

# Alexandre Gilbert

“A man of great enterprise and forethought,”

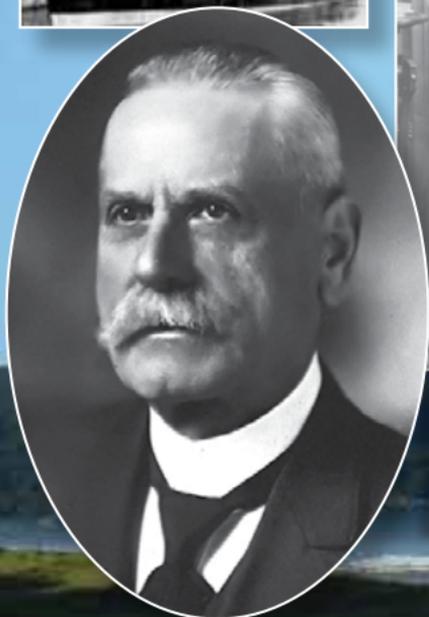
Mr. Gilbert, one of the founding fathers of Seaside, was born in the coastal town of La Rochelle, France on April 16, 1845, the son of Frank and Mary Gilbert. At the age of twenty-four and just prior to the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71), Alexandre married Emma Loncol in Paris, France on January 22, 1869. In 1871, after the war, the Gilberts immigrated to San Francisco, California. While in San Francisco, Alexandre developed his skills as a carpenter and cabinet maker. He also built and established the Gilbert House, a hotel and boarding house.

Learning in 1881 that land was “cheap” in Oregon, the Gilberts moved north to Astoria. Struck by the rugged beauty of the Oregon coast and the resemblance to his native France, he saw great potential and spent the next 54 years helping to develop businesses, property, and communities in the area.

One of his greatest achievements was the 1½ mile Promenade. Alexandre wanted the beach to remain open to the public, so he acquired the property and then donated it to the city. He also developed the downtown business district called the Gilbert Block. He was Mayor of Seaside during the 1912 fire that burned most of the city, and is credited with the leadership needed to turn this horrific event into an opportunity to rebuild Seaside with an emphasis on permanent concrete buildings.

In his life, Alexandre worked as a soldier, carpenter, hotel and boarding house operator, saloon operator, insurance and real estate salesman, Port of Astoria commissioner, French consul, and Mayor of Seaside.

It has been said of him that he was “a fine representative of the solid and sustainable business men of Clatsop County” and “a man of great enterprise and forethought,” “...a citizen of affluence and influence.”



Top left: The “La Savoie” Alexandre and Emma’s passage to Canada.  
Top right: The couple on their wedding day January 22, 1869  
Bottom left: Alexandre Gilbert ca. 1930.

# Gilbert Inn

Est. 1892

“Seaside's oldest and most gracious home.”

The history of this beautiful home began in 1885 when Mr. Gilbert built a modest 2-room cabin for weekend retreats from Astoria. Alexandre's business interests grew in Seaside along with his desire to move his family to the area. By 1892, he completed a grand Queen Anne style addition to the modest cabin resulting in the home that stands here today.

The artisans and materials used to build the home came from the region and this impressive home stands as a testament to that old world craftsmanship of times past. In the basement, you'll find large old growth beams that measure two feet in diameter and large boulders pulled from the river to use as foundation blocks under the beams. The walls and ceilings in the historical wing are all original tongue and groove fir. The solid construction and choice materials have survived for well over a century. In 1990, five more guest rooms were added around and above the original 1885 cabin further adding to its grandness.

As guests enter the Inn, they are greeted by a prominent brick fireplace, cozy turret sitting area and a hand-carved mahogany front desk. Passing the main entry, guests encounter the favorite retreat area, the sunroom. This relaxing room fills with warm natural light and makes for a great sitting area to sip tea while reading a favorite book or newspaper. The house is full of antiques, family keepsakes, art, and a beautiful pump organ that, when played, brings the entire house to life. Two chairs decorated with needlepoint, hand sewn by Emma Gilbert, still sit in the home, residents since the moment Emma placed them there.

Each of the eleven guest rooms, with its own private bathroom, is decorated with period furniture, classic antiques and comfortable four-poster beds. The Gilbert Inn is the perfect blend of the Victorian charm of a bygone era and the modern comforts of today.



Top left: The Gilbert home ca. 1940.

Top right: The front lobby and check in desk of the Gilbert Inn.

Bottom right: The turret and main entry for the Gilbert Inn.