

The People Who Made Longview

The Founder

Robert A. Long

Robert A. Long was one of nine children born to Samuel and Margaret Long. Mr. Long achieved a high school education and was blessed with a photographic memory, a strong asset for entering the business world in 1872.

Mr. Long, along with his cousins Victor Bell and Robert White, started a lumberyard which eventually became the highly successful Long-Bell Lumber Company.

Long applied for a post office and was rejected because there was already a Long View, Washington. The City of Long View negotiated with R. A. Long to give up the name if he would build them a covered platform, at a cost of \$25, to protect mail sacks from passing trains.

Longview became an official city in January of 1923 with the establishment of a United States Post Office.

All photos courtesy of the Cowlitz County Historical Museum and the Longview Public Library's Longview Room.

John McClelland, Sr.

According to the book, *R.A. Long's Planned City* (penned by his son, John McClelland, Jr.) the senior Mr. McClelland (*right*) purchased *The Daily News* from Long-Bell after two years running it, as it became self-supporting.

R.A. Long not only founded the City of Longview, but also *The Daily News* in 1923, which is still being published to this day.



Victoria Freeman

Arriving in 1923, Victoria Freeman (*left*) was one of Longview's first citizens. She always wore a hat and heels in public. An African-American woman who would never take no for an answer at a time when women—black or white—weren't supposed to be asking questions, Victoria founded the Washington State Association of Colored Women and integrated Longview's public schools after the city was founded. A public park was later founded and named in her honor.



Rebecca Jane Huntington

Pioneer Rebecca Jane Huntington (*right*) and her husband, Harry, settled in 1849 on the west bank of the Cowlitz River.

They turned the abandoned Hudson's Bay Company buildings into the riverboat town of Monticello in 1851. The town was host of the 1852 Monticello Convention where Washington territory was born.



Port Manager, H.L. Tabke

In 1921, business leaders recognized the need for a port district to support economic development and rallied local voters to gain approval. This new port was located on the Cowlitz River and named the Port of Kelso, since the city of Longview had yet to be established.

In 1925, city leaders favored relocating the Port of Kelso to operate on the Columbia River. They put forward a vote and the Port of Kelso was officially moved to its current location on the Columbia River. The official name change from Kelso to Longview was formalized in 1929.

H.L. Tabke (*far right*), the first General Manager of the Port of Kelso, would oversee 72,000 tons of cargo moved across the docks in the first nine months of business.

Today the Port of Longview operates on over 830 acres and handles millions of tons of cargo annually, all from a humble beginning of 40 acres.



Jack H. Kelly, Jr. (J.H. Kelly)

In the early 1900's, Jack Kelly (*left*) emigrated to Canada and embarked on a cross-country journey beginning in Toronto and eventually ending in Prince Rupert, B.C. At each of these stops, Jack would open up a new plumbing business and start up a local soccer team. After nearly 20 years in Canada, Jack headed south for sunny Long Beach, California.

In 1923, Jack made a stop in southwest Washington. At that time, the Long Bell Timber Company was preparing to build the largest sawmill in the world on the banks of the Columbia River. The company town needed schools, housing for employees and a major hotel and Jack Kelly knew they would need a good plumber.

Jack scrapped his plans for California and set up shop in "downtown" Longview on Commerce Avenue. He promptly started a soccer team called the Longview Timber Barons and, in the early years, the soccer team was more successful than his plumbing business.

As time went on, Mr. Kelly's plumbing became successful. This positioned his company well to take advantage of Longview's booming economy.

Jack H. Kelly, Jr. quickly diversified his business model and his J.H. Kelly Company would become the area's number one provider of construction services.



Long-Bell Executive Board

By 1927, the Long-Bell Lumber Company Longview mill was the largest in the world. From left to right, W.F. Ryder (Ryderwoods' name sake), Wesley Vandercook (chief engineer), J.D. Tennant (Vice President), S. M. (Mark) Morris (Vice-President), R.S. Davis (traffic manager) and R.A. Long, founder and Chairman of the Board.

Longview's First City Leaders Chosen

Longview was dedicated in July, 1923. In February of 1924, it was incorporated and a municipal government was established. Its history began in the roaring '20s and today Longview continues to grow in size and diversity. The first city leaders were instrumental in steering the city's early development and policies while working diligently to create a successful community.



A. L. Gibbs,
Mayor



Harry W. Jackson,
Police Chief



R.E. Eichelberger,
Superintendent



J.H. Seacrist,
City Attorney