



## Figureheads of State

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Organized in 1853, Washington existed as a territory for 36 years. As early as 1864 residents complained of living under "the oldest Territorial Government in the United States." Reflecting a long, indeed a prolonged, history, 13 individuals served as governor: Isaac Stevens, Fayette McMullin, Richard Gholson, William Pickering, George Cole, Marshall Moore, Alvin Flanders, Edward Salomon, Elisha Ferry, William Newell, Watson C. Squire, Eugene Semple, and Miles Moore.

A strong executive in an inherently weak system, Isaac Stevens was by dint of character and ambition an exception to most generalizations regarding the territorial governorship, and so we will leave him out of this discussion of Washington Territory's nominal leadership. His actions as governor have been extensively examined and debated elsewhere. Thanks to a voluminous and much studied collection of personal and official papers and to the work of biographer Kent Richards, he remains the best-known and far-and-away most able of the territorial governors.

With the notable exception of the energetic and controversial Stevens, none exhibited more than ordinary ability. Several, in sorry fact, fully lived up to the commonly expressed observation that Washington was "an asylum for worn-out political hacks who have outlived their usefulness elsewhere." All were born outside the Pacific Northwest and only one, Miles Moore, was a genuine longtime territorial settler. Edward Salomon frankly admitted, upon learning that he was being sent to Puget Sound, to complete ignorance regarding the whereabouts, resources, and prospects of his new home. Governor Pickering confessed that the countryside beyond Olympia, the capital of Washington, was "entirely unknown," at least so far as his personal knowledge was concerned.

Under the prevailing system of federal administration, proven capacity and manifest responsibility were secondary factors in the selection of Washington's chief executives. Some would-be governors made straightforward appeals through influential friends and relatives, explicitly detailing the private motivations behind the call to public service. Well-known Puget Sound attorney and Republican activist Elwood Evans explained in 1861 that he had "practiced law for ten years...with better advantage to reputation...than to success in securing wealth." Even "one or two years salary as Governor," though, would make him "the happiest man in the world...my debts all paid, my property paid for, and that little family...for whom I covet this honor, secure in a sweet little cottage homestead."

Other candidates, like Abraham Lincoln's old Illinois acquaintance, William Pickering, favored subtle approaches, denying any interest in personal political preferment. In the course of recommending other Republicans for various jobs, Pickering repeatedly reminded Lincoln of his own selfless labors "in endeavoring to convert the Savage Democratic heathen from the errors of their ways." Indirection, at least

in 1861, was a more effective method, for the governorship of Washington Territory went that year to the Illinoisan, not to Evans. As a general rule, however, gubernatorial aspirants avoided overt effort.

Appointed in 1870, Edward Salomon of Illinois was a leader in both the German-American and the Jewish communities and therefore the beneficiary of a two-for-one patronage strategy. Some governors were selected on the basis of past party service rather than in expectation of future good works. Fayette McMullin was a former Virginia congressman and a disappointed aspirant for the governorship of Kansas. In addition to his invaluable ethnic connections, Edward Salomon had just been defeated for reelection to important local office in Chicago. William Newell was a venerable Republican warhorse, with service in Congress, where he had been Abraham Lincoln's personal physician, and as governor of New Jersey dating back to the 1840s. Most recently, he had lost the Jersey statehouse to George McClellan, onetime commander of the Army of the Potomac and Democratic presidential candidate. "The only claim [Newell] has for the position," an unfriendly newspaper observed of the new territorial chief executive in 1880, "seems to be that he was defeated by Gen. McClellan."

By the late territorial period, over 500 federal employees toiled within the boundaries of Washington. From the governor on down, all were subject to removal upon a change of administrations in the nation's capital. The territory had only a single nonvoting congressional delegate and cast no tally in presidential elections, factors limiting the likelihood of local residents being appointed, particularly to major positions. Offices were filled instead by outsiders, from states where patronage might truly reward past behavior and influence future partisan contests. The pro-South Pierce and Buchanan administrations selected Isaac Stevens, a New Englander also sympathetic to the South, and Fayette McMullin and Richard Gholson, both of whom advocated slavery and supported secession. Illinois politicians William Pickering, Edward Salomon, and Elisha Ferry held a decided advantage under Lincoln and Grant. Watson Squire secured the governorship in 1884 as the candidate of the New York state Republican organization and retained office, at least for a time, by appealing to Democratic President Grover Cleveland as a fellow conservative New Yorker.

Occupants of the governor's chair generally possessed more prestige than genuine power. Formal organizational tables conveyed a misleading view of territorial affairs, at least to insiders focused on the material rewards of the various federal appointive posts. Elwood Evans considered the superintendency of Indian Affairs to be the "best, most lucrative and...from its patronage" the "most influential position." In a rival view of the real world of Washington politics, the collector of customs, which paid a salary, "fees and emoluments," the free use of a house, and the right to employ a family member as clerk, was singled out as "the best office in the Territory." By the late 1860s the appointment was supposedly "worth between \$5000 & \$6000...per annum." Other contemporary students contended that the surveyor general, an official with numerous contracts to let, or the territorial secretary, the disbursing agent for federal funds, enjoyed the best money-making opportunities.

Governors made do, in contrast, with second tier wealth-generating options. Isaac Stevens purchased town lots and served as president of the Northern Pacific Rail Road Company, a firm incorporated in Olympia for the purpose, never realized, of building a rail line to the Columbia. Convinced that an "active industrious man can make more money...raising and fattening Hogs" than from any other endeavor, William Pickering acquired acreage in the Issaquah valley from the University of Washington endowment grant. Marshall Moore invested in Tacoma land, King County coal fields, and various failed railroad projects. William Newell participated in a railway scheme to link Grays Harbor with Puget Sound. Watson Squire and Eugene Semple, meanwhile, profited from substantial pre-gubernatorial business ventures, the former in Seattle real estate and the latter as owner of the Lucia Mills, a Vancouver lumber manufacturing enterprise.

As for realistic exercise of political influence, the territorial governors depended primarily upon individual ambition and initiative. The office held no statutory control over the three other appointees in the territorial

executive department: the secretary, the United States attorney, and the federal marshal. Discord was inevitable when the secretary, as in the cases of Charles Mason under McMullin, L. Jay S. Turney and Elwood Evans under Pickering, and Nicholas Owings under Semple, was a partisan rival. Until 1864 the governor had no authority to reject or approve acts of the legislative assembly. The lack of a veto mechanism, one experienced observer noted, deprived the chief executive of the ability "to protect...himself from insult, or to protect the interests of the Government at Washington."

Although aspiring politicians and opposition party journalists regularly attacked the federal "machine" or "ring" in Olympia, the gubernatorial patronage was insufficient throughout most of the territorial period for the building of effective partisan organizations. Isaac Stevens, the only holder of the office to also serve as head of the Indian superintendency, utilized the latter position to build a personal following.

The typical governor, however, commissioned notaries public and dispensed an annual scholarship to the University of Washington. Edward Salomon appointed a caretaker for Fort Steilacoom, abandoned by the army and due to become the territory's mental hospital, and an agent to receive old Fort Colville, on the upper Columbia River, from the Hudson's Bay Company. Elisha Ferry named former congressional delegate Selucious Garfield as Washington's representative to the American Cheap Transportation Association convention. In 1874 Congress made the territorial auditor, treasurer, librarian, and university board of regents appointees of the governor. By one account, the chief executive thereafter had 38 jobs at his disposal and was, for the first time, "a potent political factor." The inherently weak nature of Washington Territory government, though, continued to obstruct the substantive exercise of power.

Exercised from 1853 on, the authority to issue pardons was onerous, controversial, and potentially scandalous. Petitioners constantly besieged governors on behalf of the "wrongfully convicted." Although consumed with genuine crises and legitimate issues, Isaac Stevens devoted precious time and energy to such matters. United States Attorney Leander Holmes advised Governor Marshall Moore to ignore all claims in support of incarcerated felons, since "half the men in this Territory will sign any petition that may be presented...and the next day would sign a remonstrance against the [first] petition." Moore and his successors persisted in the practice, at least in cases where political benefit appeared to outweigh the pitfalls. Widely maligned as a "pardon broker," Elisha Ferry nearly lost his office after pardoning the son of an influential legislator. Serving in the late 1880s, Eugene Semple was the first governor to summarily reject pleas for clemency as inherently suspect and counter to the public interest in law and order.

Busy clearing farms, developing town sites, and attending to other matters of personal importance, most settlers paid little attention to the governors. Federal officeholders came from far away, were selected for reasons foreign to the concerns of Washington residents, and generally appeared incapable, as Seattle attorney Thomas Burke quipped, of "tell(ing) a fir from an oak."

Indifference was also evident with regard to local partisan affairs. The congressional delegate had no vote and little influence in the nation's capital, justifying the lack of constituent interest. Congress, meanwhile, restricted the authority of the territorial assembly, a body "unable to wield," one critic noted, "that political power incident to a similar body in a State." County government, which assessed and collected taxes, was in theory of vital significance, but the limited fiscal burden imposed upon property owners generated neither intense scrutiny nor serious public debate.

From Edward Salomon on, Washington governors tended to their various responsibilities in an atmosphere of impending statehood. Only the right combination of political circumstances was needed to bring about formal admission to the Union. The territory's population tripled during the 1870s, with growth especially dramatic in the Palouse. By 1880 half of the population living east of the Cascades was non-Indian, compared to one third in the Puget Sound region.

Reflecting the rapid development of the interior Northwest, wheat and flour shipments out of the Columbia River mounted in value from \$593,000 in 1869 to over \$4 million in 1874. The lack of direct communication over the mountains, however, acted as a countervailing force against admission to the Union. To reach the Walla Walla valley in 1855, Isaac Stevens took a roundabout route, down the Cowlitz River to the Columbia and then upstream to The Dalles. Three decades later Eugene Semple advised that he left the territorial limits only when traveling between western and eastern Washington. Prevailing transportation patterns, by water and then by rail, followed the natural corridor opened by the Great River of the West, making the emerging wheat country, settlers complained, a "tributary to Portland."

The population continued to mount. Eclipsing long-dominant Walla Walla, King and Spokane became the largest counties, while Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane Falls surged to the lead among cities. The value of Washington's taxable property increased from \$18.9 million in 1877 to \$44.4 million in 1884. Centered on the "grand coal field" east and southeast of Lake Washington, mining expanded to rival logging and lumbering as a vital industry. Coal shipments, most to San Francisco, mounted from 70,000 tons in 1875 to 214,000 tons in 1884. Much of this growth anticipated the completion of the northern transcontinental railroad. Easterners and Westerners alike demanded the construction of a railroad across the Cascades. "Our wants are reciprocal," the Yakima Record noted of the mutual benefits to be realized, for the east side needed "the wood, coal, and lumber of the Sound," and the latter "must have our beef, wheat, and dairy products."

By breaking the Portland stranglehold, the mountain line, once in place, would result in reduced freight rates. "What we have to sell will be worth more," a wheat region newspaper enthused, "and what we buy less." A direct link between Puget Sound and the upper Columbia would also make Washington a viable political entity, worthy of statehood. "The road," Seattle's Weekly Intelligencer pointed out, "is necessary to the unity and homogeneity of the Territory." The Northern Pacific mainline across the Cascades reached Tacoma by switchback in 1883 and by tunnel in 1887, uniting the long-divided halves of the territory and creating a workable commonwealth.

President Benjamin Harrison declared Washington a member of the union of states on November 11, 1889. A week later, Governor Ferry and the other new officers of state government, already elected, took their places in Olympia. The commonwealth was at last delivered, Miles Moore declared, "from the condition of Territorial vassalage." For 36 years Washington had been governed by feudal-like representatives of a distant and intermittently concerned power. Governors were appointed by, and presumably loyal to, presidents based in the nation's capital. The political interest of faraway administrations was paramount in the selection and retention of territorial chief executives. Washington Territory was governed, for good or ill, according to the requirements and perceptions of Washington, D.C. No wonder, then, that genuine local residents sought relief from a system that denied them the right to name their own officeholders.

A tongue-in-cheek response is difficult to avoid when considering the individual territorial governors. By and large, persons of little or no consequence in their own time resist sober analysis. Only two of the governors, Stevens and Semple, have merited scholarly biographies. Four alone—Stevens, Ferry, Squire, and Semple—left significant collections of personal and official papers. The same four were the only ones to have noteworthy post-gubernatorial accomplishments: Stevens as delegate to Congress and martyred Civil War general, Ferry as the first elected governor, Squire as one of the original United States senators, and Semple as a promoter of Seattle harbor improvements.

As a body, the territorial governors differed in a fundamental way from their statehood successors. Appointed without popular mandate, they lacked independent initiative. Isaac Stevens was an activist in the extreme, but his energy came more from personal ambition than from any inherent attributes of his

principal office. Those who followed him in Olympia were, for the most part, time-serving components of an outside political system, rather than exemplars of action and achievement.

### **Fayette McMullin, 1857-59**

Succeeding the controversial Stevens, Fayette McMullin was so obscure that one early Washington history consistently misspelled his name. Although the former Virginia congressman and continuing defender of slavery took office "like wildfire" in 1857, according to a newspaper retrospective, he displayed no real interest in the territory before, during, or after his brief tenure in Olympia.

The new governor dealt, in the main, with the same central problems confronting his predecessor: geographical isolation and relations with the Indians. Since the transcontinental railroad could not be built under prevailing political conditions, he recommended that the Oregon Trail be somehow shifted north to approximate the route followed by Stevens in 1853. When Indians from the British possessions murdered prominent Whidbey Island settler Isaac Ebey, the gubernatorial response was entirely ineffective. After a good deal of pointless bluster, McMullin conceded that the territory lacked the means to "chastise" the killers or prevent future attacks. His failure to cope with the northern Indians was the principal item cited by the press in condemning the governor for "nonfulfillment of the promises which he voluntarily made."

In a sarcastic aside, historian H. H. Bancroft suggested that McMullin's main achievement "seems to have been to get rid of one wife and marry another." Although the governor did, in fact, procure a legislative divorce, scandalizing many contemporaries, his record was genuinely besmirched by an episode of morally reprehensible behavior. The execution of Chief Leschi, who was convicted of murder on perjured testimony during the 1855-56 Puget Sound conflict, was scheduled for early 1858. A defense committee of sorts, including some regular army officers at Fort Steilacoom, was organized on behalf of the unjustly condemned man. Meeting with the defense team at the post in mid January to examine the exculpatory evidence, McMullin appeared convinced of the need for a pardon.

Upon returning to Olympia he was confronted with a "remonstrance" from Stevens supporters, threatening bodily harm should Leschi be "respited." Declining to stand firm, the governor proclaimed clemency "a gross violation of Justice." Attending a public indignation meeting, he "indulged," by his own account, "in some very strong language of censure" against the military advocates of leniency. Allowing an innocent man to hang-Leschi was executed on February 19-McMullin demanded that the War Department transfer the Steilacoom officers, the witnesses to his cowardice, from Washington Territory for daring to interfere with local law and order.

### **Richard D. Gholson, 1859-61**

McMullin formally gave way in 1859 to Richard Gholson of Kentucky. The third territorial governor was of so little account that on at least one occasion his position on an issue was seriously cited as the only proof needed for the validity of the contrary argument. Although not officially replaced until the spring of 1861, the pro-slavery Gholson actually served only until May 1860, when he returned home to work on behalf of secession.

The governor's sole initiative of note involved a matter entirely outside his jurisdiction. When American and British troops occupied San Juan Island in the summer of 1859, Gholson placed the territorial arsenal-a thousand muskets and rifles-at federal disposal, encouraged local Indian tribes to intervene, and complained that he was not consulted during negotiations to resolve the crisis. The island was "a part of the Territory of Washington and subject to its laws," Secretary of State Lewis Cass reminded the inappropriately-offended

chief executive, "if it belongs to the United States," an "anomalous" question yet to be answered by the proper authorities.

### **William Pickering, 1862-66**

Sidestepping his way into Civil War home front employment in 1861 by promoting the merits of other Republican stalwarts, William Pickering was the first governor to preside over a Washington Territory with its modern-day boundaries. The discovery of gold on the Clearwater River sent thousands of trespassing prospectors onto the Nez Perce reservation and, with \$100,000 in dust shipped out to Portland each week, led to the creation of a new territorial entity, Idaho, in 1863. Walla Walla, the supply point for the mining country, quickly became Washington's largest and richest community. The territory was henceforth divided on a west-to-east basis, pitting the industrial and increasingly Republican Puget Sound against the mostly Democratic farmers and miners of the greater Walla Walla valley.

Pickering was a word-happy nutcase, always "indulging," one newspaper claimed, in "meaningless rhetoric." No sentence was complete, in his peculiar style of discourse, until fattened into a paragraph and no phrase worthy of being put to paper without underlying mark of emphasis. The second occupant of the office to complete an entire term and the oldest of all the territorial governors, the British-born Pickering had some Stevens-like interests. He arranged public support for the Snoqualmie Pass wagon road, an early effort to directly link Puget Sound with the new interior settlements, and urged that Seattle be promptly selected as the terminus for the federally-chartered Northern Pacific Railroad.

Pickering also sought the final subjugation of the Indians, whom he invariably referred to as "the wild Arab-like savages." Should the tribes decline to voluntarily remove themselves from areas desired by settlers and investors, Washington's governor favored extermination as a justifiable means of opening land to development. In something of an interim measure, Pickering joined with the state of Oregon in organizing emigrant protection expeditions, dispatching territorial volunteers upon a "holy Pilgrimage" to guard travelers on the overland trail.

More so even than Indians, the governor intended to exterminate political rivals in the Republican Party. Belatedly arriving in Olympia in June 1862, Pickering participated in the final lurid events leading to the shooting death of Benjamin Kendall, the superintendent of Indian Affairs originally appointed by the Lincoln administration as part of an effort to secure bipartisan support for the northern war effort. The alcoholic territorial secretary, L. Jay S. Turney, another Illinoisan, became the next victim, if only in the figurative sense. Returning "like the Dog to his vomit, and like the sow to...wallowing in the mire," the "Traitor Judas" had committed the ultimate immoral act, awarding the coveted public printing contract to an opposition newspaper. Joined by Surveyor General Anson Henry, the president's longtime Springfield neighbor, Pickering also secured the removal of the customs collector, Victor Smith, an undeniably venal follower of Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase, who was a possible contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 1864. On the debit side, the governor failed to have the United States attorney in Washington Territory, John McGilvra, fired for attempting to curb the illegal liquor trade on the miner-invaded Nez Perce reservation. He also came up short in a vitriolic campaign against the new secretary, Elwood Evans, "a treacherous deceiver" guilty of turning the territory's printing business over to a Democratic editor as part of a plot-Washington, remember, cast no electoral votes-to elect George McClellan to the presidency.

Given his preoccupation with intra-party feuds, the governor met an appropriate political fate. Attending Lincoln's second inaugural in March 1865, Pickering lingered on in the nation's capital with the Republican multitudes for patronage-oriented conferences. Before departing for a fateful evening at Ford's Theater, the president supposedly promised, verbally, to reappoint Washington's chief executive. According to his subsequent claim, Pickering walked behind Lincoln's coffin "deep in mud every step" to the White House,

where the "lid was removed, and I...gazed upon the plain, manly, honest face, I had both respected and loved." Confident that Andrew Johnson would honor his slain predecessor's unwitnessed pledge, the governor set out on "that very long, & still more costly & expensive journey" to Olympia, expecting to recoup his expenditures, and more, from the vital Lincoln connection. A year passed, however, and Pickering, his original term expiring, faced up to the bitter realization that "there has been some slip between the cup of reappointment and my lips."

### **George E. Cole, 1866-67**

Holding office during the years promised the hapless Pickering, Washington's next three governors accomplished nothing and are best appreciated as dim reflections of post-Civil War battles over the nature of Reconstruction. George E. Cole was a New York native, a Democrat, and an 1850 migrant to Oregon. After the discovery of gold in Idaho, he opened a warehouse in Walla Walla and, benefiting from the rapid growth east of the Cascades, won election to Congress in 1863. Appointed governor by Andrew Johnson in 1866, Cole vainly attempted to take up his duties. The legislature recognized him as the legitimate occupant of the gubernatorial chair, but Pickering refused, literally, to give up the official premises, arguing that Johnson's pending impeachment nullified all presidential appointments. Months of stalemate ensued, before Cole abandoned the governorship when the Senate, controlled by enemies of the administration, failed to confirm his nomination. Years later he received a consolation prize of apparently equal status—the postmaster's position in Portland.

### **Marshall F. Moore, 1867-69**

New York-born Marshall F. Moore, a Yale graduate and Iowa attorney, won senate confirmation, his lengthy and bloody service in the western campaigns of Grant and Sherman offsetting suspect Democratic party connections. Moore's otherwise uneventful tenure, from late 1867 through early 1869, revealed the rhetorical excesses of Reconstruction politics, even in the isolated Pacific Northwest. Although the governor had been severely wounded at Missionary Ridge and would die in 1870 from the lingering effects of battlefield injuries, Republicans charged that he had gone through the war unscathed, from obvious cowardice. Despite holding the brevet rank of major general, Moore, according to his shameless opponents, had never risen above a purchased major's commission: "He sought and obtained a place in the army he...was incompetent to fill, and then trifled with the lives of the brave soldiers placed under his charge." Leaving office amidst accusations that he was a friend of John Wilkes Booth, Moore ran as the Democratic candidate for Congress in 1869, losing narrowly to the chameleon-like fair weather patriot Selucious Garfielde.

### **Alvin Flanders, 1869-70**

While Marshall Moore vainly attempted to move from the governorship, Alvin Flanders ventured along the reverse track, with only marginally greater success. A New England native, Flanders spent the 1850s in San Francisco, operating a lumber yard and a newspaper and earning a reputation as "one of the most ardent Republicans in California." Moving to eastern Washington during the Civil War, he profited from the river trade between Walla Walla and Portland.

Flanders was elected to Congress in 1867, serving as a minor cog in the radical campaign against the appointees of Andrew Johnson, and securing the governor's office from the incoming Grant administration as a reward. The new chief executive quickly learned the negative consequences of making the wrong political enemy. When the forthrightly corrupt Selucious Garfielde became the Republican congressional nominee in 1869, Flanders and other federal officers "bolted," supposedly from moral indignation. In victory, of course,

Garfielde wasted no time in procuring the dismissal of the governor, ending the latter's brief, yet entirely unspectacular, career in regional politics.

### **Edward Salomon, 1870-72**

German-born Edward S. Salomon-member of the Illinois bar, Civil War general and, according to one admirer, "a gentleman and...energetic friend to the Territory"-seemed a major advance over his immediate predecessors. Ignoring bigoted Democratic attacks on "Our Jew Governor," he was particularly effective in promoting migration to Washington.

Unfortunately, Salomon was also the only governor in territorial history to be removed for fiscal impropriety. For years Olympia insiders had "borrowed" funds paid the land office by homesteading claimants, using the deposits to make short-term private loans at high interest rates. Salomon was one of several individuals implicated in July 1871 when a visiting federal auditor found that thousands of dollars were missing. On a hurried trip to Portland he secured enough cash, on credit, to make up the difference and save his job. "The funds were replaced to make the count good," a local banker privately reported, "with the belief that when they were made up the agent would go away" and then they would take the money out again and pay up their loans, made but for a "few days." The auditor remained on the scene, however, and Salomon was ruined financially and then summarily dismissed from the governorship.

### **Elisha P. Ferry, 1872-80**

Governor Elisha P. Ferry, the only two-term territorial chief executive and winner of the first gubernatorial election under statehood, was more a symbol of the new railroad-hungry times than an important historical figure in his own right. The veteran Illinois attorney came to Washington in 1869 as the federal surveyor general. In that post Ferry established an enduring relationship with the Northern Pacific, promising to assist the firm in all possible ways. Support from the railroad, plus a commitment by President Grant to appoint a resident of the territory, placed him in the governorship upon Edward Salomon's removal in early 1872. Although in reality only a newcomer, Ferry's promise to make the Pacific Northwest "my future home" was residency enough, at least for the administration and local Republicans.

A friend privately admitted that "the possession of extraordinary ability is not claimed for Gov. Ferry by his most enthusiastic admirers." Despite some talent as a public speaker, the governor was best-appreciated as an early model corporate attorney, working behind the scenes on the details of issues and problems. Regularly described as an "entertaining and courteous gentleman," he avoided "self laudation" and was often compared, for finely-tailored stoicism, to President Grant. Cynically well-versed regarding such matters as the partisan use of the press and the intricacies of Walla Walla's saloon-based political culture, Ferry also liked spending time with fellow lawyers in discussion of constitutional principles. Leaders of both parties respected his legal talents, while Democrats admitted to professional admiration of his skilled manipulation of electoral contests.

With respect to his public acts, Ferry was a transitional figure. He was the last of the governors to deal in a major way with difficulties involving the Indians. During the Nez Perce and Bannock wars of 1877 and 1878, Ferry visited the scenes of potential trouble east of the Cascades and, in gestures meant to calm fear rather than stimulate aggression, distributed small amounts of arms to settlers. Like a latter-day Isaac Stevens, he presided over a great council at Spokane Falls in June 1879 in an attempt to resolve problems occasioned by rapid white settlement.

Looking to the future, meanwhile, Ferry resolved one of Washington's first labor disputes. When unpaid workers, striking for their back wages, threatened to prevent completion of the Northern Pacific Columbia

River-Tacoma branch line in late 1873, the governor rejected railroad demands that he call out the militia and arrest the protesters. Showing, for all his normal friendliness toward the NP, that he was not a complete corporate tool, Ferry brokered a settlement under which the money owed was forthcoming and most of the strikers rehired.

### **William A. Newell, 1880-84**

Ferry sought a third term in 1880, apparently because his ambitions for statehood and a seat in the United States Senate might be furthered best within, rather than without, government service. Although public opinion generally supported reappointment, or at least the selection of another territorial resident, the office went instead to veteran New Jersey politician William Newell. Widely dismissed as "superannuated," Newell, in his mid 60s, was the last of the major federal appointees to the territory to claim, even tenuously, a connection to Lincoln.

The governor's closest approximation of an achievement, positive or negative, was the acquisition of supposedly escape-proof shackles for penitentiary inmates. Otherwise, Newell spent much of his time in the nation's capital, lobbying for a second four-year stint in Olympia. G. Watson C. Squire, 1884-87 Instead of an aged career politico, Washington was presented in 1884 with a hefty and well-groomed minor league robber baron. A lawyer, war veteran, and-by virtue of a fortuitous marriage-an executive with the Remington Arms Company, Watson C. Squire was actively involved in New York Republican politics. Migrating to Seattle "under a cloud" in 1880-having, according to reliable reports, embezzled \$30,000 from Remington-he invested heavily in local real estate, soon becoming the second-largest property owner in King County. Despite his new connection with the territory's leading city, Squire secured the governorship as an easterner, endorsed by New Yorkers and appointed by the Empire State's premier politician, President Chester Alan Arthur. In office, he promoted foreign trade, an interest reflecting years of luxury class world travel and the manifest needs of a commercially dependent lumbering and wheat region. The Squire years, however, were memorable for the outbreak of anti-Chinese violence, the most disruptive crisis to befall Washington since the Indian conflicts of the 1850s.

There was nothing new about the presence of the Chinese in Washington Territory. Beginning in the mid 1860s, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, the Columbia River steamboat monopoly, offered special "coolie" rates to encourage the importation of Asian labor. Hundreds, indeed thousands, of newcomers flocked to the mines east of the Cascades and to construction projects on both sides of the mountains. Two-thirds of the over 700 workers building the Northern Pacific branch line toward Tacoma, for instance, were migrants from China. Open prejudice quickly became common in the Northwest. The Washington legislature imposed a special tax on Asian residents in 1864. White citizens blamed outbreaks of "pestilence" in Olympia in 1869 and small pox in Walla Walla in 1871 on supposedly lax foreign sanitary habits.

The Knights of Labor movement, meanwhile, blamed low wages and unemployment on Chinese competition for jobs, an especially compelling argument in the fall of 1885, when the regional economy experienced a downturn. On November 3 the nearly 200 Chinese residents of Tacoma were expelled from the city in a roundup orchestrated by city officials. A helpless Governor Squire issued a vapid proclamation calling upon the public to reject the "spirit of lawlessness." The governor was prepared to act in Seattle, however, where his personal property holdings appeared to be under threat from rabid unionists. After weeks of tension, the pro-expulsion forces struck on February 7, 1886, loading 196 persons aboard a departing steamer. Roughly the same number of Chinese placed themselves under the protection of a Home Guard, organized by "law-abiding, law upholding, patriotic citizens" convinced that another bigot victory would be the prelude to a demand for wage increases. Proclaiming martial law following an exchange of gunfire, Squire sent the territorial militia into the streets and, in a series of stern orders, closed the saloons, imposed a curfew, and

ordered the deportation of all "vagrants." Convinced that local force was insufficient to put down the "state of active insurrection," he appealed, successfully, to President Grover Cleveland for federal intervention.

Many observers charged that the civil authorities, Governor Squire in particular, had greatly exaggerated the magnitude of the crisis. Arriving in Seattle on February 10 at the head of the federal troops, General John Gibbon "found every thing perfectly quiet and peaceful," the "riotous proceedings" having been put down by "prompt action" on the part of the Home Guard. Squire nonetheless emerged from the affair as a momentary, if accidental, national figure, the subject of favorable newspaper and magazine coverage from coast to coast. Although local supporters promoted him as the obvious Republican candidate for Congress, the governor's immediate problem, since a Democratic administration had been installed in March 1885, was retention of his present office. President Cleveland, fortunately, was both a New Yorker and a professed admirer of the Washington chief executive's stand against organized labor. Taking heed of a warning from conservative territorial Democrats that Squire's removal "would be a public calamity," Cleveland waited until April 1887 to send a member of his own party to Olympia.

### **Eugene Semple, 1887-89**

After Squire, Washington's next governor was Eugene Semple, a native of Illinois, a Democrat by family tradition, and a longtime Pacific Northwest resident. After two decades in Oregon, where he practiced law, ran a newspaper, and was active in party affairs, he had crossed the Columbia in 1883, going into the lumber trade in Vancouver. Semple's generally unpopular nomination was perceived in all quarters as a prime example of the Cleveland administration's ineptitude. West and east of the mountains, the governor was tainted as an Oregonian. Conservatives of both parties resented the dismissal of Squire, the supposed hero of Seattle. "The appointment is condemned by all the leading Democrats in this section," a Squire associate reported from northern Puget Sound. Looking for an optimistic sign, one newspaper commented that at least Semple wasn't a southerner.

Semple was, to the further consternation of conservatives, Washington's first reform governor. He struggled to bring existing institutions, particularly the much-maligned university, up to modern standards, initiated the process leading to the founding of an agricultural college at Pullman, and supervised relocation of the penitentiary to Walla Walla. Thanks to "the lax administration of the past fifteen years," Semple pronounced in reference to the Ferry and Squire administrations, "the public good was often subordinated to private and corporate greed." Squire, moreover, had perpetrated "an illegal proceeding" in declaring martial law during the Seattle imbroglio, an affair that could have been easily resolved if "the governor of the Territory had been a determined man."

The governor's reputation rested upon the abandonment of the probusiness labor policies of his predecessors: the territory, in Semple's view, was bound neither by economic precept nor by social philosophy to intervene on behalf of, or at the call of, employers. As conservatives had feared, the anti-Chinese campaign was merely the first stroke in the effort to secure higher wages. Lumber manufacturers were soon forced to reduce the standard shift from 12 to 10 hours, with no reduction in pay. A series of disturbances organized by the Knights of Labor disrupted the Puget Sound coal mines as well as the Northern Pacific-owned operation east of Snoqualmie Pass in 1888 and 1889. Opposed to any compromise, management cut production so that only loyal workers need be hired and employed "detectives" and special deputy marshals, sworn in by compliant federal officials, to guard the mining facilities. The Oregon Improvement Company's attorney, reporting in his capacity as colonel of the National Guard, called upon Governor Semple for military protection, supposedly the only means of preventing unprovoked aggression against corporate properties and personnel.

A businessmen himself, Semple refused to intervene. "It is proper," he declared, "for public officers to take precautions, in advance, where reasonable apprehension of a disturbance exists, but the apprehension must have some foundation more substantial than the mere opinion...of a Coal Co[mpany]." Personally investigating the situation in the mines, the governor denounced the corporate detectives as "an organized body of mercenaries" and condemned the "invasion" of Washington Territory by "bodies of armed men from other jurisdictions." As for the federal deputies, he noted in endorsing a report from the King County sheriff that many, if not most, were "escaped criminals." Semple refused outright to place the territorial National Guard, organized under Squire as a pro-employer instrument, "at the service of any corporation." Although the governor, to be sure, took no overt action directly supportive of labor, his neutrality was a major departure from practice.

### **Miles C. Moore, 1889**

Employers certainly lost no time in securing Semple's removal from office. Barely installed in March 1889, the Republican administration of Benjamin Harrison appointed Miles C. Moore as governor. Born in Ohio, Moore had resided in eastern Washington since 1863, first as a miner exposed to frostbite and then-the son-in-law of developer Dorsey Baker-as attorney, merchant, and political figure in Walla Walla. Only 44 years of age, he was known affectionately, on account of long residence, as a "mossback."

The new governor's tenure was guaranteed to be short since Congress had already authorized the drafting of a constitution as a preliminary step to admission. His nomination was, in fact, secured as part of a "ticket" devised by party leaders in anticipation of the first election: Moore for territorial and Elisha Ferry for state governor, with Watson Squire and territorial delegate John B. Allen as presumptive United States senators. Waiting out the last months of the territory's formal existence, he was little more than an institutional caretaker. Aside from a modestly-interesting involvement in government-sponsored artesian well ventures, Moore's only substantive act was the issuance of a proclamation for Washington's constitutional convention.

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