

Roy Craft (1908-1989)



Former Foundation director (1983-1987), Roy Craft, of Stevenson, Washington, died on Christmas day, 1989, in Hood River Memorial Hospital at the age of 81.

Roy was dubbed as the Foundation's "official press photographer" when he received the Foundation's Award of Meritorious Achievement in 1987. He and his wife, Gracie, attended every annual meeting of the Foundation from 1974 until his illness in 1988. Readers of *We Proceeded On* will recall his many annual meeting photographs which appeared in the magazine. Those who attended the meetings during those years will also recall receiving special tabloid photo-stories about the annual meetings published by Roy. Until the attendance of the Foundation's meetings grew to what it has been lately, Roy always had the attendees gather for a group photo.

Roy was born November 12, 1908, in McCleary, Washington. He began in the newspaper business as the co-publisher of the *McCleary Stimulator* at the young age of 16. It was a legitimate newspaper, a positive addition to the small town. Roy, his twin brother, Ray, and a friend started the paper, which continued to be published until the boys went off to college.

In 1932, after graduating from the University of Oregon, Roy was commissioned in the U.S. Army as Second Lieutenant in Military Intelligence (he eventually rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel). He began several newspapers at various duty posts, and became editor of *Stars and Stripes* in Europe. He worked as a correspondent for *Life* magazine after the war, and later served as publicist for several motion picture studios. At Twentieth Century Fox, he served five years in charge of publicity for Marilyn Monroe.

Roy and Gracie returned to Washington in 1958, and purchased the *Skamania County Pioneer*. The couple retired in 1974, but Roy continued to write a weekly column (the last of which was published after his death), and served as editor emeritus of the *Pioneer*. It was on the *Pioneer* press that the photo-story tabloids about the Foundation's annual meetings were published.

Due to Roy's health problems, he and Gracie were unable to attend the 1988 and 1989 Foundation meetings. In a January 16, 1990, letter to *WPO*, Gracie wrote: "We hated to miss the meetings in Bismarck and Bozeman."

Roy's interest in the Foundation and the Lewis and Clark Expedition will always be remembered and appreciated. Gracie explained: "Roy wanted to do a story on Our Majestic Whistling Swans (he never went for the name 'Tundra Swans'), as described by Lewis and Clark, for *WPO*. After almost disappearing, they are returning to Franz Lake, near Beacon Rock, and this winter there were several hundred. Time ran out, but the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation was near and dear to his heart to the end."

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Prepared by Bob Gatten, 2011