

# Long: Serving justice, neighborhood tranquility

■ Continued from Page 1

the charge fit the facts as represented to me, but the purpose was not so much to punish the defendant for endangering cats, but rather to discourage the defendant from shooting his rifle within his rural neighborhood.

When I had presented my case, Judge Stanley interrupted and asked Merle and me to approach the bench for a soft voice discussion. The Judge asked me, "What are you doing in this court, Mr. Frost?" and although concerned by the Judge's tone, I said "prosecuting the defendant for firing a rifle at cats and endangering people." The judge replied, "You cannot try the defendant for that charge in this court, because it is a felony charge, and I have no jurisdiction to decide felony cases in the District Court."

At no time did Merle take advantage of me or my position, nor agree with the Judge; he simply listened. Things were resolved when Merle, the Judge and I had a quiet discussion at the bench; and then as agreed, the Judge ruled this proceeding was not a trial, it was a preliminary hearing, that I had sufficient evidence to bind the defendant over for possible trial to the high court, but that the defendant was not yet convicted. It was also agreed at the bench, and then pronounced to the defendant in open court, that the State would not proceed if the defendant refrained from firing his rifle in the neighborhood for an extended period of time. So I had not lost my case, nor had Merle lost his case, but the defendant was under the gun one might say. If the defendant should further misbehave, I am also quite certain that Merle "impressed" his client with the possible consequences. The defendant did not misbehave for a year, and on Merle's request I then dismissed the case with prejudice to the State. Justice and neighborhood tranquility were re-



Merle Long

stored.

Long and I usually met each other professionally in our respective roles as attorneys for our clients: his, the City of Albany, and mine the County of Linn. On one such joint meeting, I recall Merle was advocating to the county commissioners that they should act to include lands outside the city and inside the county within the urban renewal district promoted by the city. The district was proposed to provide public financing aid in the building of a shopping mall. I objected, pointing out that the land was being used in part as an outdoor drive-in theater, and the remainder was then being farmed, so it was not "urban" and it was not in need of "renewal."

I believe my argument was well founded but Merle had obtained the approval of the plan from state taxing authorities. It was approved by the County, and the area became the first "shopping mall" in Albany--and that neighborhood (Fred Meyer, Bi Mart, Heritage Mall) continues to be the hub of local shopping in the City.

By late February 2009, I had agreed to gather information and recollections about Albany lawyers for the Albany Regional Museum, and to that purpose visited Merle and his wife Muriel at their retirement home. During that visit I was surprised to learn for the first time that Merle had been commissioned as an army lieutenant upon graduation from Oregon State College in 1942 and served in battle in France and Germany. Later, upon completing law school, he was an Army Reserve Captain and had again been called into service as a law officer during the Korean War. I was surprised because I had served as an army officer

myself during no war in the 1950s, had known Merle for about 40 years but I had never any hint from him that he had served, and in times of war.

During my February visit, I was reminded that Merle not only had practiced law, he had served in the organizations of his profession. He had maintained his private practice from 1948, from 1956 to 1985 he served as the Albany city attorney, and also for School District Number Five, and as clerk and attorney for the Albany School District, and as an attorney for Linn-Benton Community College, as well as representing folks in need of an attorney.

In addition, Merle served on the Board of Governors of the Oregon State Bar for three years and held the office of bar president in 1976, all of which entailed lots of traveling and many meetings. Yet Merle points out in one of his own writings about his life, he would not have the reader think that all he did was "practice law and attend meetings." He goes on to say that he became an elder in his Presbyterian Church, that he and Muriel became Olympic Games fans, including the 1968 games in Mexico, and attended those events all over the world, except those held in Moscow and Barcelona.

In the late 1960s my wife, our daughter and I became neighbors to the Longs, who lived two doors away. We did see each other, usually at a distance, and when I began to write this recollection I began to wonder why the Longs and Frosts, while only two doors apart, did not get to know each other better. But as I review what I have learned about the busy lives of the Longs and recall that in 1968 I became a public attorney, that our daughter was then 4 and their children were teenagers, and that Merle and Muriel were very busy at home, at work, and also attending Olympic Games, the mist clears.

■ Merle Aldridge Long, 88, died March 17

## Storyteller spins tales of Oregon

Storyteller Ray Ballantyne spins an Oregon yarn during a spring break event for students at the Museum on March 23. Among the visitors were the family of Matt and Janel Bennett (at upper left). The Bennetts own Sybaris and Clemenza's restaurants in historic downtown Albany. More than 50 individuals enjoyed the presentation.



## CEMETERY TOUR NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Did you brave the weather last year for the Museum's first historic cemetery tour? It was an educational and entertaining event despite summer rain showers. Another tour is on the Museum's agenda, but the staff could use a volunteer or two to help plan and conduct the event. Call the Museum at (541) 967-7122 if you would like to share your time.

# Celebrating Oregon's 150th

More than 300 people visited the Museum during Oregon's 150th birthday on February 14. The Museum partnered with the Monteith Historical Society and the Albany Brass Ring Carousel, with sesquicentennial activities going on at all three sites. Museum exhibits took on a life of their own as volunteers portrayed merchants, school teachers, musicians, a railroad engineer and a country doctor. At right, Museum board member Larry Bardell discusses railroading with 6-year-old Matthew Manske and his sister Olivia, 4. They are the children of Albany residents Hedio and Kevin Manske. At far right, Museum member Genny Sneddon offers visitors popcorn, dried fruit and pemmican from the S.E. Young general store exhibit.



## Cataloging Potts collection under way

The Museum is seeking donations to help defray the cost

The process to sort and catalog the enormous photo and archive collection of the late Albany historian Robert Potts is underway, according to administrative coordinator Tami Sneddon.

The Museum was the recipient of the Potts' collection from his family last year.

Sneddon says the Museum's second floor

"numbering room" will soon be renamed the "Robert Potts Photo and Archive Collection Room." With some minor modification and added shelving, the space will be adequate for the initial care of the collection.

There are substantial costs in the proper care of the items, which include hundreds of archival documents, slides, negatives and prints, according to Sneddon. She says the Museum is interested in any designated donations that would help defray the associated costs.

As an example: 10 banker-size archival boxes used for storage will cost about \$160; one hundred 8 x 10 inch archival sleeves for photographs would run \$40; one hundred 4 x 6 inch sleeves would cost \$25; metal shelving is estimated at a cost of \$80.

Sneddon says that many Museum friends don't realize the costs involved in properly maintaining collections. She would be happy to provide additional information to anyone interested in helping with needed financing.

## When was the last time you had your shoes shined?

The Museum's new "Deluxe Shoe Shine" exhibit is the perfect place to set up a shoe shine chair for young visitors who have never experienced a "shine."

The Museum needs someone to build a small chair with foot rests. If you would like to help with this project, give us a call at (541) 967-7122.

## ANNUAL MEETING TO HOST TRAPPERS

Meet early Willamette Valley trappers and Oregon Territory politicians Joseph "Joe" Meek (1810-1875) and Robert "Doc" Newell (1807-1869) at the Museum's annual membership meeting on Sunday, Sept. 20, at 2 p.m., at the Museum.

## MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP FORM

To renew or begin your annual membership, indicate the type and fill in the form below.

- Individual \$10
- Family \$15
- Patron \$115
- Business \$50
- Major Sponsor \$250
- I want to learn more about the Pioneer Society, Founders and Benefactors levels.

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

The Museum is a non-profit 501 C-3 corporation.

**Albany Regional Museum**  
136 Lyon St. S., Albany, OR 97321  
(541-967-7122)

www.armuseum.com