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## Cats case was ‘under the gun’

Recalling memories of Atty. Merle Long

BY JACKSON L. FROST  
OREGON CIRCUIT COURT,  
SENIOR JUDGE (RETIRED)

Among Albany lawyers, the late Merle Long was well respected because he was always courteous, calm and prepared. He was a big, tall man who spoke softly but clearly and did not put on a front; others might get excited or angry and loud, but not Merle. This demeanor served him well, not only among lawyers, but with anyone he encountered.

Since Long was the city attorney during the mid-1960s, he seldom appeared in criminal cases before Judge Carl G. Stanley at the Linn District Court, which at the time was my daily duty. However, I recall a case in which I was the prosecuting attorney for the State, and Merle represented a young man I had charged with shooting a small caliber rifle at cats. As is often the case

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## Hats were highlight of Tea and Chautauqua

More than 150 hats were on display at the Museum's annual tea and Chautauqua on April 10, part of the Museum's salute to Oregon's sesquicentennial. The program featured a presentation by Dianna Hanson of Corvallis about ladies hats from the Civil War era to the present. Mrs. Hanson brought many hats and talked about the significance of each. Many of the attendees, which numbered more than 60, also wore hats. Clockwise from upper left: Jerry Brenneman serves tea to a table of Museum guests; Peggy, Tami, and Jennifer, from left to right, model hats; speaker Dianna Hanson charms the audience with hat stories; Wilma Albright looks spectacular.

## Chinese connection not well-known part of Albany history

BY GARY KINGSTON  
MUSEUM MEMBER

Albany's history has important Chinese connections. It's a fact that has gone mostly unnoticed in the community.

Located on the site now occupied by the Museum's building and adjacent properties at Second Avenue and Lyon Street, Albany's "Chinatown" flourished between the late 1870s and early 1900s. Other than a few pictures



and words on display at the Museum, Albany does not mark the historic presence of its Chinese heritage.

Like most everyone that came to the United States, work opportunity was the

driving force and the lack of the same in their countries of origin was the impetus for their departure.

Those who came to our area were reported to be from Guangdong Province, not far from Hong Kong. The work ethic, skill, frugality and acceptance of low compensation made the Chinese laborer a sought-after commodity for expansion of the western U.S., particularly for mining, railroad

building, infrastructure construction, land clearing and domestic services such as cleaning, laundry and cooking.

From the individual Chinese-worker's viewpoint, the objective was to earn money and return home with finances to support a better life. This was true of other ethnic groups as well.

The option to stay in

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## Looking Back: Ben Franklin & Me

BY JACK GILLESPIE  
MUSEUM MEMBER

In the fall of 1946 I entered Albany High School as a sophomore (it was then a three year high school). I turned in my newspaper bag and quit my downtown Democrat-Herald route. At 15, I deemed myself too old for a paper route.

At school one day a friend approached me and said he was looking for two boys to help him clean up the Ben Franklin Variety Store. A small fire had left parts of the store in a mess. I and my friend Johnny said we would help. We worked hard after school for three or four days and our job was done. We were paid 50 cents per hour and dismissed. As we were leaving, John Bain, who owned the store, stopped me and asked if I'd be interested in working at the store after school and all day Saturdays and maybe full time in the summer.

I agreed and for the next three years I worked at the store doing a variety of chores. I unpacked and put price tags on merchandise, swept the floor, cleaned the bathrooms, made keys, etc. etc.

One of my duties was to watch over the Bain's five-year-old son when he was loose in the store. This basically meant to keep him

out of the bulk candy bins located at the front of the building.

The son was named Jack and during my years he was "Little Jack" and I was "Big Jack." We got along fine. The Bain's also had twin daughters, Jean and Joan, a year younger than I was, who helped at the store. During my three years at the store I got a raise from 50 cents an hour to 55 cents.

The Albany Ben Franklin store was located on the southeast side of First Avenue between Ellsworth Street and Lyon Street. (The store's site is now the conference room of the Weatherford, Thompson, Cowgill, Black & Schultz law offices as far as I can determine.

The store was divided into six and eight square "stations" each with a sales girl inside who was responsible for all aspects of her station, cleaning, stocking, etc. when not waiting on customers. There also was a "boss lady" to supervise the stations and fill in for the clerks during breaks.

Upon graduating from high school in 1949 I joined the U.S. Air Force and went off to Texas.

(In a long, complex manner, all the Ben Franklin stores were closed and would later materialize as one of the nuclei of today's Wal-Mart.)

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# View from Second and Lyon: Albany names

BY JOHN BUCHNER  
BOARD CHAIRMAN

Among questions that museum visitors often ask have to do with the names of Albany streets.

A booklet prepared during the 1976 bi-centennial provides several answers.

Bonnie Orr, the first chairperson/president of the Albany Regional Museum in 1981, was the book's author, assisted by Doris Doherty. Orr was a history teacher at Linn-Benton Community College at the time. During the summer months she worked for a neighborhood youth program and became involved with a group of people interested in local history and the establishment of this museum.

She recalls, from her present home in East Wenatchee, Wash., that she was trained as an "oral historian" and the book, "Ah, Yes, I Remember It Well," was based on a lot of old newspaper clippings and about 20 interviews with Albany-area residents. At least one copy is available in the museum's research room. She says people like Dan Brennenman, Olive and George Broders, Virginia Burkhart, Otho Froman, Rodney Tripp, J.K. Weatherford, and others provided many of the "Albany stories" for the book.

Besides the names of streets based



Edward Geary, M.D.

on numbers, tree names and presidents, many had an actual local connection.

For example, Orr reports that Thurston Street was named for Thurston Hackleman, and Denver Street for his brother, both sons of Abram

Hackleman, a member of one of the city's founding families. Lyon Street is believed named for Abram's wife, Elizabeth Lyon Hackleman.

Broadalbin Street was named for the town in which Thomas Monteith (another city founder) was born in New York state. Ellsworth Street was named for the town Walter Monteith was born, also in New York. While there is no street in the community named "Monteith," the present Pacific Boulevard was once part of a road named Monteith, according to the book.

Another founding family, the

Burkharts, gave their name to Burkhart Street. Hill Street was named for Dr. Reuben Hill, and Gale Street was named for Hill's son, a Linn County judge. An early community doctor and friend of Dr. Hill, Edward Geary, is the namesake for Geary Street.

Takena was not only a street named for the Native American word for "meeting place," but at one time was considered as the permanent name for the city. Ferry boats tied up at the foot of Ferry Street.

The Hub Bryant's were responsible for Bryant Park and the naming of Bryant Drive just west of the city limits. The Rainwater family in North Albany gave their name to Rainwater Lane.

In later years, Nebergall Loop, also in North Albany, was named for D.E. Nebergall, the meat packer.

## Four complete training

Four new volunteers attended the docent training workshop at the Museum, April 7. The new volunteers include Kara Bishop, Kate Claussen, David Fitchett and Bailey Ponce. If you would like to become a volunteer, stop by the Museum and complete a volunteer application.



## Lincoln comes to Albany

More than 150 Albany citizens attended the Oregon Lincoln Bicentennial Town Hall Program on the evening of March 21 at the Masonic Temple. The program was co-sponsored by the Monteith Historical Society and the Albany Regional Museum, in cooperation with the Oregon Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Steve Holgate portrayed Lincoln. The Jason and Rebecca Bond family, along with Sabrina Grato, were among the attendees (upper right). The Daughter's of the American Revolution furnished Abe's birthday cake for the event.

**Our mission statement:** "To preserve, exhibit and encourage knowledge of the history and culture of Albany, Oregon, and its immediate surroundings through collection of artifacts, documents and photographs."

# City law banned laundries on 1st Avenue in 1894

■ Continued from Page 1

American communities like Albany rather than return home became more attractive to many, including the Chinese, and that involved bringing the wife, family, girlfriend, or unattached females to join them. But our government created obstacles (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and subsequent amendments) for the Chinese to do that. Their existence was further isolated, beyond the obvious differences of culture and language, by anti-miscegenation laws.

These factors created enclaves of Chinese men who had little incentive to learn the English language, thus depending on their labor managers to organize, negotiate, and direct them, a situation prone to abuse.

The notion of debauched living unjustifiably grew in the minds of citizens who assumed they knew the nature and intents of the "Chinatown" inhabitants. Some did partake of the British curse of opium, many were inclined to the popular Chinese pastime of gambling, while others formed and belonged to social clubs or fraternities to nurture their sense of personal value.

As work opportunity for the Chinese laborers moved so did they. Remnant enclaves remained in towns such as Albany for a while and eventually vanished, except in the larger cities. It was tough to remain in a community that showed little or only condescending respect to the "Celestial," a name given the Chinese citizen similar in context to the "Darkie" designation of African Americans.

In 1885 at the west end of First Avenue a Chinese entrepreneur ran Wa's Laundry, located between the First National Bank and the present Masonic Temple building. An ordinance was passed by the city banning laundries on First Avenue.



ROBERT POTTS COLLECTION

**Top: Albany's "Chinatown" in 1905, located at Second and Lyon streets. Above: Albany Chinese Social Club members pose for a group portrait in about 1910.**

An article in the May 30, 1894, Albany Morning Herald, titled "Don't Patronize Chinese" stated: "Who would wipe on a towel or use a tablecloth that had been done up by a Chinaman when they can get it done for this price by white people."

In spite of many negatives a few Chinese managed to establish businesses and fewer yet melded into the community. Robert (Bob) Potts, the late Albany historian, recalled the White House Chinese restaurant on First Avenue between Baker and Lyon Streets, operated by the Chin family. A Chin son, he said, attended school and was accepted without prejudice in school life. Kay Chin also was a Boy Scout circa 1930 in the same troop as Albany notables Rodney Tripp, Arne Jensen, Merle Long and Frank Merrill. Kay went on to become a noted artist.

By 1888, Jim Westfall had been in Albany for 14 years. Taking a western name was not uncommon for those Chinese attempting to blend in with local society. Jim was a labor contractor, supplying Chinese workers for various jobs.

He also ran an Albany store selling Asian goods. His reported wealth was estimated at \$12,000.

Westfall married an Oregon born Chinese lady in 1888. The State Rights Democrat newspaper described her as "a young and intelligent looking Mongolian... light and willowy in build." The same publication reported in 1889 that she was attending the public schools. The news note concluded, "No objection other than she is Chinese made."

Westfall reported in 1906 that a former 25-year resident of Albany had returned to China with savings of \$800

that would "take him down the shady side of life" on a farm about 100 miles from Hong Kong.

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943 and initially allowed only a token number of Chinese to enter the United States each year. It was not until 1965 that any significant numbers were permitted.

Dr. K.C. Li, a mining engineer, from a Chinese family owning antimony and tungsten mines in China, founded the Wah Chang Corporation tungsten ore trading company in New York State in 1916. The Wah Chang name translates to "Great Development."

The year the exclusion act was rescinded Steven W.H. Yih earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering at the University of Shanghai. In 1947 he came to the United States where his academic credentials were expanded to include Master of Science degrees in both electrical and mechanical engineering. He was employed by Wah Chang Corp. in 1953.

Then followed in a stroke of good fortune for Yih and the community of Albany, where preparation met opportunity and good luck transpired, that Steven Yih was sent to the Albany area to start the Wah Chang zirconium production plant.

Subsequent economic growth came to Albany and its surrounding communities from the expansion of Dr. Li's vision and Yih's execution of Chinese optimism, discipline, and business acumen.

Wah Chang today, now under a different ownership and management, remains one of the community's most successful industrial employers. Yih himself died earlier this year in Albany at age 89. His widow, Mae Yih, is a retired state senator from Albany.

*Museum board member Linda Ellsworth contributed research for this article.*



# Delegates learn about needs of local museums

Publishing for small museums, volunteers in the new millennium and funding endowments in an economic slowdown were major topics at the spring meeting of the Oregon Museum Association.

The North Lincoln County Historical Museum hosted the conference in Lincoln City on March 15 and 16.

Delegates from Albany included Mary Jacq Burck, Jennifer Jameson, Edward and Patricia Loy and Kitty and John Buchner.

A road map to successful self-publishing was outlined in a panel discussion by Sheridan McCarthy of Meadowlark Publishing Services of Corvallis. She discussed six steps crucial to the publishing process that included concept and analysis, writing and editing, copy editing, design, production and finished product. The subject was of particular interest to the Albany Regional Museum delegates because of its plan to publish a soft-cover book on the Albany Timber Carnival. The carnival was a signature community event between 1941 and 2000.

The importance of volunteers to non-profits like the Museum was highlighted in a presentation by

Amy Vandergrift from the Marion County Historical Society. Trends in volunteering include the fact that people are interested in working for causes, not organizations; that seniors over 70 are increasing in numbers and volunteer in increasing percentages; volunteers are looking for short-term opportunities as they have increasing demands on their time; and that they expect challenging and interesting assignments.

Maureen Thomas, representing the Oregon Community Foundation, which manages the Museum's endowment, spoke about the timing of fund-raising efforts. She said that in today's current economic conditions, efforts need to be made to build personal relationships and museum involvement rather than actual fund-raising. She said this kind of effort prepares non-profits for future fund-raising when the economy improves.

Kyle Jansson, president of OMA and coordinator for the Oregon Heritage Commission, was in charge of the conference. He is a former Albany resident and a former editor of the Stamp Collector weekly newspaper.

## Seven join Museum memorials list

Special needs of the Museum are met with memorials that honor a family member or friend.

The most common gifts are in the amounts of \$25, \$50 and \$100.

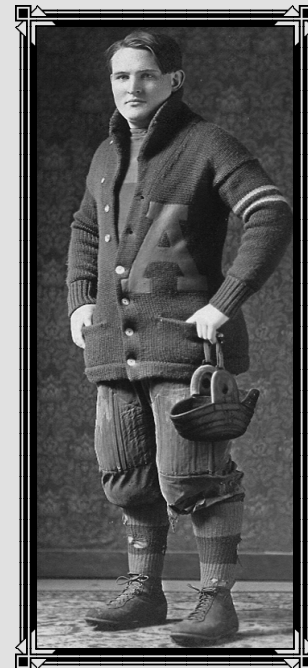
Names of those individuals memorialized are listed in the Museum's newsletter and are posted at the Museum for a limited time. They also appear on the Museum's web site, armuseum.com. A card of remembrance is mailed to a desig-

nated recipient (spouse, next of kin or other) and a thank you card to the person or persons making the donation (which also can be used for tax documentation).

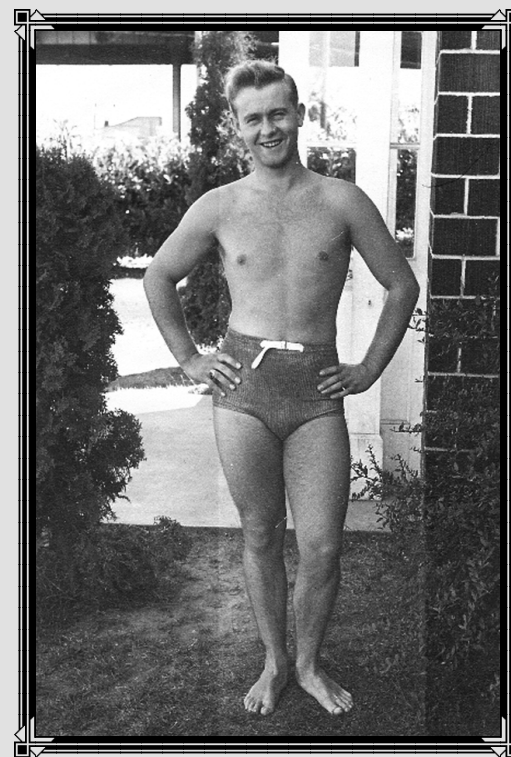
Since the 2009 winter newsletter, these seven names have been added to the memorial roll: Merle Long, Dorothy Jern, Stephen W.H. Yih, James Luster, Allen Carter, Richard Eads and A. Lee Archibald.

## MOTORCYCLES ARE COMING!

The 2009 second annual Rhys Miller Classic at the Museum will feature vintage motorcycles. A planning committee is working with Albany area cycle enthusiasts to stage the event on Saturday, Sept. 12, during the city's Antiques in the Street. The committee is looking for vintage or classic (more than 25 years old) motorcycles for this exhibition. If you would like to participate, or for more information, contact Jerry Page at (541) 451-2359; Mark Nicolson at (541) 928-5900; or the Museum at (541) 967-7122.



**BULLDOG GRIDDER.** Loren Davis was a standout center for Albany High School's 1916 Oregon high school football champions. A member of the class of 1918, "Tub" was the heaviest boy on the team at 200 pounds. The high school annual called him "a terror to opposing teams before they got started." (From the Museum's collection)



**AT SWANSON SWIMMING POOL** - Bill White moved to Albany in 1948 with his wife Peggy and infant son. This photograph was taken at Swanson Pool in about 1950. White was a good swimmer, but his favorite hobby was golf. His obituary in 2001 noted that he had recorded a hole-in-one five times. White owned or managed several service stations in Albany. (From the Robert Potts collection)



**ALBANY LAWMAN:** Griffen King was the Chief of Police for Albany before leaving for Portland in 1917 to serve as marshal there. He is the grandfather of Doreen Eagy and Bill Githens. (Photo courtesy of Doreen Eagy)

# Pictures from the Past

Nostalgic photos from the albums of the Museum, its members and friends



**PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL** - The center of attention in this 1940s photograph is presidential candidate Thomas Dewey. The New York governor and Republican candidate was on a whistle-stop train visit to the West Coast when he visited Albany during the 1948 campaign. An early favorite in the election, he was upset by Democrat Harry Truman. Among Albany greeters was insurance salesman Stanley Malo, standing directly behind Dewey with glasses and no hat. (From the Robert Potts collection)



**RURAL COMMUNITIES** - During the late 40s and early 50s many of the Albany-area rural communities entered floats in the 4th of July Timber Carnival parade. This float featured the Riverside community southwest of town. Riding this particular entry were daughters of Riverside residents. Those identified include Oregon delegate to the National 4-H Congress Beverly Bradshaw (standing at upper center), Loreen Freerksen, Andrea Campbell, Anabelle Edwards (dark hair at center of float), and Louise Miller. The float included a model of the Riverside Community Hall and signs calling attention to the community's school club, extension unit and garden club. (From the Robert Potts collection)



**OFF TO THE HOOSGOW** - On his way to the Timber Carnival jail in 1941 is dentist M.R. Cooley, for not being properly attired in plaid shirt and Levis. Escorting Dr. Cooley are "Bull of the Woods" deputies Chuck Rawlings (left) and Carroll Waller at the corner of First Avenue and Broadalbin Street. Unsuspecting merchants and citizens were often "arrested," jailed, and fined. The fines usually resulted in the purchase of Timber Carnival buttons and/or tickets for prize drawings during the Fourth of July event. (From the Robert Potts collection)

# 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

missioners 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

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."

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 Hedie 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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