

JASPER NEWTON “JACK” LONG
Induction to Georgia Jugfest Hall of Fame May 2016

Born 1880, son of potter John Sebastian Long and Eldora Lisenby Long, Jack was a talented potter operating his own pottery shop in Byron, Georgia until 1938. He passed in 1967 at home with family in Columbia, South Carolina and is buried there.



In life he enjoyed the great works like those of Rudyard Kipling and Emerson. Several of Emerson’s poetry lines aptly describe the life Jack lived-

“The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The 1930 article in the Macon Telegraph quotes Jack Long, reflecting one who always gave his best: It reads-

“He had evidently been impressed by the mouse-trap philosophy of Emerson, for he said that he had always felt that if he made the finest of pottery the world would come and patronize him. He had not thought of the difference in the way things are done today and the way they were done when Emerson wrote about the mousetrap, for he said: “A young man came down here and asked me to make a great quantity of cheap stuff that he could sell at a low price. I told him I had been making the best that my talents would allow me to make, and I could not think of making low grade stuff.”

“Yes, said the young man to me, you are getting older, and before you know it you will be too old to work and you will be as poor as Job’s turkey. You’d better make what the public wants. It wants something cheap.”

“But, I couldn’t do it, apologized Mr. Long. Don’t you think someone would like to get one of these beautifully tinted jars for a cemetery vase at 75 cents or this nicer one at \$1 than to buy one that the wind will blow to pieces or will break in a freeze? Why should I make the stuff that won’t

stand up and that person would be ashamed to put over the grave of a loved one or keep on the mantel.” And as he asked the question, he caressed the glazed vases that he said should endure for six thousand years under reasonably favorable conditions.”

His pottery pieces are known for their beauty and include both hand thrown and molded pieces, some in lovely shades of cobalt blue, turquoise and gold.

“Character is higher than intellect...a great soul will be strong to live, as well as to think.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Jack loved communicating with others in his travels and by the written word. His dresser drawer held thin onion skin stationary sheets for the frequent letter writing he did in his older years. This same antique wooden dresser, which his granddaughter still holds dear today, held bagged Georgia clay he would bring home to Columbia from the creek banks of Echeconnee during jaunts he'd make in his 1930's car. He not only deftly worked the fine Georgia clay in his younger years but continued into his 80's building pottery wheels, donating to colleges and making clay come alive on his wheel as his children and grandchildren watched. He would seize the malleable Georgia clay, place it onto his handmade pottery wheel and work it with water, until it effortlessly appeared to develop lovely curving edges, ending in a perfect piece of art.

Jack was also quoted in the 1930 Macon article very proudly saying-
“I walked down this very road soon after that, (his father's untimely death from being caught up in the pug wheel) on my way to Columbus to serve as apprentice machinist. I learned my trade and began as a railroad engineer, working for several roads and I rose to an earning of \$400 a month, but I yearned for the calling of my Scotch fathers. I couldn't stay out of pottery.”

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Jack Long stood true to himself by giving his best at all of his endeavors.

He ran a pottery business in Byron, Georgia with his family until 1938. He allowed his young daughters Chanie and Jacqueline to exhibit their childhood talents making pottery pieces that he would fire for them.

With a constant quest to be on the road, Jack chose to be out meeting others, sharing his art and giving of his talents. He would travel with a trailer load of pottery, carrying this into other states like Florida, selling his wares. He visited children from his first marriage: son (Harry) in Alabama and daughter (Thelma) in North Carolina.

Jack was truly a “Jack of all trades”. He served as a machinist and a railroad engineer. He created fine pottery and even built homes for family members. The home he lived in with his second wife Louise Brooks Long and youngest daughter Jacqueline and her family in Columbia was built by his own hands. He also built other homes-one for his other daughter Chanie, which is still in the family-and also did this for his sisters. There most likely were others he built. These homes were framed up with wood into which concrete was poured-much like a fine piece of molded pottery. Great niece Betty Jo recalls that building them was a family affair with even the young children helping complete the task of pouring in the cement mixture. He created an ornate mosaic flamingo on the front wall of the Columbia home. Columbia College, obtained some of his works for their arts department and in 1971 purchased the home, later demolishing it for expansion.

“Live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

His descendants inherited that “on the road again” quest that Jack passed on. He was always ready to get out and go places. Dressed well, he would jump in his old coupe or hitch a ride seeking out an adventure, often traveling for weeks at a time. He also spent time at the Merritt family pottery in his younger years.

The family of Jack Long relishes this time we have to be here to see him recognized, to meet with family and to traverse those same Georgia roads over which he traveled and carried trailer loads of fine pottery for the generations to come. We express our appreciation for the recognition given to him for his life-long pursuit of creating pottery that stood the test of time and is highly valued still today for its quality and beauty.