw Valley ten years or more may become associate members until residing here 20 years when they become active members.

1946- In 1946, minutes of the twenty-seventh annual Siuslaw Pioneer Association meeting held in the American Legion Hall in Florence contained this sentence: "The committees on markers and pioneer orchards reported, and a place for housing pioneer relics was discussed and several good suggestions made but no action taken."

1969- Finally, **in 1969 the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum Association was formed** with officers as follows: President- Don Bowman; Vice-President- Pony Ellingson; Secretary- Eileen Huntington; Directors- Eileen McCornack, Carl Johnson, Ralph Bernhardt, and Millard Martin. The Florence Junior Chamber of Commerce donated \$500.00 for a museum, if used within five years. During the next four years many efforts to find a desirable location were unsuccessful.

1973- That year the Museum Association presented four sites that could be obtained for a price:

- 1) The Ziemer house, built by Charles David
- 2) Theater property owned by the City of Florence
- 3) Property near the airport
- 4) The former Lutheran Church of Glenada

The first three were eliminated as being undesirable. The Siuslaw Pioneer Association decided that the church was a desirable site if funds to purchase the property could be raised. Donations large and small came from pioneer families, private industries, and organizations. A few weeks later the Lutheran Church property was purchased. Work parties were organized and the museum was on its way.

The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum was dedicated June 15, 1974.



Clara [Gamble] Haring was born in London, England on 11 August 1855. Her family arrived in America on 3 July 1863. The family moved to Coos Bay in 1871. Clara married Amos Haring in April 1874. In 1879 they moved, with 3 small children to the Siuslaw North Fork to homestead property that Amos had chosen before their marriage.

Amos L. Haring was born on 2 April 1846 on the high seas between the West Indies and New York Harbor. His home was near Barnegat Island, New Jersey. As a young man he decided he did not want to go to school and chose to become a merchant seaman. When he was 18 or 19 his ship was shipwrecked and he was the only survivor. The ship that rescued him came into Coos Bay and Amos disembarked and remained there.

Amos and Clara had nine children, of which seven reached maturity. They and their children are buried in the Haring Pioneer Cemetery on the North Fork. Many of the early North Fork pioneers are also buried there.

Source: from the files of the Kyle Research Library at SPM

Preservation Campaign Builds Momentum

The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum's West Wall Reconstruction and Community Engagement Initiative is making significant progress in achieving its goals to repair our wall and boost community engagement with the museum. From the start, a major challenge has been determining the full extent of dry rot damage in the west wall. Repair estimates can only be determined after opening the wall and conducting an assessment and without this information, the final project cost has been a moving target. Complicating matters, lead was discovered in the wall's paint in January 2025, raising concerns of a substantial cost increase beyond initial estimates.

However, thanks to due diligence in seeking out highly-qualified contractors, we have secured Arcadia Environmental, an expert in remediation services, to handle the removal of the siding (including the lead-based paint) for a significantly lower cost than we had anticipated. Their expertise in this field allows them to remediate concerning materials safely and efficiently. This fortunate turn of events, coupled with recent estimates by Lofy Construction to handle the remaining repairs, has seen a dramatic reduction of our project budget. Once at an intimidating estimate of around \$250,000, we are now optimistic that the project can be completed for the much more achievable cost of under \$150,000. Still, despite our optimism, we remain aware that final costs won't be confirmed until the siding is removed and Lofy Construction assesses the dry rot damage.

Construction is currently slated to begin sometime in May 2025. Meanwhile, our fundraising and public outreach efforts continue to build momentum and as of late March, about 28% of our fundraising goal has been met. In December 2024, we sent hundreds of appeal letters to stakeholders and known donors to rally to our cause, prompting an enthusiastic response. In February this year, we followed up with a bulk mail campaign, delivering flyers to thousands of Florence-area residents. In the following weeks, the museum experienced another wave of generous support.

In addition to these public outreach efforts, Greentrees Village has recently aided us by including a message about our project in their newsletter and City Lights Cinemas has generously donated \$600-worth of ad space in their theaters. This involvement from other important community members is greatly appreciated by the museum and is an important piece of our general outreach.

At the same time, several other fundraising strategies are at various stages of implementation, including online crowdfunding, local business partnerships, direct asks to the community, and grant applications. In the case of grants, we are pleased to report that Autzen Foundation has awarded the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum with \$6,700 toward the wall project. Two additional grants with total possible awards of \$115,00 are currently under review and we look forward to receiving decisions on these grants before construction starts in May.

The momentum generated by this initiative will be pivotal not just for the success of this project, but future museum endeavors as well. In the coming years, it is likely the museum will again have to address dry rot issues in both its north and east walls. Establishing a base of support in the community and demonstrating our ability to deliver on such important construction projects will ensure that these future projects are successes as well. The continuing support of stakeholders is profoundly important to us. It's through that support that we are empowered to not only repair our infrastructure, but preserve the stories, artifacts, and experiences that define our community. Our success will ensure that the museum remains a cornerstone of cultural education and pride for years to come.

Link to our new **GOFUNDME** site is here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/3gxdj-save-our-museums-west-wall>
Just click on the link and it will take you to the site.



P.O. Box 2637
Florence OR 97439
Return Service Requested

MAILING LABEL

SIUSLAW PIONEER MUSEUM



The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum is located on the corner of 2nd and Maple streets in Old Town Florence.

Our location address is:
278 Maple Street

Our mailing address is:
P.O. Box 2637
Florence OR 97439

Meet our Board of Directors and Trustees

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

Pam Mann
Craig Sanders
John Barnes
Dorothy Hosking

Trustees:
Carl Frazier
Annie Schmidt
Pat Rongey
Kyle Lewis

Board meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the museum. These meetings are open to all members. Call ahead for space availability.