

CHAPTER THREE

The Second Decade

1863-1873



The new year of 1863 found the tenth territorial legislature still in session in the little wooden capitol on the hill above the town. It was still engaged in political combat, and a major issue was that perennial one of who was the public printer.

The removal of Alonzo Poe to California had prompted Governor Pickering, in mid-December of 1862, to declare the office vacant and to appoint George A. Barnes, the local merchant, capitalist and mayor as Poe's successor. On the surface it appeared a strange choice, for a printer was one thing George Barnes wasn't. He was, however, the brother-in-law of John Miller Murphy. Murphy and his financial and political backers, Anson Henry and Elwoods Evans, had found a way to get the territorial printing contract for the *Standard* by a somewhat circuitous route.

Belligerent Benjamin Kendall of the *Overland Press* believed the post to be his by right of inheritance from Poe, at least until the legislature held an election to decide the matter, and he was forthright in his denunciation of Murphy, Evans and Henry.

The legislators, for their part, were somewhat miffed at Pickering's usurpation of a political plum which they considered to be their sole prerogative. Besides, they were aware that Barnes had been picked by the autocratic and unpopular Anson Henry, in cahoots with Evans and Murphy. There were strong rumors afloat that Henry was already skimming off more than his share of the available public funds. Kendall had, in fact, recently fired an editorial blast at Henry under the heading, "*Have We a Swindler in Our Midst?*" in which he charged Henry with being able to do "*anything, and everything to suit the occasion*" . . . including the theft of public funds.*

Even after Kendall was removed suddenly and tragically from the fray, it took 20 ballots in the legislative assembly to confirm Barnes' appointment as territorial printer, assuring Murphy and the *Standard* of the work and Henry and Evans a share of the profits.

SUDDEN DEATH

The removal of Kendall was the result of the first sensational murder in the history of the sleepy territorial capital and might have been expected to make headlines, but Murphy "played it down" to a remarkable degree in the *Standard* of January 10, 1863:

"DIED: *Suddenly at this place on Wednesday, January 7, 1863, B. F. Kendall, formerly of Bethel, Maine, aged 34 years, and late editor of the Overland Press.*"

Apparently feeling that some explanation should be made of his one-sentence reporting of the most sensational news story of the decade, Murphy noted elsewhere in the same issue that "*we have no desire to add to the excitement now prevailing in the community.*"

*Surveyor-general Henry, wrongfully ascribing the editorial to Alonzo Poe, armed himself with a large bowie knife and went in search of Poe, locating him at Edmund Sylvester's store where he was peacefully smoking a cigar and chatting with the town's gregarious founder. Henry struck Poe with his cane and Poe returned the blow with his light walking stick, whereupon Henry, according to Mr. Prosch of the *Puget Sound Herald*, "*drew his bowie knife and brandished it with loud words of defiance.*" Edmund Sylvester broke up the fight, Poe refused to take Henry's threats seriously, and no blood was shed. Poe was not the last Olympia newspaper man to be attacked in error by an outraged subscriber.

Kendall's murder was, on the surface at least, the result of an article he had printed regarding an attempt made to drive George Roberts, a farmer and agent for the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, off some farm land he was holding for the company on the Cowlitz river. Kendall was the attorney for the company and a close personal friend of Roberts, and he came to the conclusion that a 70-year-old farmer named Horace Howe had set fire to Roberts' barn and outbuildings. He made his suspicions known in the *Overland Press* in no uncertain terms:

"It is the general impression that Horace Howe is the venerable gray bearded villain who attempted to perpetrate this high handed, diabolical deed. This veteran wretch goes on with his work of robbery. We trust the wretch may sooner or later meet his deserts . . . the gallows."

Howe didn't pay much attention to Kendall's tirade against him until a small army of Kendall's enemies, of whom he had no lack, descended upon the old man to explain to him how grievously he had been slandered. After a month of such pressures, Howe arrived in Olympia in December, 1862, but then spent another week deciding what to do.

On the morning of December 20 the rumor spread over the Olympia gossip grapevine that something exciting was about to happen in front of Aunt Becky Howard's Pacific House. Those who heeded the message were not disappointed. At about nine o' clock, Kendall finished his breakfast and left Mrs. Howard's dining room, pausing in front of the hotel to discuss with a friend the efforts of Murphy, Henry and Evans to steal the public printing for the *Standard*. Howe, having at last made up his mind . . . or had it made up for him . . . rounded the corner of 3rd and Main, walked up behind Kendall and brought a hazelwood ox-goad down across the editor-attorney's shoulders. Kendall whirled, drew a revolver and shot the old man in the left side. Then he started running toward his office, emptying his gun over his shoulder at Howe, who continued to pursue him despite his wound. Kendall outdistanced him and escaped inside his office.

Kendall claimed he had fired in self-defense, but his enemies did their best to stir up the prevailing excitement to mob action aimed at lynching the troublesome editor, or at least running him out of town. Their failure to do so was partly attributable to the fact that more fights broke out around town as the merits of

the case were argued, thus distracting public attention from the main event. Even the legislators became involved. Two of them, J. D. Bagley and M. S. Griswold sat down in Aunt Becky's dining room for a friendly lunch. The conversation naturally turned to the favorite topic of the day, the shooting of old Mr. Howe by Kendall.

Griswold expressed the opinion that a vigilance committee should be formed to deal with Kendall. Bagley, on the other hand, felt that he had only done what any other red-blooded frontiersman would have done under the circumstances. Their words grew heated and they came to blows, but not for long. Aunt Becky Howard didn't hold with such goings-on in her hotel, and she was not impressed by politicians. (When Governor Pickering, soon after his arrival, had the temerity to address her as "Aunty" she had fixed him with a withering gaze and informed him that, to the best of her knowledge, she was not a sister of either his father or mother.) She promptly embraced Mr. Griswold and raised him from the floor a good two feet, holding him thus suspended until he lost both breath and belligerency. Griswold later confided to Charles Prosch of the *Puget Sound Herald* that *"Becky's grip reminds him of an old fashioned blacksmith's vice."*

No less a distinguished frontier statesman than the silver-tongued orator, Selucius Garfield, abandoned his griddle cakes to pinion Mr. Bagley and, according to Prosch, *"performed his duties in a most commendable manner, and thus ended the great battle of Becky's dining room."*

With so much excitement going on all of a sudden, Olympians didn't have time to concentrate on a single project like riding Kendall out of town on a rail and, in the meantime, Dr. Warbass let it be known that old Mr. Howe would soon be back on his feet again.

The ring of territorial statesmen led by Anson Henry thought for a while their efforts might pay off anyway. The spectacle of the big, handsome Kendall, who had brought with him a reputation for swash-buckling bravery, running from a gravely wounded old man armed only with a hazelwood switch, had been vividly described by eyewitnesses and the *Washington Standard*. Public opinion was against Kendall, and his enemies hoped he would decide to leave town, or at least stop writing those embarrassing articles about whose fingers were in the public cookie jar.

The next issue of the *Overland Press* blasted any such hopes. After portraying his side of the affair in great detail, Kendall addressed himself to Henry, whom he was convinced had masterminded the Howe offensive:

*"Henry in his sheet (the Standard) says 'we forbear comment.' He is at perfect liberty to comment on this case, prejudice and affect the public mind to the fullest extent of his lying ability. We acted under a conscientious conviction of right; regretting the necessity of inflicting injury upon old or young, enemy or friend * * * We shall shrink from no responsibility by failing to express our views."*

Kendall's brash defiance of both public opinion and the political establishment coalesced the enmity of the people he had alienated, and he had started alienating people even before he got to Olympia.

After graduating from Bowdoin College with honors, he had gone to work as a clerk in the federal land office at Washington City. Within a year his boss recommended him to President Pierce for the job as secretary of the newly-formed territory of Washington . . . the job which eventually went to Charles Mason. Kendall then joined Stevens' railroad survey party as personal secretary and scout, receiving \$25 a month. He managed to keep on fairly good terms with the irascible Stevens, but his "sour and harsh viewpoint, sardonic scowl, bulldog voice" and "apparent rudeness and severity of bearing" did not endear him to other members of the party.

With Stevens' support, Kendall was unanimously elected chief clerk of the house of representatives for the first session of the territorial legislature. Soon afterward he defeated Frank Clark, the attorney for the imprisoned settlers during the martial law controversy, for the position of territorial librarian. The victory did not endear him to Clark.

Although Kendall held both positions during two legislative sessions, the pay was even poorer than he had been getting as a member of Stevens' survey party, and he took up the practice of law in order to eat regularly. Although he had little or no formal legal training, he was a natural born frontier lawyer, soon winning the post of U.S. district attorney. A year later he became embroiled in the martial law controversy, joining with Judge Lander in opposition to Stevens. As a result he withdrew from the Stevens-dominated "Olympia Ring" which currently

controlled territorial politics, and refused to continue as either legislative clerk or librarian.

Stevens and his supporters placed the name of Kendall high on their list of bad guys when, as prosecutor, he won the contempt of court case against the governor which cost them \$50 and a great deal of embarrassment. Thereafter he and Elwood Evans rounded up the mob which marched to Stevens' mansion near the capitol building to demonstrate loudly against the governor.

The following year Kendall headed the prosecution of Leschi, again butting heads with Clark, who was the defense attorney. In subsequent cases, both as prosecutor and private attorney, he consistently defeated Clark, William Wallace and Elwood Evans, rubbing verbal salt in their wounds afterward at every opportunity. Before long his erstwhile friend Evans was describing Kendall in letters to Wallace as "a man who has no soul; who is as sordid as self can make him."

Shortly thereafter Kendall learned that the lucrative job of superintendent of Indian affairs would soon be open and he headed for Washington City to nail it down for himself. While he was there the rebels fired on Fort Sumpter and Kendall volunteered to become one of the first Union spies. General Winfield Scott was impressed by his credentials and accepted his offer. The general later reported that "he has executed a confidential mission for me of great danger and importance (covering) nearly all the seceded states including Louisiana."*

At the urging of General Scott, Kendall received the job he was looking for and returned to Olympia amid the inevitable firing of cannon and "general rejoicing." It wasn't that Kendall was any more beloved to the populace. It was just that times were hard and, as Charles Prosch pointed out in the *Herald*, "Who wouldn't be the friend of a man who has anything to give in these hard times?" Kendall

*John Miller Murphy, in his *Washington Standard*, conceded that Kendall had performed this service to his country, but took a rather dim view of it, writing that "Some insist now that no honest, loyal man could have traveled (in Confederate territory), but a man that has the manners so peculiar to a southern negro driver can travel anywhere in the south with perfect impunity."

now had jobs to distribute, and some of the jobs had traditionally carried the political perquisite of lining the holders' pockets at the expense of the taxpayers and their Indian wards.

Evans, Henry . . . who had just received the job of surveyor-general . . . and Wallace . . . who had been elected delegate to congress, were not among those who cheered and fired off cannon. Their noses were hopelessly out of joint because they hadn't been consulted in regard to this choicest of political patronage plums. Murphy took up their war whoops and duly published them in the *Standard*. Kendall may have been independent, arrogant and extremely hard to get along with, but he was also well educated, brilliant, hard-working and honest, and the Republican political power-brokers could only base their opposition on the charge that the new superintendent was a turncoat Democrat.

Evans, in a letter to Wallace in Washington City, summed up their lacerated feelings against "*such an outrage to Republicans as confirming this best position, most lucrative and most influential from its patronage,*" thus forcing deserving Republicans "*to submit to indignities from a poltroon because bread & butter depend upon it.*"

This political infighting among the hungry Republicans didn't greatly impress the general public. Even the *Puget Sound Herald*, which seldom had anything bad to say about Republicans, and which was particularly tender of the feelings of Wallace and Evans, sided with Kendall on this issue.

As usual, Kendall managed to stub his own toe without help from anyone. The obstacle which felled him was a well-fed Methodist preacher named James H. Wilbur, who occupied a spacious residence and drew the then magnificent salary of \$3,000 a year as superintendent of Indian education on the Yakima reservation.

A number of Methodist clergymen achieved marked success as arm-twisters and wheeler-dealers on the Northwest frontier. The Reverend John De Vore of Olympia had actually caught the tight-fisted Clanrick Crosby in a weak moment and talked him into pledging all the lumber from his mill that the man of God could load and raft to Olympia in one day. He then proceeded to roll up his sleeves, labor from dawn to dark without even taking time out for lunch, and float off on the tide with enough of Crosby's lumber to build Olympia's first



REV. JOHN F. DE VORE,
PIONEER METHODIST MINISTER
OF PUGET SOUND OF 1853.

Methodist church. The Reverend Daniel Bagley of Seattle was the guiding spirit of his town's successful theft of the university from the territorial legislature, selling off public lands quite illegally to finance the construction, and then getting Arthur Denny to talk congress into retroactively authorizing what he had already done.

The Reverend Wilbur was possessed of similar talents, but what he was interested in building was a comfortable and well-feathered nest for himself, and this he had achieved in the Yakima country. He had virtually taken over the management of the reservation from the superintendent and staffed it with the faithful of his church. He was an ardent exhorter at revivals, had been active in the Northwest missions since 1846 and was said by the *Standard* to be "*better known throughout Oregon and Washington than almost any other man.*"

Kendall fired the reverend educator on the grounds that he was a trouble-maker and was costing the taxpayers too much. His few friends tried to point out that he had just committed political suicide, but as usual he refused to listen.

Murphy, in a burst of outraged piety, asserted in the *Standard* that the action demonstrated Kendall's "fixed determination to dispense with the services of all praying men."

Anson Henry wrote to Henry Wallace the joyful tidings that "Kendall has most grossly offended the entire Christian community, and most especially the Methodist Church. There will be almost a universal demand for his removal."

Public outrage, which had failed to generate as a result of Henry's plaintive outcries against Kendall for not letting him do his hiring and firing for him, was fanned to fever heat by a united pastorate which viewed Wilbur's dismissal as an attack by the forces of the devil upon the very foundations of the Christian church. Denunciations thundered from pulpits all across the territory, and poor Kendall found himself in the position of so many government officials before and since who have tried to save money for the taxpayers.

For good measure, Anson Henry talked the Reverend Wilbur into making a pilgrimage to Washington City to lay the sins of Benjamin before Father Abraham. Henry was one of Lincoln's closest personal friends and the President received Wilbur cordially. Then he consulted with Delegate Wallace and got the kind of answers to be expected.

It was then that Captain Hale replaced Kendall as superintendent of Indian affairs. The *Standard* reported gleefully, "Kendall went to the wall * * * and Father Wilbur returned to the Yakima reservation."

The political plums had been returned to the pioneer power-brokers of Olympia.

Soon afterward Kendall took over the editorship of the *Overland Press* and began getting some of his own back, in the process generating the comic opera battle of the Pacific Hotel.

Two days after that engagement, Horace Howe, Jr., appeared at his father's bedside in Olympia, where he was besieged by the same parties who had goaded the old man into his attack. They convinced the younger Howe that family honor demanded a complete retraction of the arson story by Kendall. They knew the embattled editor's stubborn character well enough to know he would rather die first. Young Howe admitted he didn't have much book learning, and Attorney Clark wrote the proposed retraction for him.

The following week Kendall put the current edition of the *Overland Press* to bed. It contained his last, strangely prophetic editorial:

*"Friends prove enemies * * * The recipients of our bounty become ungrateful. Our trusts are betrayed. The free generous confidence of youth is fast giving way to cold, selfish distrust of the existence of all we once regarded as most sacred and holy of human ties * * * It is an unpleasant maxim that we are ever to be suspicious of our fellow men * * * Act as we may, discharge our duties well or ill, be honorable or dishonorable, generous or mean . . . we must all find rest at last 'The End of the Play'."*

On January 1, 1863, the younger Howe met Kendall on the street near his newspaper office. Howe demanded the publication of the retraction and Kendall, with uncharacteristic reasonableness, told him to bring it to the office. It took Howe a week to get around to it. On January 7 he went to the newspaper office twice, but finding a number of other people there, he didn't stay to talk to the editor. On the third call he found only Kendall and his clerk in the office.

He and Kendall went into an inner office. The clerk heard a few minutes of low conversation which he couldn't make out. This was followed by a few seconds of dead silence and then a single pistol shot. Howe dashed from the office, a cocked derringer in his hand.

A moment later Kendall staggered to the outer office, exclaimed that he was shot, "grasps the mantle shelf, reels forward and falls lifeless upon the hearth." He had been shot through the heart.

In a preliminary hearing at the courthouse, Clark acted as Howe's attorney, while Kendall's friend, Judge Lander, led the prosecution. Clark denied repeatedly that he had ever laid eyes on the retraction Howe had submitted to Kendall. He admitted that he owned a derringer just like the one that had killed Kendall, but he refused to say where it was. In any event, he had an excellent alibi for the time of the murder. As representative for Pierce and Sawamish counties, he was up at the capitol attending the deliberations of the tenth territorial legislature. There is no record of Anson Henry's whereabouts that day, but it was pretty generally conceded that he or Clark, or both of them, had provided Howe with the murder weapon.

Murphy of the *Standard* continued his peculiar reticence in regard to the case, avoiding any comment except that "*The crowded state of our columns prevents our publishing the evidence.*"

Judge Lander had taken over his late friend's newspaper and in it observed that "*the refusal of the witness to answer questions, gave rise to many unpleasant surmises in regards to Mr. Clark's connection with the melancholy affair.*"

The impoverished Howe was subsequently provided with \$3,000 bail by unidentified benefactors and returned to Cowlitz Prairie. The *Overland Press* intimated that it intended to "*stir up the Rip Van Winkles of this country,*" and that Howe might be a major factor in the stirring.

Soon thereafter the defendant disappeared. Some said he had left the country, others that he had accidentally drowned, while still others intimated that he had been silenced the same way he had silenced the troublesome Kendall.

The mystery was never solved. Anson Henry died two years later in the wreck of the steamer *Brother Jonathan* off the California coast. There were persistent rumors that a good deal of money went down with him.

Frank Clark became a successful criminal lawyer, prospering for another half century, but his reputation never recovered from the Kendall affair. In 1917, 34 years after his death, Hewbert Hunt, in his book *Washington West of the Cascades*, described him as "*a man whose actions did not at all times conform to the highest ideals of moral philosophy.*"

Elwood Evans and John Miller Murphy lived even longer lives, but like Henry and Clark, they remained singularly silent regarding any part they might have had in the celebrated case.

And, as in so many other controversial cases which might embarrass the politically powerful, Case No. 1304—Washington Territory vs Horace Howe—of the 2nd district Court, long since disappeared from the court files of Thurston county.

The death of Kendall and the disappearance of Howe remain surrounded with mystery to this day, but as Willis A. Katz wrote in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* of January, 1958:

"Righteously or otherwise, Kendall has been a martyr to the politics and politicians of frontier Washington Territory."

On January 31, shortly after Kendall was safely laid away in his grave, the tenth

territorial legislature adjourned, but not before Mr. Bagley, the representative from Clallam and Jefferson counties, having recovered from the state of breathlessness brought on by Aunt Becky's bear hug, introduced a resolution honoring "*the late B. F. Kendall, whose many virtues as a man are deserving of remembrance, whose culture of mind was worthy of imitation, whose energy of character has left its imprint upon the Territory*".

The legislators were willing to spread a few kind words about the deceased on the record, as long as he *was* deceased, and even John Miller Murphy produced a decent obituary.

There was a strange lack of the usual festivities which traditionally took place in Olympia following legislative adjournment *sine die*, but it wasn't the result of sadness over the untimely demise of Benjamin Kendall. It was caused by the fact that the federal government had failed to send so much as a deflated greenback to pay the expenses and mileage of the members. A number of them had to hock their belongings to get home, and even though Secretary Evans pried loose \$2,000 from some undisclosed source to succor the more needy and deserving Republicans, few of the legislators had the price of a drink after they bought their tickets home.

Olympia's civic leaders, convinced that it was the lawmakers' love for that "silent and succulent lobbyist, the Olympia oyster" that gave them the best chance of retaining the capital, sent them off with full stomachs to somewhat offset their empty pockets.

PUBLIC PRINTING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

When the eleventh legislature assembled at Olympia in December, no time was wasted in getting a good, hot fight going over the territorial printing contract. Elwood Evans, still secretary of the territory, had been engaged in a quiet but nonetheless bitter personal feud with his erstwhile partner, John Miller Murphy, for the past year. Even earlier he had broken diplomatic relations with the third member of the triumverate, Anson Henry. Evans had coveted the governorship and was never really satisfied with the secondary position of territorial secretary. He came to the conclusion that Henry, the close friend of Lincoln, had deviously blocked his appointment and secured the job for Pickering.

The reason for his quarrel with Murphy is less clear, although Mr. Prosch of the *Herald* attributed it to the fact that Evans insisted upon writing articles for the *Standard* of a quality "*which Murphy's small brain was incapable of conceiving.*" He added that Murphy had flown into a fine rage when he received an article in the mail addressed to Evans as editor of his beloved *Standard*, and had thrown it into the stove instead of printing it.

Be that as it may, on December 7 Evans announced that he, not the legislature, had the right to select the public printer. He summarily removed Mr. Barnes, implying that Olympia's conservative Republican businessman-mayor was a violent copperhead, intent on overthrowing the Union. The U.S. treasury department, he told the legislature, had given him the authority to appoint a public printer "to prevent the public treasury from being plundered by the enemies of the people".

Murphy, well aware that he was one of the unnamed "enemies of the people" whom Evans was charging with plundering the treasury, was outraged; he was even more so when he learned that none other than T. H. McElroy, co-partner in the establishment of the *Columbian*, nee *Pioneer and Democrat*, had been selected to take the printing away from the good *Republican Standard**.

Many of the legislators were as outraged as Murphy. This juicy political plum had traditionally been theirs and they weren't inclined to give it up without a fight. Furthermore, the bizarre charge of Evans that George Barnes was a copperhead was a bit too much for even those who were otherwise favorable to McElroy. The squabble crossed party lines, with F. P. Dugan, Democratic house leader from Walla Walla entering into an alliance with Evans, and ex-Acting Governor McGill leading the anti-Evans, anti-McElroy faction. Ironically, McGill had set the precedent which Evans was following when, back in 1861, he had appointed James Lodge to replace George Gallagher, resigned.

Evans won the battle and the war as well. McElroy kept his job and public printers were

*It was growing apparent at this time that Murphy was becoming increasingly disenchanted with his Republican affiliation. He was beginning to refer to the *Standard's* political philosophy as "Union" rather than Republican, and in later years he was known to deny that it ever *had* been Republican.

henceforth appointed by the territorial secretary until Washington achieved statehood. Evans battered down all efforts to unseat McElroy as long as he was secretary, and Charles Prosch charged flatly that Evans was a silent partner with McElroy in the old Pioneer Job Printing Office, and so was again sharing in the profits of the public printing.

The profits must have been considerable, for McElroy rose from an impecunious printer to one of the wealthiest men in the territory. This was to be the pattern for public printers until well into the twentieth century; most of them started out broke and ended up prosperous.

Backed by Evans, McElroy didn't have to publish a Democratic newspaper to retain his job, although his shop did commercial job printing as well as the territorial publications. Urban E. Hicks, a printer of decidedly copperhead persuasion soon arrived on the scene to fill the void issuing a newspaper called the *Washington Democrat*. The following is typical of his journalistic style and political convictions:

"It is impossible that peace should come again while a fiendish ape is at the head of our affairs. He realizes nothing of the awful destruction of property nor the wasting slaughter of life. Neither does he care. He has none of the instincts or sensibilities of a man, nor the dignity of a respectable tyrant."

John Miller Murphy was a great admirer of Lincoln, and he remained so even after his politics turned Democratic. He was shocked at Hicks' diatribes against the Great Emancipator, and he was boiling mad because he was pretty sure that Hicks was being financed by a pair of his arch enemies. The *Standard* proclaimed that:

"The capital upon which the Democrat is founded, incredible as it may seem, has been furnished by friends of Mr. Lincoln's administration. The ostensible conductor of this new enterprise are U. E. Hicks & Co., but we have cogent reasons for believing that its real projectors are Evans, McElroy & Hicks . . . Secretary and Public Printers for Washington Territory. That this nondescript firm of professed Union men and Copperheads, were concocting a scheme to secure the Public Printing among themselves, and make the government furnish a club to be used to break its own head, has been known for two years past."

Apparently young Murphy was unable to vent his Irish temper sufficiently in type, and Hicks claimed in later years that Murphy was

in the habit of throwing rocks through the windows of the *Democrat* office. Fortunately for the Murphy blood pressure, the *Democrat* lasted only about a year, although the capital city hadn't seen the last of U. E. Hicks.

The journalistic kettle was boiling in Olympia during civil war days, and the *Standard* soon had new competition. Even the much smaller village of Seattle got a newspaper, although it was printed in Olympia on Murphy's press. James R. Watson didn't have a printing plant of his own and talked Murphy into doing the job on credit. The first issue of a newspaper with a Seattle dateline was thus produced at Olympia on August 15, 1863, and carried to Seattle by its enterprising publisher on the *Eliza Anderson*. He did so well that by December he had his own printing plant in Seattle.

PUTTING ON AIRS

The burgeoning crop of territorial newspapers shared in the rewards of progress when, in 1864, the transcontinental telegraph line reached Olympia. No longer were their editors dependent upon weeks-old copies of eastern newspapers brought up the coast by sidewheel mail steamers. The citizens of the territorial capital were assured of news which was not more than a week old.

John Miller Murphy had tried to speed up the journalistic process some years earlier. He was in San Francisco on his honeymoon, and as he and his wife approached the dock to embark on the steamer for the return trip, newsboys were shouting an extra announcing that Fort Sumpter had been fired upon. Murphy bought up all copies, kept them hidden until he reached home, and at once cranked out a small extra edition of the *Standard*, complete with big black headlines. He expected to clean up a tidy profit on his scoop, but he made one serious mistake. The news was all in the headlines, and the headlines were large enough to be read at a distance of 50 feet. So nobody bought his extra.

Henceforth, to the end of his long career, Murphy made it a policy to hide any important news on inside pages and in type so small that the reader often had to go through the paper several times to find it.

On August 27, 1864, the *Standard* reported, "The telegraph will be completed to Skookumchuck to-day and will probably be finished to this place by next Saturday."

Governor Pickering wasted no time in utilizing the newly-strung wire to dispatch the first telegraphic message from Olympia . . . a lengthy congratulatory telegram to President Lincoln. The next day the brass key in the Olympia telegraph office chattered into life and this message was copied in the operator's fluent copperplate script:

"Washington, D.C., Sept. 6, 1864.

Gov. Pickering, Olympia, W.T.

Your patriotic dispatch of yesterday received and will be published.

. . . A. Lincoln"

Honest Abe had avoided the tendency of most politicians, including Pickering, to send long, expensive messages on historic occasions. He kept his answer well under ten words.

Despite the hard times brought on by the war, progress in Olympia wasn't limited to the coming of the telegraph. The first home-built steamboat, the *Pioneer*, was launched by Miller and Ethridge, sawmill operators, and made a successful trial voyage up the Deschutes waterway to Tumwater. Although designed primarily for towing logs to her owners' mill she was equipped with "a well arranged cabin 18 feet in length and about 12 feet wide and can carry comfortably 30 or 40 passengers."

The town fathers erected a hand-pump over the spring next door to Edmund Sylvester's store, and it became more of a social gathering place than ever, but its days were numbered. Later in the year a water company was franchised and began laying pipes made of bored logs. It was a primitive affair and for the next sixty years or so it provided the citizenry with more grounds for rage and frustration than drinkable water, but it was viewed as new evidence that Olympia was progressing from frontier village to modern metropolis.

Most heartening of all was the news from Washington City that congress had granted a charter to the reorganized Northern Pacific Railway, and had thrown in a fat land grant to finance its construction. It looked as if Stevens' dream was to become reality, and Olympia was certain to be the western terminus of the transcontinental line. When that happened the boom would be on and everybody would get rich.

The dreams were far more impressive than the reality. Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield (Massachusetts) *Republican*, considered one of the great journalists of his day, made the trip from Portland to Puget Sound over the Cowlitz Trail. He included an account of this journey in his book, *Across the Continent; a Summer's Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons and the Pacific Coast*. The trip took three days by steamboat and stage, and cost \$30 for transportation. Regarding the territorial capital and principal settlement he wrote:

*"We dined the second day at Skookum Chuck, and came to the head of Puget Sound * * * and this town, the capital, at night, encountering the usual demonstrations of artillery, brass band and banners and most hospitable greeting from Acting Governor Evans and other officials and citizens.*

"Olympia lies charmingly under the hill by the waterside and counts its inhabitants less than 500, though the largest town in the territory, save the mining center of Wallula down in the southeast corner.

"It numbers more stumps than houses within its limits, but is the social and political center of a large area, puts on airs and holds many of the materials of fine society. We were entertained at a very 'Uncle-Jerry-and-Aunt-Phoebe' little inn, whose presiding genius, a fat and fair African of 50 years and 300 pounds, robed in spotless white, welcomed us with the grace and dignity of a queen and fed us as if we were in training for a cannibal's table."

The great eastern editor was obviously more impressed by Aunt Becky Howard than by anything else in pioneer Olympia, even the remarkable number of stumps in the streets.

MARRY IN HASTE

Weddings were also major social occasions in pioneer Olympia, but once in awhile the participants failed to "hold the materials of fine society", thus depriving their fellow citizens of an excuse for celebrating.

Young Christopher Columbus Simmons was one who staged an unconventional wedding. The son of Michael Simmons, born in a sheep pen on the Cowlitz while the pioneers awaited the spring of 1845 to continue on to Puget

Sound, was a strapping lad of 19 in the fall of 1864. His father, Big Mike Simmons, cheated by those he had trusted and driven from the political scene by Stevens, would soon die in poverty on his last land claim, in Lewis county.

Christopher Columbus seems to have inherited his father's lack of business shrewdness. Mrs. George Blankenship, in her *Early History of Thurston County, Washington*, quotes from a personal interview with the younger Simmons in 1914:

"One time when I was working for my uncle, Dr. (David) Maynard, who was one of the first settlers of King County, he made me a present of a deed to 160 acres of what is now West Seattle. I held onto it for awhile and then found it too troublesome to care for the deed and to keep the small amount of taxes paid, so I gave it back to Uncle Maynard, much to his disgust. He thought I must have very little sense not to hang on to what he knew would be very valuable at some not far-off day."

Christopher Columbus Simmons knew he didn't want the responsibilities and anxieties involved in getting rich, and he acted forthrightly to avoid them. He acted just as forthrightly in claiming what he *did* want, and that was a pretty girl named Asaneth Ann Kennedy, who was just 14 years old that fall. Her parents had sent her to Steilacoom to finish school, and they made it plain that Chris Simmons' attentions to their daughter wouldn't be welcomed, at least not until after she had graduated.

One night in late August Christopher decided he couldn't wait that long. He borrowed a boat at Big Skookum, where he was working and rowed to Steilacoom. There he met Asaneth Ann and the two rowed on down Puget Sound to Seattle. Territorial law required that parties to a marriage who were under 18 years of age must have parental consent, and the young lovers were worried. When they arrived at Elliott Bay they proceeded at once to seek the advice and counsel of Doc Maynard. In his interview with Mrs. Blankenship, half a century later, Simmons recalled the solution found for them by the ingenious doctor:

"This good man considered for a moment and then said to Ann, 'Take off your shoes'. She did so and Dr. Maynard wrote the figures 18 on two slips of paper and put them in her shoes. Ann caught on as quick as lightning. A

few minutes later we stood up before Rev. Daniel Bagley, who asked her age. 'Why I'm over eighteen', she said as bland as milk, and so we were married and lived happily together."

The pioneers of Olympia may have missed the wedding festivities, but the event provided them with a cherished legend which, unlike some of the others, appears to be quite authentic. The *Standard* of October 1, 1864, duly recorded the nuptials at Seattle of "Christophur (*sic*) Simmons and Amanthi (*sic*) Ann Kennedy", as performed at Seattle by the Reverend Daniel Bagley.

And Parson Bagley, the father of the University of Washington, certainly wouldn't have done anything illegal unless tricked into it.

Chris and Ann filed on a claim on Eld Inlet, which included tidelands with fine beds of oysters, which grew naturally and provided a good living without undue exertion. In 1914, when he talked to Mrs. Blankenship, Christopher Columbus and Asaneth Ann had just celebrated their golden wedding, surrounded by their nine children, numerous grandchildren and countless oysters. They lived on in peace and contentment, without ulcers, high blood pressure or nervous breakdowns, for many more years.

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

The most dramatic event of the year 1865 was, of course, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The news was flashed to the backwoods territorial capital by the telegraph, bringing the same grief and shock that rocked the rest of the nation.

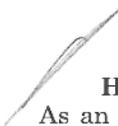
The territorial Democratic convention was being held in Olympia at the time, and one of its delegates, Major Haller of Seattle, was visiting the office of P. D. Moore, recently appointed collector of internal revenue for Washington and Idaho by President Lincoln, when the news came. Haller was so overcome that he proceeded to the convention and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, moved that it adjourn immediately, without selecting a delegate to congress. The motion very nearly passed.

As a means of relieving his feelings, Moore mounted a drygoods box on the corner opposite U. E. Hicks' copperhead *Washington Democrat* office and delivered himself of a stirring eulogy to the martyred president. His impromptu

speech so inflamed the crowd that they decided to burn down the newspaper office and string Hicks up to the nearest shade tree.

Moore was a great orator, but he was also a devout Quaker, and the incipient violence he had stirred up horrified him. He remounted his box and made another impassioned speech on the virtues of tolerance and neighborly love, thus saving the property and health of Mr. Hicks.

The Democrats might as well have followed Major Haller's suggestion and adjourned without nominating a congressional candidate. Arthur Denny, aided on the campaign trail by the silver tongue of Selucius Garfield, won the election handily and proceeded to Washington City to bail out the Reverend Bagley and his questionable sales of university lands. He had the blessings of Governor Pickering in this endeavor, for the governor was among the many prominent citizens of the territory who had availed themselves of the Reverend Bagley's choice bargains in public land.



HERE COME THE BRIDES

As an aftermath of the civil war, an enterprising young Seattle man named Asa Shinn Mercer, evolved a plan to bring out a shipload of New England ladies of respectable character and marriageable age to help solve the imbalance of the sexes in Washington territory. Men outnumbered women by better than ten to one in Washington, whereas the civil war had decimated the male population in New England and left a surplus of equally restive females.

Mercer had helped to build the territorial university and, upon its completion, had been appointed its first president and dispatched to the villages and logging camps of Puget Sound to try to round up a student body. He found only one individual in the entire territory who was eligible for enrollment at the college level, and the student body had to be filled out with the grammar school children of Seattle. His scheme to import young ladies to the territory seemed based on better logic, but he had the misfortune to run out of money along the way, and spent that entrusted to him by other Seattle citizens for various purchases to get his bevy of damsels to Puget Sound. (Governor Pickering had been an eloquent backer of his

project, but when Mercer telegraphed the executive office for help he was rewarded only by an inspiring telegram several hundred words in length . . . and sent to him collect.)

The citizens of Olympia reaped a greater harvest from the Mercer expedition than did those of Seattle, who had involuntarily paid the bill.

The townspeople selected a committee to "cooperate with" the Seattle committee. The Olympia group consisted of such solid and persuasive citizens as Elwood Evans, T. F. McElroy, George Barnes, Francis Henry and Daniel Bigelow . . . and their wives. Homes in the Olympia area were quickly found for 80 of the widows and orphans. The advantages of the capital city and the comfortable respectability of the Thurston county homes were set forth so convincingly that more of the Mercer girls ended up in Olympia than in Seattle, and poor Mercer was more or less gently run out of town.

AND HERE COME THE WHORES

Shortly after Mercer's abortive effort to solve the woman shortage in the Puget Sound country, an equally enterprising, but less idealistic gentleman named John Pinnell, set about to do the same thing in a different way. Described by *American Mercury* magazine in later years as "*Tall saturnine and suave, wearing a flowered waistcoat and a plug hat*", Pinnell arrived from San Francisco and opened an establishment on the sawdust fill near Henry Yesler's waterfront sawmill. He named it the *Illahee** and stocked it with high-proof whiskey and Indian maidens. Before too long he imported a cargo of genuine white women from San Francisco's Barbary Coast. Unlike Asa Mercer's shipment of widows and orphans from New England, Pinnell's girls did not pride themselves on either their respectability or marriageability (although legend has it that several of them did, indeed, wed Seattle pioneers and that they shared with the Mercer girls the founding of several prosperous and respected families of the town).

*Although Pinnell made a major contribution to Seattle's emergence as the metropolis of the Pacific Northwest, no streets or parks are named after him. Only the name of his brothel, *Illahee* (an Indian word meaning "the place") has been immortalized as the name of a ferryboat in the Washington state ferries fleet.

Several of Seattle's less stuffy historians argue that the coming of John Pinnell was the greatest single factor in Seattle's survival and ultimate supremacy. Most of the 10,000 or so single, virile and lonesome men who toiled in the area's logging camps and mines got in the habit of spending their spare time . . . and their money . . . in Seattle and the Illahee. Besides, Pinnell hadn't spent anybody's money but his own to get his project under way, and he paid more than his share to the town's modest treasury after he got things going. Seattle's total city budget in those days was \$5,000, to which Pinnell's license fee contributed \$1,200.

Olympia, having capitalized on Mercer's importation of virtuous womanhood, failed to follow through and lure Pinnell's non-virtuous sisterhood to the capital city. The few dozen Mercer girls were very quickly married, thereafter presumably bringing contentment only to their husbands. The Pinnell girls were far more efficient. Each of them could provide solace to hundreds of lonesome bachelors each month, and each pay day more and more of the territory's loggers, miners, seamen and single homesteaders took the steamboats to Seattle and the Illahee.

Olympia was still the biggest town in the territory, but after John Pinnell chose Seattle as the location for his business, the capital city's days of supremacy were numbered.

MR. WILLIAMS' FIRE ENGINE

Not that there wasn't real progress in 1866.

For one thing the town finally got that real fire engine so long advocated by the pioneer newspaper editors, although for a while there was considerable doubt as to whether it was owned by the town or prosperous local merchant Charles E. Williams. Williams learned of a big hand-pumper for sale second-hand in Seneca Falls, New York. At that time he owned Olympic hall, which was later acquired by Captain Finch of the *Eliza Anderson* and given to the Good Templers lodge. Williams decided to stage a "grand engine benefit ball" at his hall, with tickets at \$10.00 each, which was a lot of money during the post-civil war era on the Northwest frontier.



PROUD CREW OF OLD COLUMBIA pose with their rig in front of Columbia Hall in 1888. Upper row: John McClellan, foreman; D. S. B. Henry; William Craig; George Allen, chief; Charles Talcott; Ed Robbins, Joe Chilberg. Lower row: Thomas Ford; Clem Johnston; William Schofield; Jose Rizbeck; John Miller Murphy; Sam McClellan; Robert Frost; Dick Wood; E. T. Young. . . . State Capitol Museum Photo

The townspeople wanted that engine, though, and they responded so generously that the required \$900 purchase price was raised and the engine was ordered. When, in due time, it arrived on the ship *Black Hawk* by way of Cape Horn and was landed at the Main street wharf, the whole town was there to celebrate its arrival. It was a handsome thing of gleaming red and shining brass, with long pump rods along each side and a dome bearing the letters in black brass . . . *Columbia*. It was generally agreed that the name was most fitting and should be retained.

Mr. Williams was particularly entranced by the beautiful new fire engine; so much so that he apparently forgot that all the citizens had chipped in to buy it. He had big doors cut in Olympic hall and ordered the *Columbia* to be delivered there.

It was, he claimed, his own private fire engine, although the fire department could borrow it whenever there was a conflagration within the town limits.

Despite great public outrage and indignation, Williams was obdurate.

Finally, to meet this civic crisis, the Squilgee Engine Company was mustered for drill. After a lapse of several years the giant beer barrel on wheels was reassembled by her gallant crew. Other concerned citizens built a fire in the street in front of Williams' store at 4th and Main. The fire alarm was vigorously banged and the dread cry of "Fire! Fire!" echoed through the town. The gallant Squilgees responded, hauling their ridiculous engine with a long hauser from *Eliza Anderson's* wharf. Liveryman A. J. (Jack) Baldwin, the foreman, strode forward and began squirting at the fire with a large horse syringe. The spectators went wild with delight and poor Williams arrived on the scene at a dead run, convinced that his store was doomed.

Williams was no fool and he knew when he was beaten. He went into his store and soon reappeared with the ownership papers for the *Columbia*, which he presented to Baldwin.

The Columbia Engine Company was forthwith organized, with Baldwin as its foreman. the *Squilgee*, having served its final purpose, was seen no more.

The fire company, soon equipped with red shirts and brass helmets, loved to practice with their engine, despite the effort involved in hauling it and working the pumps by muscle-power alone. The citizens, especially the small boys, loved to watch them.

On summer evenings the banging of the fire bell would bring both firemen and citizens running to the performance. The bravely helmeted firemen would wheel the gleaming red and gold *Columbia* from its shed and race with it to 3rd and Main, where a tall flagpole stood. The town character, Jake Summers, a burley pockmarked individual with a whiskey baritone voice of great volume, would mount the engine and start singing soft and low. As he increased his volume, the firemen increased their efforts . . . twenty of them toiling at the primitive hand-brakes . . . and when Jake reached a crescendo the hosemen proudly sent a stream of water arching far above the flagpole. To the applause of the assembled multitude, the firemen would then repair to the old brewery on Columbia street to suck up cream lager as thirstily as their engine sucked up water.

Before long the firemen of the new company put pressure on the town trustees to provide quarters of suitable dignity for their beloved *Columbia*. They also raised enough money to underwrite a good share of the costs, although the town fathers had to borrow \$500 from Tom Prather to round out their contribution. The result was a new city hall, named Columbia hall in honor of the town's first fire engine. It was one of the grandest public buildings in the territory, far superior to the territorial capitol, and a fine public meeting room was provided on the top floor. Thereafter theatrical productions, lectures and political rallies were held at Columbia hall instead of the old Washington hotel.

Optimistic newspaper publishers continued to set up shop in the capital city during the immediate post-war years. The *Overland Press*, under the management of a long series of publishers, became the *Pacific Tribune**. After 1867 Charles Prosch moved down from Steilacoom to take over its editorship, and he

and John Miller Murphy were enabled to carry on their cherished feud at close quarters.

FOOLS' PARADISE

The death of Lincoln and the controversial succession of Andrew Johnson had thrown the politics of the nation . . . and of Washington territory into turmoil. Old political affiliations were again severed, and anti-Johnson Republicans formed "bolters'" parties. The *Standard* had changed its politics to Democratic. The *Tribune* was anti-Johnson Republican. J. N. Gale brought his family up from Oregon in 1866 and established the *Union Guard*, which supported the national administration. After a few months he formed a partnership with Elisha T. Gunn and the paper was enlarged and renamed the *Olympia Transcript*.

Gale had decided temperance leanings, and since he wrote the editorials, while Gunn gathered the "locals" and set the type, the *Transcript* tended to emphasize the evils of drink more than the evils of Democrats and "bolters". Gunn was afraid this would have an adverse effect on the paper's revenues. Gale wouldn't compromise his principles, so Gunn eventually bought him out. Gale soon found a perfect spot for himself as editor of a new paper, the *Temperance Echo*, which was supported by local temperance organizations.

Soon after Gale and Gunn launched the *Transcript*, J. R. Watson, founder of the Seattle press, got restless and returned to Olympia to publish the *Territorial Republican*. The village was saturated with partisan newspapers, and Watson soon sold out to a young journalist named Clarence B. Bagley, who changed the paper's name to *Commercial Age*.

By 1870, with a population of 1,200, Olympia had four newspapers, and in the years immediately ahead the field would become even more crowded, prompting John Miller Murphy to refer to the town as a journalistic fools' paradise.

*In 1873, with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad, it was moved to New Tacoma, becoming a lineal ancestor of the present Tacoma *News-Tribune*. the journalistic history of both Seattle and Tacoma thus had its beginnings in Olympia.

HERE COME THE CARPETBAGGERS

In the meantime, the shifting tides of national politics had deposited new territorial officials on the muddy shores of the capital city. Andrew Johnson, in 1866, had appointed George Cole, the delegate to congress, as governor, but in its vendetta with the former vice president, the senate refused to confirm the appointment. Johnson replaced Cole with Yale graduate Marshall F. Moore, who had been breveted brigadier general for heroism in the war. In the process he had acquired wounds which failed to heal, and he died at Olympia early in 1870 after meeting with only one session of the legislature . . . that of 1867.

Like most territorial governors, Moore brought with him a small retinue of supporters and job seekers. Included was his brother-in-law, Philemon B. Von Trump, who soon gained fame by climbing to the top of Mt. Rainier in company with Isaac Stevens' son, Hazzard . . . the first recorded conquest of the mighty mountain which broods eternally over the Puget Sound country, and can sometimes be seen during the summer months.

Moore also brought along a new territorial secretary, one Ezra L. Smith. Like many of the "carpet-bag" appointees of the period, Smith was not adverse to making a quick dollar or two. Charles Prosch, who had led the chorus of moral indignation over the alleged partnership of Evans and McElroy in the public printing, was quick to take advantage of the new secretary's itching palm to get the job for himself. After his term of office ended, he published the details with surprising frankness in the *Pacific Tribune*:

"We are indebted to Mr. Smith. He appointed us public printer, charged us over \$2,000 for the boon, got his pay at the start, and so laid the foundation for his present prosperity. We have not yet been paid for our labor."

This transaction, which can scarcely be termed anything but outright bribery, failed to arouse much moral indignation. Even Murphy, who had devoted columns to lambasting McElroy and his friends, merely observed that Prosch's admission "has been the subject of much comment. The public expects Mr. Smith to exonerate himself, or plead guilty to the charge. Should he not do this, the Legislature may very properly make it the subject of an investigation."

This was all that was ever printed in the Olympia papers on the subject and the legislature made no investigation. Presumably the whole thing was considered "just politics".

Anyway, two survey parties were hard at work under General Tilton blazing the right of way for the Pacific division of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Prosperity was just across the mountains, and there was little time for minor scandals.

THE VOICE OF SELUCIUS IS HEARD IN THE LAND

Alvin Flanders, a good conservative Republican, was elected to succeed Arthur Denny as a delegate to congress, serving from 1867 to 1869. Flanders, even less articulate than Denny, was, like his predecessor, elected (over Democrat Frank Clark) largely through the oratorical efforts of Selucius Garfield. The local poet laureate, Francis Henry, was moved to describe the proxy campaign in his inimitable verse:

*"Alvin Flanders rode upon
A horse that wouldn't mind him,
And so to act as fogleman,
Selucius rode behind him.*

*"Selucius was a proper man
And had so good a straddle
That he could ride two horses with
One office for a saddle.*

*"His classic seat was full of grip,
His brain was scientific,
And large enough to hold a train
Of cars for the Pacific.*

*"His mouth o'erflowed with oily words,
In fact 'twas even hinted
That he could make an off-hand speech
Just like a book that's printed.*

*"And thus they rode from place to place,
Where'er their pony bore them;
When Flanders had to speak a piece
Selucius spoke it for him.*

*"Tis mostly thus with those who shriek
Of Congress orthodoxy,
When called upon to fight or speak
They do it best by proxy."*

John Miller Murphy didn't think much of the silver-tongued orator, a fact which he made abundantly clear in the columns of the *Washington Standard*. Within a period of little over a month, he composed the following gems of political invective:

"Selucius, the man of words, who, in order to illustrate the force of eloquence, has literally TALKED HIMSELF INTO NOTHING. The ass, who having been used by Wallace, Denny and Flanders to ride upon to Congress, imagines that he will be carried there in his turn. . . the old man of the islands in politics, who once seated on the neck of a party never lets up as long as it has the strength to carry him. A man whose moral turpitude is the subject of comment wherever he is known."

This was followed by a couple of even less kindly observations:

"Selucius is always cocked and primed, as our "Devil" inelegantly expresses it, 'to shoot his mouth off'. In this he resembles a turkey cock; you have but to clap your hands and his feathers become at once erect, showing much more than nature intended."*

and:

"Selucius resembles an ass in being most noted for his bray. In some other respects they are quite opposite. One would appear to be well hung, the other wouldn't."

Murphy's contempt for Garfield reached a climax when, on January 18, 1868, he listed the passengers arriving on the *Eliza Anderson* as *"Mr. Smith and wife, Dr. Ostrander and wife, Mr. Bigelow, one klotchman, two siwashes, Garfield and three Chinamen."*

*The "printer's devil" at the *Standard* during the era was young Sam Crawford, who later became a colorful newspaper man in his own right.

THE LEGISLATURE IS ARMED AND DANGEROUS

The year 1868 was an exciting one for the frontier capital. It got both the legislature and its first circus, and it was difficult for the natives to decide which was the most exciting.

Post-war political bitterness was at its peak, and the struggle to steal the capital from Olympia was on again. Feelings ran high and the legislators were armed and dangerous. Much time on the floor was spent in re-fighting the civil war, and the bitterness overflowed to the local saloons, where fistic encounters were frequent.

Many of the frontier statesmen carried revolvers to the capitol with them and sometimes flourished their weapons, but fortunately nobody was shot.

A bill was introduced to move the capital to Vancouver. William H. Newell, publisher of the *Walla Walla Statesman*, one of the most peppery of the pistol-packing legislators, averred that he had come to Olympia with the determination not to interfere with the location of the capital, but that when meetings were held by the local citizens to "intimidate and overawe the action of the assembly," he was disposed to give the bill his vote. Newell was just letting off steam, for he was dedicated to getting the prize for Walla Walla. The bill languished throughout the session in the committee on corporations.

The assembly did find time, between the feuding and fighting, to create Quillehuyte county (which was never organized), establish a board of regents for the territorial university (presumably in an attempt to keep the Reverend Mr. Bagley under control), dispatch 23 memorials to congress begging for federal funds, and pass an act submitting to the voters of the territory a proposition for calling a convention to frame a state constitution and to apply for the admission of the state of Washington into the Union. When the voters got the opportunity to cast ballots on the latter measure they were less than enthusiastic. It failed 1,109 to 974.

After the legislature adjourned the town fathers had the old Indian war blockhouse in the square torn down, thriftily utilizing the salvaged lumber to plank one of the more swampy sections of Main street. Town

Marshal Hawk, left without a jail, informed the *Standard* "that he has fitted up a cell in the cow-shed adjoining Grainger's stable for the reception of town prisoners."

One of the first to occupy the cow-shed jail was one Heo, who was charged with assaulting an Indian girl of his tribe. General T. I. McKenny, the Indian agent, sentenced Heo to 50 lashes, vigorously laid on his bare back by the brawny arm of William Billings, Indian agent. After receiving 15 blows from Billings' five-stranded whip, poor Heo ruined the Indian reputation for stoicism under torture by fainting dead away.

Also, following the adjournment in February of the 1867-68 legislature, the council sergeant at arms, Louis Meyers, froze both his feet while trying to return home to Vancouver over the Cowlitz Trail on foot.

Washington territory might be on the railroad builders' maps, but it was still frontier country, and its citizens needed a certain hardiness to survive.

Olympians proved theirs when the circus came to town. Bartholomew's wagon show pitched its tent on Main street between 4th and 5th. It got in late in the day, and the tent-raising was hurried. No sooner had the audience, comprising the total population with the price of a ticket, assembled, then the seats collapsed. The ensuing pandemonium was finally quelled and the seats reerected. As the grand entry was about to be made the seats went down again.

Mr. Bartholemew, sweating profusely, offered to refund the admittance money and give up, but the hardy pioneers of Olympia wouldn't hear of it. They insisted they would stay there and keep collapsing all night if necessary. Heartened by the loyalty of his audience, Bartholomew finally got the bleachers properly secured and the show went on.

The Olympians, who got little excitement between legislative sessions, expressed themselves as well pleased with the eventual performance.

Having become a Democrat, John Miller Murphy needed a little prompting to assail the members of the Republican party, but his feelings were probably more than usually tender at this time. Having given up hope of reclaiming the public printing, he had embarked in 1867 on a search for other public office. He succeeded in being elected territorial



William Billings, Indian agent and sheriff.

auditor, and also quartermaster-general of the territorial militia. The first job paid little, and the second nothing, but both carried prerequisites of office, which Murphy enjoyed. As quartermaster-general he even got to wear a gold-bedecked uniform and assemble with other members of the governor's military staff on special occasions.

He ran hard for another term as auditor, even going so far as to order the compositors in the *Standard's* back office to never, under any circumstances, spell the name of his rival candidate correctly. His crew became adept at misspelling the unfortunate man's name in every conceivable way, but despite their best efforts, he succeeded in beating Murphy who, for many years thereafter confined himself to town politics and to making life as miserable as possible for Republicans in territorial office.

By the time the 1869 legislature arrived on the scene, its members found new signs of modest progress at the capital. A fine concord stage was in operation between Olympia and Commencement City, sometimes referred to as Tacoma. George Barnes was in the process of building the state's first brick bank building on Main street, between 3rd and 4th. Just to the north, I. Harris had opened one of the largest drygoods stores in the territory. The splendid

Columbia hall was available for dances and entertainment, and the local temperance organization, the Good Templars, had established a free public library in their Tacoma hall, which had formerly been the Olympia hall, owned by D. B. Finch, owner of the *Eliza Anderson*. The old sidewheeler was said to move slower and make money faster than any other steamboat in history, and she made Finch so wealthy that he could afford to give his building away in an age when income tax deductions had not yet been invented. Perhaps most startling of the signs of progress was the appearance on the streets of the capital city of two velocipedes, one a store-bought ancestor of the two-wheeled bicycle; the other a three-wheeled contraption of back yard construction.

The town's horses had something to run away from beside the whistle of the *Eliza Anderson* and the frequent firing of cannon.

Selucius Garfielde, having sent Wallace, Denny and Flanders to congress on the wings of his oratory, at last received his reward, the Republican nomination and inevitable victory.

GARFIELDE'S TRUNK

The silver-tongued orator soon found, however, that in achieving his victory, he had made a great many more campaign promises than he could possibly keep. Like many notable politicians to come, Garfielde just couldn't say no. He promised grants of public lands, the repeal of the law against selling liquor to Indians, and the privilege of stealing the choicer reservation lands from the Puyallup Indians. He promised federal mail contracts, jobs, pensions and promotions. According to the *Washington Standard* he even promised John Pinnell, proprietor of that house of ill fame but healthy profits, the Illahee, "to protect him and his 'non-professional dancers' by act of Congress."

Poor Selucius was less fortunate than earlier delegates from Washington territory. With the advent of the telegraph he couldn't just ignore the increasingly clamorous demands of his political creditors. At last, in desperation, he sent word back from Washington City that he had placed all his campaign promises in a trunk and the trunk had somehow been lost along the way.

This was met with a burst of honest indignation from the delegate's erstwhile supporters, and of hilarity from his political enemies. Francis Henry took pen in hand and brought forth a cartoon picturing a huge trunk with the lid thrown back, disclosing lifelike caricatures of all the well known politicians in Olympia.

Murphy composed some of his more satirical feature stories, usually captioned "THAT TRUNK", but he didn't limit himself to lampooning Garfielde. He also harpooned him, as for example:

*"A man who has betrayed his party, who has jumped from a devout Southern sympathizer to a sharer in the spoils he did not help to earn, will find but little aid or sympathy *** so it is fair to presume that Garfielde's political record will balance his eloquence and talent and leave enough duplicity and treachery to condemn him to eternal perdition besides."*

That Selucius Garfielde was, indeed, no ordinary political spellbinder is attested to by the fact that he succeeded in getting himself elected to a second term.

The census of 1870 showed that Thurston county had achieved a population of 2,246 with 1,203 of its citizens residing within the town limits of Olympia. The territory's capital city was still its largest city . . . and there was reason to believe the immediate future would be even brighter.

WORKING ON THE RAILROAD

Early in the year ground was broken at Thomson's Junction near Duluth, Minnesota, for construction of the long-awaited Northern Pacific railroad. Soon afterward construction began at Kalama, near the southwest corner of the territory, of a right of way toward Puget Sound. There were efforts to boom Kalama as a railway terminus, but everyone knew it would be only a way station when the main line was completed from Duluth to the Sound. The results to investors in its town lots were so disastrous that the *Standard* claimed the name of the town should be changed to Kalamity.

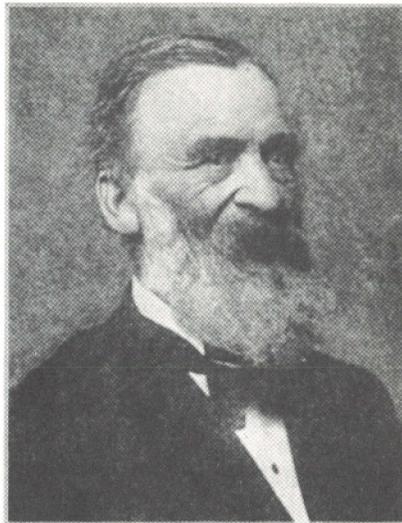
Besides, everyone also knew the real terminus could hardly be located anywhere but Olympia, the capital, the head of navigation and the undisputed metropolis of the territory.

Olympia was doing so well that its enemies were accused of trying to burn it down. There was, at any rate, a series of incendiary fires which kept the fire laddies of Columbia Number One breathless and prompted the citizens to organize a vigilance committee to rid the town of arsonists. A second fire company, the Barnes Hook and Ladder Company, was organized, with George Barnes as chief. Barnes was one of the richest men in the territory by that time, and he staked his men to fancier uniforms than those of the Columbia, but his liberality didn't extend to the purchase of a hook and ladder wagon. The firemen had to improvise one of sorts from an old farm wagon, and the Barnes Company was noted for performing better in parades than at fires.

In December the superiority of the capital city seemed to be clinched when Ezra Meeker wandered into town and succeeded in plucking 53 varieties of blooming flowers. These he took east and displayed to the wondering gaze of Horace Greeley, that noted admirer of the west, who advised him to write a book about the marvels of Washington territory. The result was Meeker's first literary effort, a modest pamphlet which caught the eye of Jay Cook, financial wizard of the Northern Pacific. The railroad company bought thousands of copies and distributed them all over the country.

PROFITABLE POLITICS

Governor Moore had, in the meantime, been forced to give up his office as the result of increasingly serious illness. Alvin Flanders, the uncommunicative Wallula business man who had been elected delegate to congress by the oratory of Selucius Garfield, was appointed to replace Moore. Flanders had planned to run for another term, but he had not been an outstanding success at the national capital. Besides, Garfield felt it was his turn to elect himself. In a deal with President Grant, Flanders was offered the governorship if he would vacate his seat in congress in favor of Garfield. He lasted only one year as chief executive, being involved only with the 1869 legislature. It was conceded by most observers of the territorial political scene that a thin, saturnine individual named Elisha P. Ferry, who had received the appointment as surveyor-general, was the real power behind the scenes at the capital.



ALVIN FLANDERS
1860-1870

Soon after Flanders assumed the executive chair, a new territorial secretary arrived on the scene, a lean and hungry individual named James Scott. He came, according to John Miller Murphy, "*with all his belongings in a carpet-bag.*" In addition to his carpet bag he brought his nephew, James Rodgers. These two enterprising political appointees were men of purpose and that purpose, Murphy observed with seeming accuracy, was to "*bag the fat of the land.*" Their first step was to bag Charles Prosch, the territorial printer, and replace him with Rodgers. All they had to qualify them as public printers was unlimited greed. They needed a newspaper plant and a boss printer.

They solved the first problem by buying J. R. Watson's *Territorial Republican*, which was renamed *Commercial Age* and placed under the nominal ownership of Clarence Bagley. T. F. McElroy was printing foreman. Murphy also claimed that he was one of the undercover owners of the *Commercial Age* under the assumed name of "Mr. Reed". Others were Olympia liveryman "Rice" Tilley, Samuel Coulter, who owned a local butcher shop and livery stable, and Randall Hewitt, who had owned an interest in the old *Territorial Republican*.

This strangely assorted group of old political enemies, acquisitive local business men and carpet-baggers was prepared to cut the fattest hog in the history of the public printing business. John Miller Murphy summed it up fairly well when he write:

*"Coulter is public printer * * * Messrs. Coulter & Tilley expect to realize many fat rounds from the legislative printing. They are the heavy men in the firm, and furnish the main stake, the remainder being spare ribs. They stand a chance to commit an indiscriminant slaughter upon the funds * * * we feel they are more at home with cleavers and sausage stuffers than rounces and shooting sticks."*

They were assured of fat profits for several reasons. McElroy, who had tried to form a printers' union during his absence from the political scene, reduced the wages of the *Commercial* printers to 45 cents per 1,000 ems of type, although the going rate was 60 cents.

Furthermore, the unprecedented sum of \$20,000 had been appropriated to print a new set of laws, the *Code of 1869*, which had been described as the "greatest work ever performed by a legislative body in this territory."^{*}

And just to keep an anchor out to windward, the gentlemen of the *Commercial Age* made deals with their many and diverse friends in the legislature to introduce a paper blizzard of bills, few of which made much sense, but all of which had to be printed.

It should be recorded to the credit of Governor Flanders that he was aware of what was going on in the public printing office and did his best to hold down the larceny. He vetoed more than fifty bills, all of which were passed for the single purpose of increasing the profits of the public printer, claiming that his action had saved the government at least \$10,000 on the printing of the *Code*.

The proprietors of the *Commercial Age*, for rather obvious reasons, didn't agree. Having lost money every time the stubborn governor vetoed a bill, they complained editorially that "the Governor made a dunce of himself in this veto matter, and made a further dunce of himself by giving publicity to it in his organ" (*The Transcript*).

The *Commercial Age* floundered about helplessly under the avalanche of printing, while its proprietors demanded still more. Two months after the session convened, the governor's message still hadn't been printed. The

Code didn't appear until the summer of 1870, and the announcement of its belated completion was published in the last issue of the *Commercial Age*, that of June 25, 1870. Rodgers, the official public printer, had been out of the territory during much of the year, returning two weeks before the paper folded to collect his share of the profits, along with the various other partners. Grant's election to the presidency had altered the power structure at Olympia.

In the *Standard* of January 15, 1870, Murphy had announced:

"THE NEW APPOINTMENT.—*The telegraph brings the information of the appointment of E. S. Salomon, Governor of Washington Territory, in place of Alvin Flanders, removed. As any information regarding the 'party-hacks' who are foisted upon us is of interest, we publish the following from the Tribune, which paper claims to be posted on the matter of which it speaks.*"

Edward Salomon, ninth territorial governor of Washington, was actually a man of greater attainments than most of the territorial executives of that era. A Jew, born in Germany, he migrated to Chicago after completing high school. At the age of 24 he was an alderman. At the outbreak of the civil war he entered service as a lieutenant, fought bravely in many of its greatest battles, and rose to brevet brigadier general. After the war he served as clerk of Cook county until appointed governor of Washington territory by Grant. After the 14th legislature of 1867-68, annual sessions gave way to biennial gatherings, so Salomon had only one legislature to deal with during his two-year term of office. He exhibited considerable political courage, vetoing an early-day gerrymandering effort of the Republican majority. Their legislative redistricting measure was returned to them with the comment that "this bill seems to me to be unjust, and would deprive some of the citizens of the territory of the representation they are entitled to."

Despite his abilities, Salomon found his term as territorial governor no bed of roses.

In the first place, he inherited a political hornets' nest. Although the Republicans were solidly in control of the legislature, the glib-tongued congressional delegate, Selucius Garfield, had by this time managed to split the party as effectively as had Isaac Stevens. The surveyor-general, Ferry, with his penetrating gaze fixed on the governorship, headed the pro-

^{*}*Compiling the Territorial Codes of Washington*, Arthur Beardsley, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII (1937).

Garfielde faction, ably assisted by Garfielde's campaign manager, L. P. Beach. During the 1871 session, the anti-Garfielde Republicans "bolted" the party organization and formed a coalition with the minority Democrats, led by the new territorial secretary, J. C. Clements. This group was dedicated to scuttling the ambitions of the Garfielde-Ferry-Beach triumverate, and had the backing of the Republican *Transcript*, in which McElroy had a healthy financial interest along with Gunn, and Prosch's *Tribune*, as well as Murphy's *Standard*, which was against any Republicans who happened to occupy the seats of power.

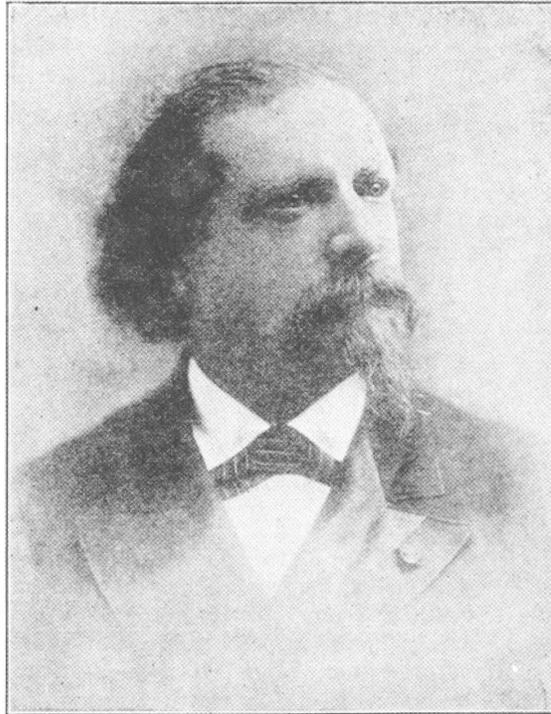
The pro-Garfielde forces had been supported for a time by the *Message*, which had been established in 1870 by one Harry Sutton with the hope of using the paper as a means of getting the public printing appointment. He, too, was caught in the political crossfire, however. Secretary Clements had a deep and personal hatred for Garfielde, who had tried to block his appointment as territorial secretary, and Sutton was Garfielde's protege. The ubiquitous McElroy was, on the other hand, a close friend of the new secretary. He formed a partnership of convenience with his old enemy, Prosch, who owned the most suitable printing plant for the purpose, and Clements appointed them public printers.

The unfortunate Sutton had to close down his paper and the Ferry-Garfielde faction was forced to establish a political organ of their own, the *Daily Courier*. Clarence Bagley, late of the *Commercial Age*, seemed to be making a career for himself as a journalistic figure-head. He was listed on the masthead as editor and manager, although most of the financial backing for Olympia's first daily newspaper was provided by Ferry.

Amid the din of political infighting at the capitol and the editorial uproar created by four violently partisan newspapers, Governor Salomon had difficulty making himself heard, and when he did succeed, he was frequently laughed at.

Short, plump and sporting a magnificent spiked German mustache and goatee, the governor spoke with a thick German accent. Like the Englishman, Pickering, the natives found him amusing.

Murphy, who showed little mercy toward the physical peculiarities of his political and journalistic enemies, frequently made fun of the governor's accent in the columns of the *Standard*. Judge Orange Jacobs, supreme



EDWARD S. SALOMON
1810-1872

court justice and an ambitious Republican politician, was referred to by Salomon as "Yudge Yawcups". Thereafter, Murphy for many years did likewise in the *Standard*.

Hilarity reached its peak when the governor took the steamboat to Seattle to address the citizens of that town. Disembarking at Yesler's wharf, he proceeded up Mill street (now Yesler Way) to meet the assembled natives. The street was then made of slabwood covered with sawdust from Yesler's mill. The sawdust was partly rotted and well intermixed with the droppings of the dray and coach horses which used Mill street to reach the steamboat landing.

Governor Salomon launched into his speech, eulogizing the territory, its climate, soil and future greatness. In the midst of his oratory he suddenly paused, stooped down and gathered up a handful of the odorous street covering.

"Mein Gott!" he exclaimed, "vot a splendid soil to raise cabbages!"

Despite all the confusion, the legislators of 1871 hewed to the line on at least a couple of issues upon which they felt strongly. Statehood they were sure, would bring new and profitable political plums, which they were anxious to harvest. They passed another resolution calling for a constitutional convention and a request for full membership in the galaxy of sovereign states. Again the citizens turned them down at the polls.

They also knew what they didn't want. If any were in doubt, Elisha Ferry was prepared to straighten them out. Some of the women of the territory were getting uppity ideas about equal suffrage, a concept most repugnant to Ferry. He blamed the agitation on Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway, who had the bad taste to publish a newspaper devoted to women's rights, and to travel across Oregon and Washington unescorted to advance her radical ideas from the rostrum.

Ferry and the legislature put Mrs. Duniway . . . and any misguided women who might have been listening to her . . . in their places. A law was passed which was brief and to the point:

"Hereafter no female shall have the right to ballot or vote at any poll or election precinct in this Territory until the Congress of the United States of America, shall, by direct legislation upon the same, declare the same to be the supreme law of the land."

DEMON RUM

There were many who also blamed the women and their growing activism for the increasing enthusiasm for the temperance movement, which was sweeping the territory and was particularly noticeable in Olympia, where Gale's *Temperance Echo* was beating the drums in the war against Demon Rum. The five newspapers of the town had as widely divergent views on this subject as on politics.

John Miller Murphy, who opposed heavy use of hard liquor, but liked his cheese and beer, was annoyed by the sanctimonious and uncompromising stand of the *Echo*. He took great editorial delight in exposing the fact that lager beer had been dispensed and consumed at a temperance party held by the Good Templars at their Tacoma hall. Gale of the *Echo* responded in his columns to the effect that the only lager beer at the party was brought in under Murphy's waistcoat.



ELISHA P. FERRY, two-term territorial governor and first governor of Washington State.

Murphy responded with solid evidence to back up his claim and Gale, being more gentlemanly than most frontier editors, published a retraction in his next issue.

Despite Murphy's repeated victories in the battle of wits with Gale, the temperance movement continued to gain ground to such an extent that the supreme political opportunist, Selucius Garfielde, became an ardent disciple of the Good Templars in his bid for a third term in congress. The Thurston county commissioners also responded to the pressure by refusing to grant any saloon licenses on the basis of a forgotten territorial law requiring that anyone applying for such a license must procure the signatures of a majority of the adult inhabitants of the election precinct where the saloon was to be located.

The *Echo*, of course, editorialized that the commissioners "deserve the thanks of every inhabitant of the county, in having done righteously and fearlessly their duty."

In the rival town of Steilacoom, the *Herald* chortled gleefully that, "The county commissioners have refused to grant licenses for the sale of spiritous liquors in Olympia. That's a settler. The town won't last much longer now. That and the terminus (of the Northern Pacific) were the props on which it leaned."

WE WAS ROBBED!

The *Herald* had hit an extremely tender spot for Olympia had been leaning heavily on the expectation of becoming the tidewater terminus of the railroad, and with considerable justification. The company had informed the town trustees that it proposed to locate the terminus on Budd Inlet, provided a right of way was obtained from Bush prairie to tidewater. This was quickly provided and the citizens settled down to await the arrival of steel rails and sudden prosperity. Late in November the line reached a tiny settlement called Hodgson's Station in Coal Bank precinct, 15 miles south of Olympia. It never got much closer. Instead, it proceeded on to Commencement Bay and the sawmill village of Commencement City, which had lately taken to calling itself Tacoma.

Olympia was left in a state of shock; so was Seattle, which had been just as sure that it was going to be the terminus. Inflated property values in both towns were punctured, and a rush was on to "New Tacoma".

It appears that Olympia lost the prize as the result of a coronary occlusion which struck down an obscure agent of the Puget Sound Land company, a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific.

The man's name was Ira B. Thomas, and he had been dispatched by the land company to buy up large tracts of land on the east side of Budd Inlet on deep water north of Olympia. The company wanted it done quietly, to keep out other speculators and reserve the forthcoming land boom profits for itself.

After acquiring title to the proposed terminus site, Thomas suffered his heart attack and died. Rather than go through the slow process of probating his estate, the company sent other agents to buy up land on Commencement Bay and plat a substitute boom town.

Had Ira Thomas lived just a little longer, Olympia would probably have gotten the railroad and all the ensuing blessings of overpopulation, congestion, pollution and odorous smog.

The citizens were heartbroken at their loss, and civic enterprise went into a state of sad decline.

Olympia was still the capital city, however, and the political show had to go on.

Elisha Ferry had, in the meantime, succeeded in getting President Grant to remove Gover-

nor Salomon and appoint him in his place. John Miller Murphy and the *Standard* were less than enthusiastic. Titles were important to the politicians of the post-civil war era, especially military titles, and Ferry liked to be addressed as "general", although his only warlike service had been as assistant adjutant-general on the staff of the governor of Illinois. Murphy took a sly dig at Ferry on this subject in May of 1872, after Ferry had received word of his pending appointment, but before he had formally taken office:

"ANTICIPATES HIS GLORY.—*Ferry, in his organ (the Courier), has doffed the title of 'General' and assumed that of Governor, although his trowserloons have not yet pressed the chair of state. This haste to abandon a title fairly earned by many well contested bottles * * is quite inexplicable.*"

Apparently Murphy's journalistic needle was penetrating painfully, as were those of Prosch of the *Tribune* and Gunn of the *Transcript*. Ferry responded, as have many outraged politicians since, by cancelling his subscriptions. Murphy took note of this in the *Standard*:

"Our newly appointed Governor, in a fit of rage stopped his STANDARD, Transcript and Tribune. 'Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad'." In a lighter mood, he then quipped that "As 'General' Ferry has stopped his paper, we can indulge in as much 'jocularity' at his expense as we please. Of course he won't see it."

The published biographies of Elisha Peyre Ferry indicate that he was a lawyer, having been admitted to the Illinois bar at the tender age of 20. There is no mention of his ever having been connected with the brewing industry, but Murphy insisted that he had somehow been involved in beer-making. Whether he had owned stock in a brewery or whether the whole thing was a figment of Murphy's fertile imagination, the columns of the *Standard* carried numerous unkind comments based on Murphy's assumption. This one is typical:

"'General' Ferry is said to have been a greater success as a brewer than as a politician. It cannot be said, however, that he has had more experience in brewing malt than brewing mischief, although it may have extended over a greater period of time."

THE EXECUTIVE COW

The governor's interest in fresh milk, rather than beer, was the basis for another feud between the executive office and the editorial sanctum of John Miller Murphy.

Every Olympia family that could afford one kept a milch cow in those days, and they were in the habit of letting them wander the streets of the town during the day. The public square was a favorite grazing spot and so, apparently, was Murphy's lawn. He fulminated frequently in his editorials against the plague of unrestrained cows. He felt their infestation of the streets was both unsanitary and undignified for the capital city of a great territory. He also resented their munching on his shrubbery and fruit trees. His one-man crusade finally induced the city fathers (of which he was now one) to pass a mild ordinance forbidding "cattle other than milch cows from running at large within the corporate limits of Olympia," and further directing the "milch cows, if found in the streets or alleys at night shall be impounded."

Murphy felt this was a step in the right direction, but it didn't go far enough. He continued to press the wandering cow issue.

Governor Ferry's daughter, Eliza, had been presented with a cow by her uncle, Seattle Fire Chief Gardner Kellogg, and when the family moved to Olympia she insisted on bringing it with her on the steamboat. The executive cow wandered off one night and fell victim to Murphy's impoundment ordinance. Eliza was heartbroken, her father was outraged, and Murphy printed a highly uncomplimentary account of the whole affair in the *Standard*.

Murphy may have been a match for the governor, but not for the governor's daughter. Eliza, intent on revenge, gathered a number of her young friends. Under cover of darkness, they spread salt all over the Murphy premises. The salt attracted every vagrant cow in town, and there was no way of dispersing them until they had licked up all the salt. The clang of their bells made the night hideous for Murphy and his family, and he wrote no more of Eliza Ferry's cow.

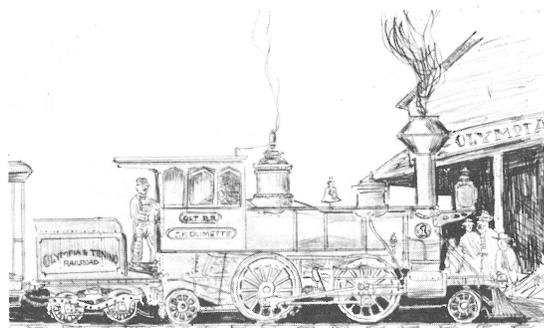


GREAT SEALS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

CHAPTER FOUR

The Third Decade

1873-1883



The year 1872 had closed with twin shocks for the citizens of Olympia. In December the town was jolted by the worst earthquake in its history, damaging buildings, toppling chimneys and splitting trees, as well as causing a great deal of panic among the people, cows and horses of the area. Only one Olympian was apparently unaffected by the quake. He was undergoing the usual rough and tumble initiation into a local fraternal organization at the time, and was blindfolded for the ordeal. When the building began to sway, his brethren departed at high speed, leaving him alone.

Upon their return, they found the new member philosophically waiting for the next step in his initiation.

The shock of the quake was as nothing, however, to the growing realization, as the years passed away, that the Northern Pacific was not going to honor its promise to locate the terminus on Budd Inlet. The property owners along the inlet had pledged half their holdings to the railroad, and others had pledged scarce cash. As late as Christmas day, 1872, General John W. Sprague and Governor John N. Goodwin, agents for the company, had dispatched a telegram to Marshall Blinn, Olympia businessman and railroad promoter, informing him that the construction crews were heading for the capital city. Besides, the town's railroad promoters, Blinn, George Barnes, Clanrick Crosby, Elisha P. Ferry, John Miller Murphy, Edwin Marsh and others, had a written acceptance by the Northern Pacific of the townspeople's donation and a promise to lay track to Budd Inlet.

But anyone could see that the track, after reaching Plum's Station, a good seven miles

east of town, was curving away to the northeast and Commencement Bay.

Amidst their blasted hopes, the citizens of Olympia were even frustrated in finding a target for their rage and indignation, for the Northern Pacific was a corporation and, as such "had no bodies to be kicked; no souls to be damned."*

For a while it looked as if the railroad might not get that far. The affairs of its chief promoter, Jay Cooke, were tangled and the bonds of the Northern Pacific were not in great demand. In September, 1873, the Cooke financial empire crashed, triggering the worst national financial panic in 40 years.

The track finally reached Commencement Bay, but there was little holiday spirit to commemorate the long-awaited event. Track gangs had been unpaid for weeks, and they were threatening to burn the bridges and tear up the tracks behind the locomotive which pulled the first cars to Puget Sound. Funds were scraped together to keep the railroad from being demolished by the same men who had built it, but it was no grand transcontinental line, joining east and west together with bands of steel.

The already rusting track began at the village of Kalama and meandered through sparsely settled wilderness to the tent and shanty town of New Tacoma. It had no connection with Portland, except by ferry. In the east, construction was halted on the east bank of the Missouri river, at Bismark, Dakota, 450 miles west of Duluth. The impressively titled "Pacific

*A History of Thurston County, Washington, Rathbun.

Division" was nearly 1,500 miles from the eastern segment. A single "mixed train daily" took care of the total freight and passenger traffic between Kalama and Tacoma. It would be another decade before the golden spike was driven at Gold Creek, Montana . . . and four years more before the first transcontinental train would reach Tacoma over the Cascade division.

The Northern Pacific railroad, a dream of 20 years, proved a nightmare to towns like Olympia and Seattle, whose carefully constructed hopes were demolished by its decision to create a new boom town of its own. To the rest of the territory it was a bad joke, and delegate McFadden was bombarded with demands that congress cancel the company's land grant, which donated to it every other section of land across its projected right of way. Tender feelings toward the railroad company were not restored when the nationwide depression, precipitated by the frenzied financial methods of Jay Cooke, moved westward at a much more rapid rate than had Cooke's steel rails.

Olympia, at this critical period in its history, was still the largest settlement in Washington territory and, despite its miles of mudflats at low tide, the most attractive. As streets were laid out in the 1850's and 60's, maple trees were planted to shade the wooden sidewalks, and by the 1870's these shade trees were the town's greatest visual asset, giving it the appearance of a carefully tended New England village and sparing it from the raw and temporary look of most frontier towns. Every published description of the territorial capital of that era placed heavy emphasis on its maple-shaded streets.

One whose enthusiasm for the bucolic beauties of Olympia was quite unrestrained was Miss Addie L. Ballou, authoress, advocate of women's rights and temperance, who was delivering a series of uplifting lectures at Tacoma hall. She presented the following bit of flowery prose to the *Washington Standard*:

"Olympia, the capital of Washington territory, is one of the most charming small cities in the far west. Taste, culture and finance have combined with art and nature, to complete her beauty. She sits like a queenly diamond sparkling among emerald settings, emblazoned on a disk of retreating and adorning globules of watery fret-work, and when she shall have tied her navigation commerce to

the eastward and southward with the iron bands of her nearly prospective railroad, she shall be the queen city of the far western territories."

While impressed by Miss Ballou's "graceful garlands of poesy," John Miller Murphy, loyal Olympian that he was, seemed to feel that she might have gone a little overboard in her pean of praise. He intimated that she might have been influenced by a desire to get more people to her lectures and was operating on the same basis "as was the politician who went around kissing the babies."

Murphy also took a realistic view of the railroad situation as it existed in 1873, summing up his feelings with a combination of cynicism and pragmatism:

"Now you see it and now you don't see it! The riggers and cappers of the great Northern Pacific Humbug have passed from our midst, and with them has gone the fond delusion that we had spotted the little joker in the terminus; for, it is said, they fully repudiated the idea that said company was under any obligation to build a branch road into Olympia. Many a good citizen who but yesterday was reveling in visions of wealth to flow from his reserved lots in this vast municipality, has forever abandoned the idea of a coach-and-six from that source, and quietly taken his place in that countless throng which, since Adam, has been marching down the slope of time to the tune of 'Sold and got your money'."

The former Hodgson's Station, renamed Tenino,* was the nearest railroad station . . . 15 miles to the south . . . and two or three competing stage lines quickly went into business, running between downtown Olympia and Tenino twice a day to meet the decrepit train of mixed freight and passenger cars at the Tenino depot.

*Considerable disagreement exists as to how Tenino got its name. Some have insisted that it was taken from a box car or surveyor's stake number . . . 10-9-0, but there is no evidence that this was the case. The most likely explanation is that "Tenino" was an Indian word meaning "fork in the trail."

RACES AND RATE WARS

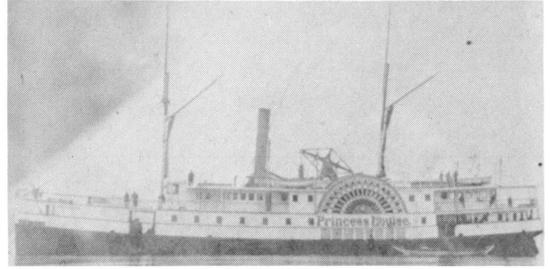
Olympia remained the terminus of the steamboat mail route between Puget Sound and Victoria, although the old *Eliza Anderson* was lying forlorn and neglected at the dock. She had been displaced by faster and fancier sidewheel packets.

Ever since her arrival in 1859, the old *Anderson* had been fighting off rival steamboats, most of them bigger and faster than she. The mail subsidy made it possible for her owners, D. B. Finch and Captain Tom Wright, to cut fares and hold them down until the opposition gave up, but by 1870 the going was getting tough. The well-financed Oregon Steam Navigation Company entered the fray. Finch and Wright had to pay a big subsidy to get rid of them. They had already realized that the *Anderson* was getting too slow and wheezy to hold her own in the increasingly competitive business, and had placed an order in New York for a fine new sidewheeler, the *Olympia*.

The *Olympia*, built of seasoned oak, 180 feet long, brig-rigged, beam-engined, and handsomely appointed, was the finest and fastest steamboat on Puget Sound, but she labored under a serious handicap from the start. Finch and Wright had lost the mail contract to a man named Nash. Nash began constructing a steamer on the beach near Priest Point, ran out of money, and sold out to a couple of Portland business men named E. A. and L. M. Starr. The Starrs completed Nash's boat, the 115-foot sidewheeler *Alida*, and began running her in competition with the *Olympia*.

Although greatly inferior to the New York-built *Olympia* in size, speed and seaworthiness, the *Alida* was the biggest vessel yet built at Olympia, and the *Standard* announced with some pride that "the neat little steamer *Alida* arrived at Percival's wharf Thursday evening to begin her new mail service."

*Shortly after the close of the civil war, Captain Samuel Percival, who had taken over ownership of the pioneer Kendall and Company store, built a steamboat dock at the foot of Water street. In the 1870's he turned its operation over to his son, John C. Percival, who retained management until his death in 1942. It is currently owned by Puget Sound Freight Lines.



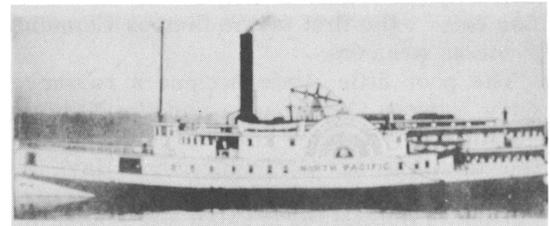
Rival Victoria boat *Olympia* in later years as the Canadian *Princess Louise*.

The *Alida* didn't wear well, however, and by 1873, the *Standard* announced the departure from the Olympia maritime scene of "the old tub *Alida*."

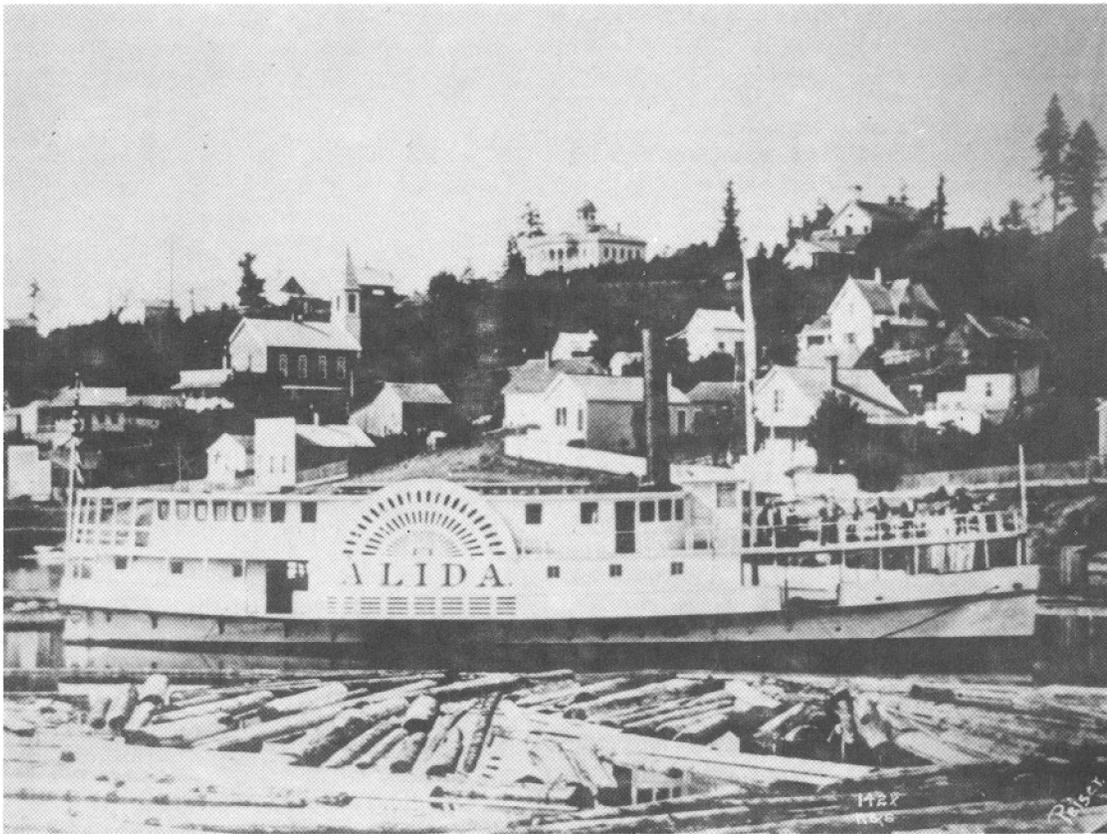
The Starrs also found her less than satisfactory. They quickly found that she scared her passengers and crew half to death when she tried to navigate the stormy waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. They had to buy another small, but more seaworthy steamer, the *Isabel*, to transfer freight and passengers across the strait to Victoria. Efforts to widen the *Alida* and make her less likely to capsize in a brisk breeze, further retarded her less than breathtaking speed.

The Starrs, like Finch and Wright, gave up and ordered a big new sidewheeler, the *North Pacific*. When she arrived at Olympia from the builder's yard in San Francisco, a new and even more spirited rate war developed. Passenger and freight rates fell to the lowest level yet.

Things culminated in the summer of 1871 with a classic steamboat race between the *Olympia* and *North Pacific* from Victoria to Port Townsend. The *North Pacific* won by three minutes.



Olympia-Victoria packet *North Pacific*.



OLYMPIA-BUILT STEAMER *Alida* at Seattle;
Territorial University on the hill in background.

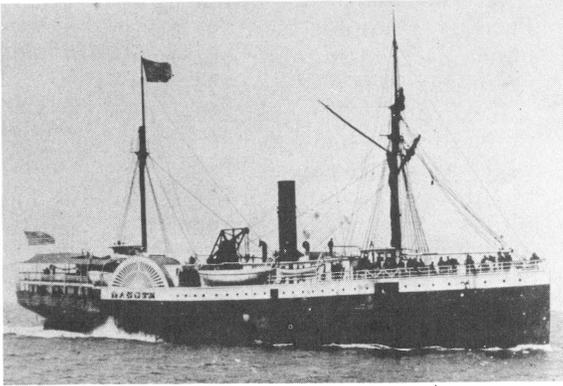
The victorious Starrs offered the *Olympia's* owners \$7,500 a year to take her off the route. They did, and she paddled down to San Francisco, where her owners were paid another liberal subsidy to keep her off the Sacramento river route. She made more money for them by not running than she could earn in operation, so they collected their profits for several years; then sold her to the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company, which renamed her *Princess Louise* . . . the first of the famous Canadian *Princess* steamers.

The poor little *Alida* became a passenger ferry between Old Tacoma and the Northern Pacific's New Tacoma after the establishing of the terminus on Commencement Bay. She ended her days as a floating "pest house," harboring the victims of small pox, plague and the other contagious illnesses which periodically afflicted the citizens of Washington territory.

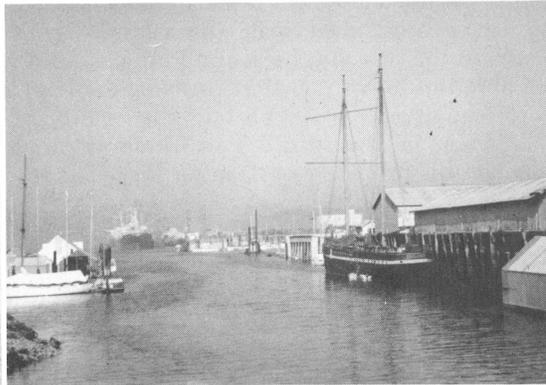
The *North Pacific* maintained her home port at Olympia for less than a year after 1873; then the capital city lost even its 20-year-old status as the Sound's major steamboat terminus. The Starrs made Tacoma the southern starting-point of the Victoria route. The little sternwheeler *Zephyr*, operated by Captain Wright, provided a mere feeder service between Olympia and the upstart port of Tacoma.

Olympia's civic ego was thus further bruised, although Captain Wright made a good deal of money with the *Zephyr* and then sold her to Captain W. R. Ballard, who also prospered, investing his profits in a new town just north of Seattle, which he named after himself.

The San Francisco firm of Goodall and Nelson did continue to run its coastwise steamer *Dakota* from that port to Olympia, with stops at Victoria, Port Townsend, Seattle and Tacoma, but with increasing frequency she was eliminating the trip to the tip of the



Type of Pacific Coast Steamship Company side-wheel coastal liner which called at Olympia's Westside wharf in early days.



Percival Dock 100 years later. Historic schooner *Explorer* moored alongside. Deep-sea freighters loading at Port of Olympia piers, background.

Sound in the winter months, when visibility was bad and extreme low tides common.

In a brave effort to do *something* to save civic face, the town fathers ordered signs with the names of the streets erected at each corner of what Murphy referred to grandly as "*our main business thoroughfares.*"

The unwillingness of the citizenry to part with what little money they had in this era of blasted hopes also postponed the town's entry into the age of flight. A "Professor" Brown advertised in May that he would make a balloon ascension from the outskirts of town, but the exhibition never took place. In order to finance his flight, Brown erected a tent and proposed to deliver a lecture on the art of aerial navigation. The population of the town assembled to view the free balloon ascension, but few if any were willing to pay to hear the preliminary lecture. The professor folded his tent, and his balloon, and departed, vowing never to give the parsimonious people of Olympia the opportunity to witness the wonders of man in flight.

Summer came, bringing hot weather and making the gracious shade trees welcome, as the streets made the annual transition from mud to dust. The town sprinkling wagon was, according to the *Standard*, "*in constant use these hot, dusty days.*"

With the coming of October the sprinkling wagon was relegated to the town barn and the maples proved less of a blessing. Their leaves began to fall, and the town marshal made his rounds, reminding business men and householders that they were responsible for raking and burning them. With October, too,

came the biennial session of the territorial legislature.

THE LEGENDARY BASEBALL GAME

Governor Ferry delivered his first message to the legislature on October 9. He gave priority to matters connected with the recent settlement of the long-standing boundary dispute between the United States and Canada. The matter had been placed in the hands of the emperor of Germany for arbitration, and his decision had given the San Juan islands to the United States.

The feelings of the Olympia baseball team were somewhat hurt by the fact that the governor didn't give them credit for winning the lovely archipelago for Uncle Sam.

Shortly before the decision was to be announced by the German emperor, some practical joker had posted official looking telegrams at strategic locations about the town announcing that Wilhelm had decided to award the islands on the basis of which team won the upcoming baseball game between Olympia and Victoria. The Olympians beat the Canadian team, the award was duly made to the United States, and many were quite convinced that this long and sometimes noisy battle had been won on the playing field of Olympia.

Ferry, who not only considered this highly improbable, but who even had doubts that Emperor Wilhelm was a baseball fan, confined his remarks to "reciting in brief its history down to its arbitration", and informing the legislators that "immediately after receiving

notice of this decision, I caused civil authority to be re-established over the islands lying between the two channels, and I am pleased to be able to inform you that these islands now form, undisputably, a part of the county of Whatcom, in the territory of Washington. I suggest the propriety of forming these islands into a new county.

The legislature responded quickly, creating San Juan county.

The usual legislative battle over the appointment of a public printer developed, but it was the final skirmish before a long armistice. This, like most wars, was based on economics. After 1873, as the nation plunged into an ever-deepening depression, congress tightened the purse-strings on the territories. The rate for public printing reached a new low of 75 cents per 1,000 ems of type during the 1873 session, and by the early 1880's it had dropped as low as 30 cents. It was no longer possible to get rich on the public printing, so the politicians lost interest in the matter.

The 1873 legislature refused to abandon the tradition entirely, however. Clarence Bagley had been defending the Ferry-Garfield-Beach forces against the massed assaults of all the other Olympia papers for some time. He and his partner, John Harned, had recently bought out Ferry's personal interest in the *Courier* and were continuing it on their own as a stout partisan of the administration. Ferry intended to see to it that Clarence got his reward, but the legislature beat him to the punch. Two days before Ferry delivered his message to them, they passed a resolution appointing his bitter enemy, Elisha Gunn of the *Transcript*. Ferry nursed his wounds for two weeks; then, on October 21 he informed the legislature that their action was null and void; that Clarence Bagley was the public printer by order of Henry Struve, the latest territorial secretary and a loyal member of Ferry's well-disciplined political organization.

There was considerable grumbling among the legislators and charges by the *Transcript* that Bagley and Struve were splitting the profits, but when it was discovered that the profits were no longer all that enticing the issue was dropped and Bagley enjoyed an all-time record tenure of 12 years.

RAILROAD TO TENINO

By the spring of 1874 the territory's two biggest towns, Olympia and Seattle, had

recovered somewhat from the Northern Pacific's stunning blow in locating its terminus at Tacoma, and both decided to build railroads of their own.

The Seattle effort has gained a larger place in Northwest history, but it was Olympia which actually completed its line to its destination through its own efforts and resources. The Seattle civic leaders promoted a general assembly of the citizens to start grading a right of way toward the Cascade mountains and Walla Walla, but it was largely a showing of good intentions to induce congress to provide a land grant to finance construction by professionals. The collapse of the Northern Pacific had, however, made railroads and land grants unpopular at the national capital. When Seattle's request for federal help was turned down, the ambitious project to tap the wheat fields of the Walla Walla country was abandoned. It wasn't until a Scottish engineer named Colman came to town and took over the moribund railroad that it was actually built as far as the coal mines east of Lake Washington.

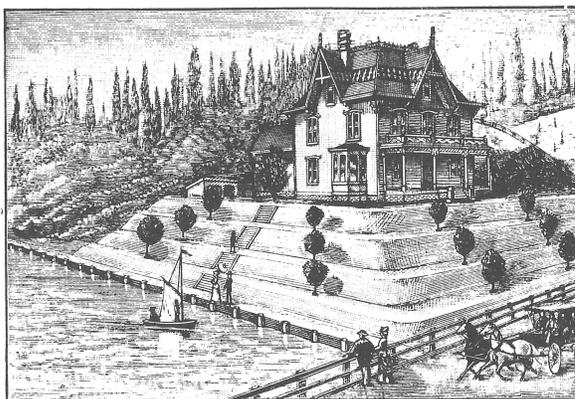
The Olympians did much better than that. Following a mass meeting at Columbia hall, during which speeches were made by Hazzard Stevens, Governor Ferry, ex-Governor Salomon and other civic leaders, the entire able-bodied male populace assembled at the town square. The governor, the supreme court justices, the town trustees, the fire department, the baseball team and the Good Templars were all there. John Miller Murphy and the rest of the small army of warring newspaper editors declared an armistice and donned working clothes.

Even the usually indolent Indians were aroused to action, and by mid-April Murphy reported the remarkable news that "*The head chief of the Squaxon Indians, Kettel, with three of his chosen braves reported early yesterday morning to the foreman on the grade of the railroad. 'Nesiki ticki cultus potlatch mamook ict sun copa la-lode'.** They manfully went to work."

*The Chinook jargon, a primitive mixture of Indian, French and English words, was the standard means of communication between whites and Indians during much of the 19th century in the Pacific Northwest. Chinook words became a part of the normal conversation of the day, and were understood by practically everyone. The translation of Murphy's Chinook means, roughly, "We want to give work one day on the railroad."



FIRST BRICK HOUSE in Washington Territory, built in 1874 by William Billings with material from his own brickyard. Mrs. Billings and daughter Blanche in the stylish pony cart of 1895 vintage; Frederick Billings leaning on gate.



Captain Sam Percival's mansion at the west end of Marshville bridge was an Olympia landmark for many years.

Most of the townspeople appeared to be in agreement with Judge McFadden, who wrote from Washington City that, *"without railroad connections, Olympia cannot stand still. She cannot go forward, even slowly. She must retrograde, and in a few years her dilapidated dwellings will become the fit abode for owls."*

The idea was to build a 15-mile line from Olympia to Tenino, where it would connect with the main line of the Northern Pacific. The grading was 15 per cent done by the close of that eventful day. And, unlike the citizens of Seattle, who soon gave up and concentrated on nursing their blisters and strained muscles, the determined Olympians kept right on working, donating one day a week to labor on the railroad.

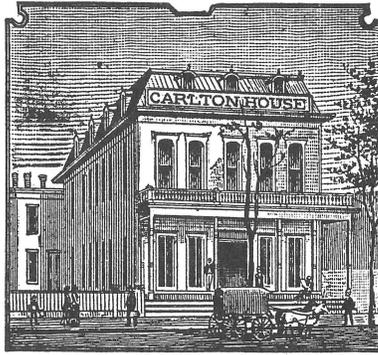
Not only labor, but equipment, tools, horses, mules and food for the workers were donated by the railroad enthusiasts. At an election the previous fall the voters of Thurston county had authorized the county commissioners to float a modest bond issue to provide some hard cash for the project, but in the prevailing financial gloom the bonds were easier authorized than sold. The clearing of the roadbed over the relatively flat prairie between Olympia and Tenino could be accomplished largely with volunteer labor, but there was some anxiety about the financing of rails and rolling stock.

With the coming of those rains in the fall of 1874, the working parties were abandoned, but the *Standard* pointed out that the grading was just about completed anyway. It also took to task those faint-hearted citizens who were beginning to mutter that the line would never be completed.

Despite the general hard times and the drain of the community's manpower and resources to build its railroad, there were some signs of progress in other areas.

William Billings, the long-time sheriff of Thurston county, was building the first brick mansion in the Puget Sound country, using his own bricks from a plant he had established earlier to build the county's first jail down on the flats on 6th and Adams. Billings' bricks must have had the consistency of peanut brittle, for a parade of prisoners made their way out of the jail through the walls until the structure eventually had more patches than original material.

In addition to the sheriff's unique and impressive home, Captain Sam Percival was building the town's ultimate in gingerbread carpenter-Gothic wooden mansions above the Deschutes waterway at the east end of the Marshville bridge. The structure may have served as balm to the grand groundbreaking for the Olympia-Tenino railroad. Captain Sam was a leading light of the temperance movement, which was becoming a powerful force in town, but charges were brought by some of his brethren of the Good Templars that he had carried his pitcher once too often to the barrel of Columbia street cream lager at Warren's Point. The combination of warm spring weather, hard labor and unaccustomed tipping had, according to his critics, caused the good captain to navigate with difficulty, listing badly from port to starboard, and bringing the rude humor of the unregenerate down upon the forces of temperance.



CARLTON HOUSE, Olympia's leading hotel in the 1880's, became a notorious bootleg joint in prohibition era.

The members of the 1873 legislature were offered the hospitality of a new hotel, the Carlton House, just built by G. W. Carlton, a former printer, and John Van Wormer, who had been the mail carrier between Olympia and Chehalis. John Miller Murphy described the new hostelry as *"new, large and well adapted to the business, with large family rooms, cozy fireplaces and many home comforts not found in ordinary hotels."* He offered the opinion that *"Carlton is a good printer and we therefore think he has sense enough to run a hotel,"* but added a word of caution to his former colleague, pointing out that members of the newspaper fraternity were (and are) confirmed free-loaders and that if he let them establish credit the Carlton would probably become *"the home for indigent printers."*

MORE TRANSPORTATION TROUBLES

The year 1874 drew to a close with public indignation focused upon that corporate monster, the Northern Pacific railroad. A law suit, instigated according to popular belief in Olympia by the big railroad, voided the county bond issue for the narrow-gauge line to Tenino. Good old Judge McFadden got a special act of congress passed authorizing the county commissioners to issue railroad bonds, but that meant the whole proposition had to be submitted to the voters again, causing more delay.

Furthermore, the congressional action, although favorable, resulted in still another blow to the town's faltering civic ego. In reporting the proceedings the *Congressional Record* referred to the capital city and principal metropolis of Washington territory as "Bolivia"!

After the bonds were passed a second time the Olympia Railroad Union, the civic organization formed to build and operate the line, assumed that its major problem was solved. With Hazzard Stevens as its president and its board of trustees including such civic heavyweights as Marshall Blinn, T. I. McKenny, John Miller Murphy, George Barnes, Sam Percival, T. F. McElroy and Oliver Shead, it was predicted the bonds, in the amount of \$75,000, would be quickly sold in Portland.

This was not the case, and Hazzard Stevens was dispatched to San Francisco to dispose of them. He met with no better success there. These failures were likewise attributed to the devious machinations of the Northern Pacific, rather than the general state of the economy.

There was no doubt, however, that the railroad company was imposing discriminatory freight rates on Thurston county in an effort to divert as much trade as possible to its own town of New Tacoma.

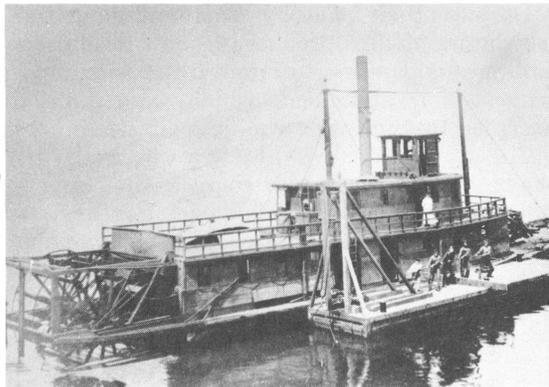
Indignation reached the boiling point in November when it was learned that P. D. Moore, who was willing to try his hand at anything to make an honest dollar, had underbid the Starrs for the lucrative Victoria mail contract, although he didn't own so much as a rowboat with which to make deliveries. Moore had bid \$26,980 to operate the route from Olympia, with an alternate bid of \$20,980 if Tacoma were made the southern terminus. In its current economy mood, the federal government accepted the Tacoma proposition, and Moore was authorized to begin the service at once. Since he didn't have a boat, this was easier said than done. The former contractors refused to touch the growing piles of undelivered mail. Finally, in desperation, the government offered Moore \$500 a trip on an emergency basis. Moore chartered the ungainly sidewheel tugboat *Favorite* and operated her from Olympia to Victoria until January, 1875, when the mail terminus was officially changed to Tacoma. The Starrs, in the meantime, had abandoned their Olympia wharf in disgust and

were running the fine big packet *North Pacific* from Tacoma.

In Olympia, indignation meetings were held to denounce this latest example of Northern Pacific perfidy. Telegrams were sent to Washington City, but to no avail. The glory days of steamboating were over, and the poky little sternwheeler *Zephyr* became the only link with down-Sound ports, except for the sometimes erratic service of the Goodall and Nelson coastwise steamers from San Francisco . . . and there were rumors that this service might also be terminated at the instigation of the Northern Pacific.

The old Westside wharf was in a bad state of repair, and the only means of transferring freight and passengers from it to downtown Olympia was by small boats at high tide. Captain J. G. Parker wrote to the steamship company in San Francisco, asking if they would continue to operate to Olympia on a regular schedule if the town provided an adequate deep water dock and a suitable connecting road. Their reply was in the affirmative, and the townspeople spent most of the year arguing over where the ocean dock should be located. B. F. Brown finally secured the civic improvement for his claim on the west side south of Butler's Cove. A special levy was passed in September and construction was completed early the following year. Goodall and Nelson made good their promise, running their steamers *Dakota* and *Panama* to Brown's wharf on a weekly schedule.

The Olympia Water company, second only to the Northern Pacific as a whipping boy for local frustrations, was probably a major factor in keeping the town on the main line of at least the coastwise steamships. William Horton, who had been the engineer on Captain Parker's little pioneer steamer *Traveler*, and later her owner, had obtained the franchise for the water company and established a small plant at Tumwater to manufacture the wooden water pipe. The product proved popular and, after the Olympia lines were laid, Horton incorporated the Washington Water Pipe company and organized a Pacific coast distribution system for the product. The major part of the cargo lifted at Brown's wharf by the San Francisco steamers was, for many years, wooden water pipe from Tumwater. The company remained in business and expanded fre-



Stern-wheeler *Zephyr* in her later years as a towboat.

quently, in later years as the Washington Pipe Manufacturing Company and Puget Sound Pipe Company, until well into the 20th century.

Despite the increasingly hard times, Olympians were in a mood to fight back against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. In addition to financing the railroad and the wharf, they voted another tax on themselves to buy a tract of land south of town for a fair grounds, and spent \$100 to erect "the tallest flagpole in the territory" on the town square.

The legislature returned to Olympia in the fall of 1875, grumbling considerably about the ramshackle state of the "temporary" capitol building. The \$30,000 made available for a new building during the term of the late lamented Governor Gholson had been partly spent on clearing the 10-acre capitol grounds and the balance had long since reverted to the federal treasury.

The sad state of the capitol was described in detail in a letter from Secretary Struve to the secretary of the interior, forwarded by Governor Ferry with his full endorsement.

Although Struve's tale of woe reached almost poetic levels in places, it failed to move the bureaucrats of Washington City. The territorial capitol continued to slowly disintegrate and territorial legislators continued to fall through the wooden sidewalk, suffer exposure to the winter winds which blew through the decrepit outhouses . . . and curse the unfortunate secretary, whom they held responsible for the sad state of affairs.

Despite their shabby surroundings, the legislators of 1875 produced a joint resolution calling for a constitutional convention and request for statehood which was finally accepted by the voters the following year.

The legislature was also preoccupied with the creation of more new counties, but Governor Ferry put a stop to this by vetoing the first of the proposed measures, which would have created the "county of Ping"* from Walla Walla county, and letting it be known he would do the same to any others which might pass.

A number of legislators, as well as most of the townspeople, took time off in October to visit the *Standard* office and gaze in awe at the marvelous workings of the steam-powered press which John Miller Murphy had installed to replace the time-honored hand press of the territorial news media.

THE SCHIZOPHRENIC DAILY OLYMPIAN

Clarence Bagley had found the financial strain of trying to maintain a daily paper too much for him, but the civic leaders of Olympia felt they needed one badly. If the statehood request were granted by congress there would be another vote on the location of the capital, and they wanted both the prestige of the territory's only daily newspaper and the propaganda value it could provide at a rate seven times faster than any of the weeklies.

They prevailed upon Murphy, the ardent anti-Ferry Democrat, to join forces with Bagley, spokesman for the governor and the Republican administration, to produce a daily paper on Murphy's marvelous new steam press. Agreement was reached on the understanding that Murphy and Bagley would dictate the political policy of the new paper on alternate days. As a result, the *Daily Olympian*, as it was christened, had a uniquely schizophrenic editorial personality, being partisan Republican one day and ardently Democratic the next.

*This still-born county was to be named after a backwoods statesman named Elisha Ping, who showed up in Olympia for the 1877 session as a member of the council from Columbia, Whitman and Stevens counties.

This arrangement worked fairly well until young Bagley left town and was temporarily replaced at the editorial desk by his father, the Reverend Daniel. The elder Bagley slipped several galleys of the Republican propaganda into the *Olympian's* columns on one of the days it was supposed to be Democratic. Murphy, who was still giving much of his attention to his first love, the weekly *Standard*, felt that he had been taken advantage of and his Irish temper erupted in a monumental explosion. He and Clarence parted company, and the *Daily Olympian* lasted less than a year. Bagley brought the *Daily Courier* back to life, but its days were also numbered.

HARD TIMES

There were few other signs of progress in the depression-plagued year of 1876. W. O. Bush, a son of the pioneer George Bush, carried a display of agricultural products from the family farm to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, and it won first prize but created no stampede of settlers or investment capital to the Northwest. The narrow-gauge railroad bonds remained unsold, though further efforts were made to dispose of them in San Francisco. The county commissioners had stipulated that construction must be completed before 1876, and Marshall Blinn and Sam Percival of the Railroad Union, backed by the town trustees, had to beg for a year's extension of time which was granted.

The citizens of the community's growing Chinatown on Columbia street financed a Chinese language school for their children, presided over by the Reverend Don Gong, but there was little else at which to point with pride.

The town trustees weren't even in a position to pay off Tom Prather's \$500 note on the town hall. They had to give him another I.O.U. instead.

A few hardy souls were not yet ready to throw in the towel, however. The Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad of rival Seattle had been in an even deeper coma than the Olympia and Tenino Railroad, but it now showed signs of coming to life. Its directors entered into a contract with Colman's Seattle Coal and Transportation company to complete the line to the coal mines, and it appeared that he

meant business. The more loyal Olympians were determined that Seattle wasn't going to "hear the snort of the iron horse" before they did.

Another community meeting was held at Columbia hall in June. The members of the Olympia Railroad Union reiterated their willingness to bow out in favor of anyone who showed greater promise of getting the job done. The result was the formation of the Thurston County Railroad Construction company and the issuance of \$250,000 in capital stock at one dollar a share. The issue was quickly sold, despite the hard times and many previous disappointments.

There ensued some wrangling between the Olympia Railroad Union and the Thurston County Railroad Construction company over when the transfer of assets should take place, but this was worked out, the papers were signed and another grand field day was held to grub out the undergrowth which had sprung up on the right of way.

Legislators converging on the dingy territorial capitol in the fall found a new climate of optimism in the capital city. They found it catching and wasted no time in authorizing the assembly of a constitutional convention of 15 delegates to be elected from the counties of the territory and the "panhandle" counties of Idaho. The proposition for statehood envisioned the inclusion of these Idaho counties in the new state of Washington. The vast majority of the Idaho citizens involved were heartily in favor of the idea, but it was viewed with little enthusiasm in Olympia.

Civic paranoia was still rampant, and the proposed annexation was viewed as a means of shifting the center of population in a plot to move the capital to eastern Washington.

At about the time the legislature was celebrating another adjournment *sine die*, E. N. Ouimette, merchant and secretary of the Thurston County Railroad Construction company, was boarding the trusty sidewheeler *Dakota* for San Francisco. In the March 30, 1879 issue of the *Standard*, Murphy advised the citizens of Olympia and Thurston county that the time had come to make good on past pledges and promises:

"A telegram from Mr. Ouimette, received last Tuesday evening, announced the welcome intelligence that he had completed negotiations for the purchase of iron (rails) for our branch railroad, and was about closing terms for a

locomotive and six freight cars. A subsequent dispatch stated that the latter transaction likewise had been consummated and the rolling stock shipped on the Chester."

The diligent Ouimette was the hero of the hour, the same issue of the *Standard* reporting that *"there is some talk of electing Mr. Ouimette Mayor, as a mark of recognition of his services in managing the railroad negotiations."*

The current state of the local economy was attested to by the fact that nobody was willing to buy gunpowder for the town cannon when the good news arrived from San Francisco, the *Standard* noting that *"our people did not burn any gunpowder over the railroad news, but they rang the bells, which made quite as much noise, without costing anything."*

Even the local boot and shoe maker, Benjamin Vincent, gave vent to the general spirit of jubilation in an advertisement in that same issue of the *Standard*:

*"Now that the railroad's to be built
You surely can't refuse
To treat yourself without ado
To a pair of boots or shoes."*

THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD

The little eight-wheeled narrow-gauge locomotive duly arrived at the new ocean dock on the west side. To modern eyes it would have looked more like a toy than a serious piece of railroad equipment and, like a modern toy, it had to be assembled before it could be used. It was transferred to Percival's dock by scow and the pieces assembled at the foot of 2nd street by Engineer Mason, who would have the honor and glory of handling the throttle once the locomotive was put together and placed in operation.

John Miller Murphy's steam press, and even the marvelous steam sausage-slicer at the butcher shop of D. J. Chambers and Son, were neglected as the population of the town flocked to the waterfront to watch its long-awaited pride and joy take form under the skilled hands of the engineer and his helpers. Meanwhile, the rails were being unloaded from the ship *Tidal Wave* and placed on the roadbed by a crew of 75 men, "one third of whom are Chinamen."



WAITING FOR THE TENINO CANNONBALL at Sheldon's Station on the Olympia-Tenino railroad line.

By late July the rails were in place and the rolling stock transferred to them. August 1 was the great day. The train was assembled, steam was up, and everybody in town was invited for free rides to Tenino and back. Well over half the total population responded enthusiastically. The *Standard*, on the following Saturday, reported the historic event with enthusiasm and in detail:

"We confidently assert that no similar demonstration ever culminated in a more perfect success than did the free ride given last Thursday, by the managers of the Olympia-Tenino Railroad. Foremost, and most important of all the elements of success in such matters, was the fine weather which prevailed. Providence did, indeed, seem to smile upon the undertaking and its happy results.

"The morning train, consisting of six cars, crowded with humanity, left at 8 o'clock. By actual count it was ascertained that 353 per-

sons made the first trip over the road. An equal number left by the 2 o'clock train, and when the cars arrived at Long Bridge, in the evening, it was estimated that fully five hundred people were on board. The road proves, upon its own showing, to be all that the most sanguine ever expected from it . . . a first-class road, devoted to the interests of the people.

"The Olympia Cornet Band accompanied the excursionists, and enlivened the ride with soul-stirring music. At Tenino, during the stay, the time was passed in dancing, in which town and country united with great glee. A special train being in waiting on the track of the Northern Pacific, it was dispatched to Centerville, for a load of pleasure-seekers, who arrived in time to bask in the smiles of the 'muse of the many twinkling feet'.*

*Now renamed Centralia.

"But it is unnecessary to refer at greater length on this subject. The railroad is a success, and declared to be so by the people. It now ranks among the living, inspiring and progressive enterprises of the day."

Murphy's enthusiasm was probably accounted for, at least in part, by the fact that he was accorded a place of honor in the locomotive cab, whereas Bagley of the *Courier* was relegated to a flat car which, according to Murphy, *"is about as near 'riding on the rail' as sitting on the cellar door and calling it sliding down hill."*

Following the free excursion, the train began a twice-a-day schedule over the 15-mile route, the conductor, who also acted as station master and flagman, collecting 12¢ for the ride to Tumwater, 50¢ to Bush Station, 75¢ to Spurlock Station and one dollar to Tenino. Regular freight and grain was transported to or from any point on the line for a dollar a ton, with hay going for two dollars a ton. Each of the little freight cars could carry eight tons, and at the end of the first week's operation the *Standard* reported that *"the receipts of the Olympia-Tenino Railroad have been from \$40 to \$50 per day ever since it was opened to business, and as the expenses of operation do not exceed \$12 per day, a very fair margin is left for profit."*

The early operation of the railroad was not without its problems and frustrations, despite the glowing reports in the local press.

Property owners on the west side of the Deschutes waterway had refused to cooperate in the securing of a right of way and it was necessary to build a trestle on the mudflats to carry the line the last couple of miles to the depot at the 4th street "Long bridge." In the rush to get the train rolling, the builders had failed to add sway-braces to the trestle and when the Tenino Express passed over it the trestle groaned and swayed alarmingly, while the cars pitched and rolled and the passengers prayed. The *Standard* was able to report before the end of August that this condition had been corrected, adding the encouraging advice that nobody should *"feel any more trepidation in riding over that part of the road."*

The Thurston county cows presented a problem not so easily solved. They were of an independent and fearless breed, and they caused the railroad even more trouble than they did John Miller Murphy. They refused to be intimidated by the falsetto whistle of the diminutive locomotive and seldom moved off

the track. If there was time the train would stop while the fireman and conductor shooed the stubborn beast away, but in darkness or on curves there were frequent collisions, in which the local cows always came out second best. At each meeting of the railroad directors there were delegations of angry farmers demanding restitution for the loss of their choicest cattle.

Engineer Mason's navigation was also hindered by the fact that the locomotive had been delivered without a headlight, as well as by the lack of a turn-table at the north end of the line. The train was forced to back into the Olympia station with the conductor lighting the way with a kerosene lantern, which was not a properly inspiring approach to the capital city.

The directors eventually authorized the construction of a turn-table and the ladies of Olympia held a benefit supper to procure a headlight for the locomotive, but misfortune continued to plague the railroad. In mid-September the *Standard* reported, *"a slight mishap at the turntable last night unfitted the engine for taking the train to Tenino today, and hence no whistle greeted our ears this morning. The mail was sent out on a hand-car."*

Furthermore, when the long-awaited headlight arrived from San Francisco it was discovered that the unscrupulous dealer with whom the ladies' order had been placed had taken their money and shipped a second-hand mine lantern instead of the majestic hand-painted kerosene locomotive headlight everybody had been expecting.

Early passengers on the line also traveled in some discomfort due to another oversight. The line's one passenger car had arrived without seats. By late September, however, the *Standard* was able to impart the glad tidings that the seats had arrived on the *Dakota* from San Francisco.

The citizens of Olympia, used to a less complicated way of life, were confused by the proliferation of transportation facilities. The sternwheeler *Messenger* had joined the *Zephyr* on the down-Sound route, and the *Standard* reported the resulting state of affairs as follows:

"Since the locomotive made its debut, mingling its shrill whistling with that of the steamers, our citizens are often at a loss to know 'which is which', and a few ridiculous mistakes have already occurred in consequence."

While the Olympia-Tenino railroad did not immediately bring miraculous prosperity to Olympia, it was considered a definite civic asset. A real, operating railroad, even though it was neither as long nor as wide as the Northern Pacific, was a fine status symbol, which would doubtless impress the legislature when the next fight over the capital location broke out.

It also engendered a new industry. With the railroad providing connections with the Northern Pacific and relatively speedy freight transport to Portland, a group of enterprising Olympia citizens formed the Olympia Oyster company, gathering and shipping the succulent local bivalves in considerable quantity. Until that time the oysters had mostly been gathered by Indians and hawked from baskets to the limited Olympia market.

The Indian oyster-gatherers now sold their wares direct to the oyster company, which also cultivated beds in the outlying bays, shipping them to town on its own little sternwheel steamer, the *Old Settler*.

Somewhat carried away by all this progress, Murphy even went so far as to let the civic leaders of the town talk him into taking another fling at publishing a daily paper, a project which he described, with some lack of enthusiasm, as follows:

“ . . . The Daily Experiment, as the name implies, is an experiment. It will be published, if at all, a week, maybe a month, possibly a year, and if it attains that mature age, will doubtless be continued indefinitely.

“ . . . It will endeavor to note every local event, but in return expects to receive from each of its patrons 25 cents per week.

“While it will endeavor to puff town and surrounding country higher than Gilray’s kite, it don’t propose to laud anything that puts wealth into anybody’s pocket, without receiving a small moiety of its own. This might as well be understood at the outset . . . Its motto will be . . . You tickle me and I’ll tickle you, which, next to the Golden Rule, is the most sensible of proverbs.

“ . . . Advertising will be inserted at reasonable rates by the week. Special notices 5 cents a line each insertion, but none inserted for less than 25 cents. At these rates, those who have insisted that a daily paper would pay can have a chance to demonstrate their faith by their works.

“ . . . Let it be distinctly understood that the present project is not of our own suggestion or seeking, but simply a compliance with the wishes of some very enthusiastic friends.”

Despite Murphy’s highly practical and realistic proclamation, the little four-page tabloid survived only a short time beyond the one year probationary period. Murphy, now a twice burned child in the precarious game of daily newspaper publishing, vowed that he would never again be fast-talked into getting out a paper more often than once a week. He stuck to his guns for well over a decade before he gave in to the pleas of civic boosters and ventured for the third and last time into the field of daily journalism.

ANOTHER TRY FOR STATEHOOD

In mid-June the constitutional convention, authorized by the voters and the last legislature, assembled at Walla Walla to hopefully draw up a state constitution. In addition to 15 delegates from Washington territory, it included a representative of the three Idaho panhandle counties, Shoshone, Nez Perce and Idaho, which wanted to become part of the new state of Washington. The sum of \$200 was appropriated to pay the expenses of the Idaho delegate, but he wasn’t permitted to vote. Washington territory’s elder statesman, Alexander Abernethy of Cowlitz was the convention chairman; Francis Henry represented Thurston and Lewis counties.

In an effort to abolish the politically powerful organizations which had traditionally grown around the territorial governors, the new constitution limited governors to a single four-year term, although they could run again after being out of office for a term.

It fixed the salaries of the governor, secretary of state, state treasurer and superintendent of public instruction at \$1,500 per annum, supreme and circuit court judges, \$2,000, circuit attorneys, \$1,000 and members of the legislature, \$4.00 a day per diem while in session and 10¢ per mile in “going to and returning from the seat of Government.”

Despite the continued efforts of Mrs. Duniway and her followers of the woman suffrage movement, the delegates made it clear that only *male* persons of the age of 21 or over

were to be electors. They did, however, provide for the submission of female suffrage and local option on liquor sales as separate propositions, to be voted on at the same time as the proposed constitution. If they received a majority vote they would be incorporated into the constitution.

The delegates took a swipe at the much disliked Northern Pacific by including a provision that "all railroads in the state shall be deemed public highways, and shall be free to all persons for the transportation of themselves and property, under such regulations as may be prescribed by law." They also struck a blow for thrift in government by providing that "the public debt shall never exceed one hundred thousand dollars unless contracted to repel invasion or suppress insurrection."

The convention also stood firmly for morality, with provisions that the legislature could not grant divorces or authorize lotteries. A proposal to establish "separate but equal" schools for non-white children was voted down by better than two to one, but a memorial to congress was authorized requesting the abolition of all Indian reservations granted under the treaties of 1854-55, thus permitting white homesteaders to grab the last remaining Indian lands.

In regard to the capital question, the constitution provided that:

"The legislature shall have no power to change or locate the seat of government; but shall at the first session after admission submit the question of the permanent location of the seat of government to the qualified electors at the next general election, the seat of government to remain at Olympia until permanently located by a majority vote."

The document was approved by a vote of 6,537 to 3,236. It was overwhelmingly favored in the three Idaho counties . . . 742 to 28 . . . but there was much difference of opinion among Washington residents on the desirability of including them in the proposed new state. The official position of the legislature was favorable to their annexation, probably to a large degree from political consideration. The Idaho counties were heavily Democratic, as was congress at that time, and there was a belief among the territorial politicians that congress would take more kindly to the request for statehood if Washington were somewhat less overwhelmingly Republican. Others felt

the inclusion of the Idaho counties would complicate and endanger the request for statehood.

Everyone was convinced that statehood would bring increased land and property values, along with a golden flood of federal money, and the majority simply and selfishly wanted statehood, with or without the panhandle counties.

There were a few exceptions. The citizens of Pierce county, the promised land of the Northern Pacific, were opposed to the anti-railroad provisions of the constitution and voted against it. Walla Walla county had come to the conclusion that it would like to be annexed to Oregon; furthermore, Mr. Newell of the Walla Walla *Statesman* had convinced a large segment of the population that the whole thing was a plot by Elisha P. Ferry to get himself elected United States senator. Statehood and the constitution lost there, too.

And four out of five of the electors voted against woman suffrage and local option.

Thomas J. Brent, who was elected as the Republican delegate to congress at the same election that ratified the proposed constitution, introduced no less than three bills providing for the admission of Washington as a state. Similar bills were filed at the succeeding three sessions of congress, but only one of these . . . with the three Idaho counties deleted . . . emerged from committee, and it failed to pass.

Although Thurston county had favored statehood by a fair majority, many Olympians breathed a sigh of relief when congress failed to act. At least the town wouldn't have to go through the traumatic and expensive process of another capital location election for a while.

TINDER TOWN

The summer of 1878 was unusually hot and dry in the Puget Sound country. The *Standard* complained of "the impalpable dust that so thoroughly invests everything," despite the best efforts of the town sprinkling wagon. Forest fires broke out and raged unchecked, as they would each summer for many years. Smoke blotted out the sun and made it difficult to recognize acquaintances on the streets at a distance of half a block. The steamboats groped their way from landing to landing, hooting their whistles dismally, and the

Standard was moved to observe that “*the early Christians walked by faith and not by sight. The Sound steamers run by whistle and not by compass.*”

Even the sidewalks of the capital city were not immune from the threat of fire. At two o'clock on a June morning the fire alarm sounded and, according to the *Standard*, “*brought out nearly our whole town population to wage battle against the dread destroyer.*”

It was, in fact, a section of the dilapidated wooden sidewalk leading to the equally dilapidated territorial capitol which was on fire. Many had hoped that it *was* the capitol. At this time the *Strandard* was still complaining editorially about another block of sidewalk between 3rd and 4th on Washington street, which had been damaged by a previous fire and still hadn't been replaced.

Shortly thereafter the fire bell clanged again, and this time the citizens and the volunteer fire companies had a real problems on their hands. Fire had broken out in a wooden shed near the drug store and office of Dr. Rufus Willard, and it spread through the frame business stuctures faster than the best efforts of the *Columbia* could cope with it. Before it was over the entire block from 3rd to 4th between Main and Washington streets was in ruins. Only a fortuitous change of wind and the combined efforts of men, women and children prevented the complete destruction of the downtown area.

John Miller Murphy, an ardent fire buff and member of the *Columbia* engine company, immediately set up a hue and cry for a steam fire engine, both as essential to the safety of the community and as a civic status symbol. Having made up his mind on the matter, Murphy kept up his campaign until he got it, but he did not neglect his traditional crusades against such minor civic problem areas as unruly cows and hazardous streets and sidewalks.* He had unsuccessfully matched wits with the town cows for years, and appeared to view them with a certain grudging awe and admiration, coupled with a deep hatred:

“Olympia has some of the most wonderfully ingenious and persistently intrusive cows that have ever cursed any community. They break into yards, destroy fruit trees and shrubbery, eat the fruit, and guard their retreat and dodge missiles with the extraordinary precision of intelligent beings. Their mode of procedure is as systematic as that of the burglar, and shows

the extent to which dumb beasts can be educated. Their skill in opening gates will, with the constant practice they maintain, soon enable them to pick a McNeal & Urban lock. Still the owners ‘comply with the law’ keeping them in at night, and consider themselves free from responsibility for depradations committed in the day-time. One or two suits for damages will probably place this matter in a new light.”

THE TOWN MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH

The year 1879 was ushered in by a period of intense cold. The never very effective town water system gave way entirely beneath the drain of frozen and burst water pipes. The *Daily Experiment* reported on January 11 that “*the water tank on Percival’s wharf is empty and the supply pipe fails to discharge into it on account of the immense waste in the upper part of town.*” The local steamboats not only had to dodge floating ice from the Deschutes river, but were unable to take on water for their boilers. No mail had been received from California and the east since the first of the month because the *Columbia* river was frozen solid and no boats were operating.

John Miller Murphy and other respectable citizens fell victims to icy sidewalks made even more hazardous by the boys of the town who used them for sledding, and the *Standard* warned ominously that “*the boys who poured water on the sidewalk to have it freeze and thus facilitate the coasting business had best be wary as their names are already recorded.*”

The cold weather did not put an end to the contagious diseases which were, at best, endemic in 19th century Olympia. Diphtheria was sweeping the town, and the white plumes were often in use on the hearse of Rabbeson and Harned. The new East Olympia school was closed because of the epidemic, and doctors disagreed as to what caused the disease and what remedies should be used. Between the obituary notices in the *Standard*, a short

*Murphy devoted his columns to a defense of the town's street and sidewalk maintenance program only when he served as a town trustee.

article pointed out that "diphtheria, as a malady of late appearance in the world, stands without kith or kin; nor have physicians yet agreed upon such a diagnosis of it as is reconcilable with its infinity of symptoms."

Throughout the year the columns of the *Standard* were well laced with such dismal tidings as "neuralgia, influenza, diphtheria and a number of kindred diseases are troubling a good many of our citizens."

There were also comments on the large number of rats displaced by the extreme January tides which inundated the lower town, the strange foreign bodies to be found in the town water supply, and the fact that the heaps of muddy offal scraped from the gutters were used to fill depressions in the streets instead of being more suitably sold to farmers as manure. By late spring it was reported that the flies were back, as they swarmed over the manure piles of the livery stables, the unprotected meat in the butcher shops and the outdoor privies of the residential areas.

Furthermore, reported Murphy, who was not particularly fond of the town's Chinese residents, it was time for the authorities to do something about the "pool of filthy water standing in the gutter in front of the Chinese wash houses on 4th street between Main and Columbia for a week past, which leaves a slimy stratum of putrid matter to taint the atmosphere we breathe when evaporated under a hot sun."

The continued economic depression had added a new problem . . . that of abject poverty among a number of the aged citizens whose savings had been wiped out and who were too feeble to harvest the fish, shellfish, birds and game which swarmed in the bay and its surrounding forests.

The county commissioners were forced to pass the first "poor law", authorizing Mary Mann of Tumwater to "keep the paupers of the county." She was provided with five dollars a week to feed, clothe and house each of the unfortunates. J. C. Horr, merchant and wharf owner, had added the manufacture of wooden coffins to his enterprises, and he was awarded the contract to bury those paupers who failed to survive on the bounty of the county. He was paid \$3.50 "per corpse", which made it evident that it was much cheaper for the community to bury its indigent citizens permanently than to feed them for a week.

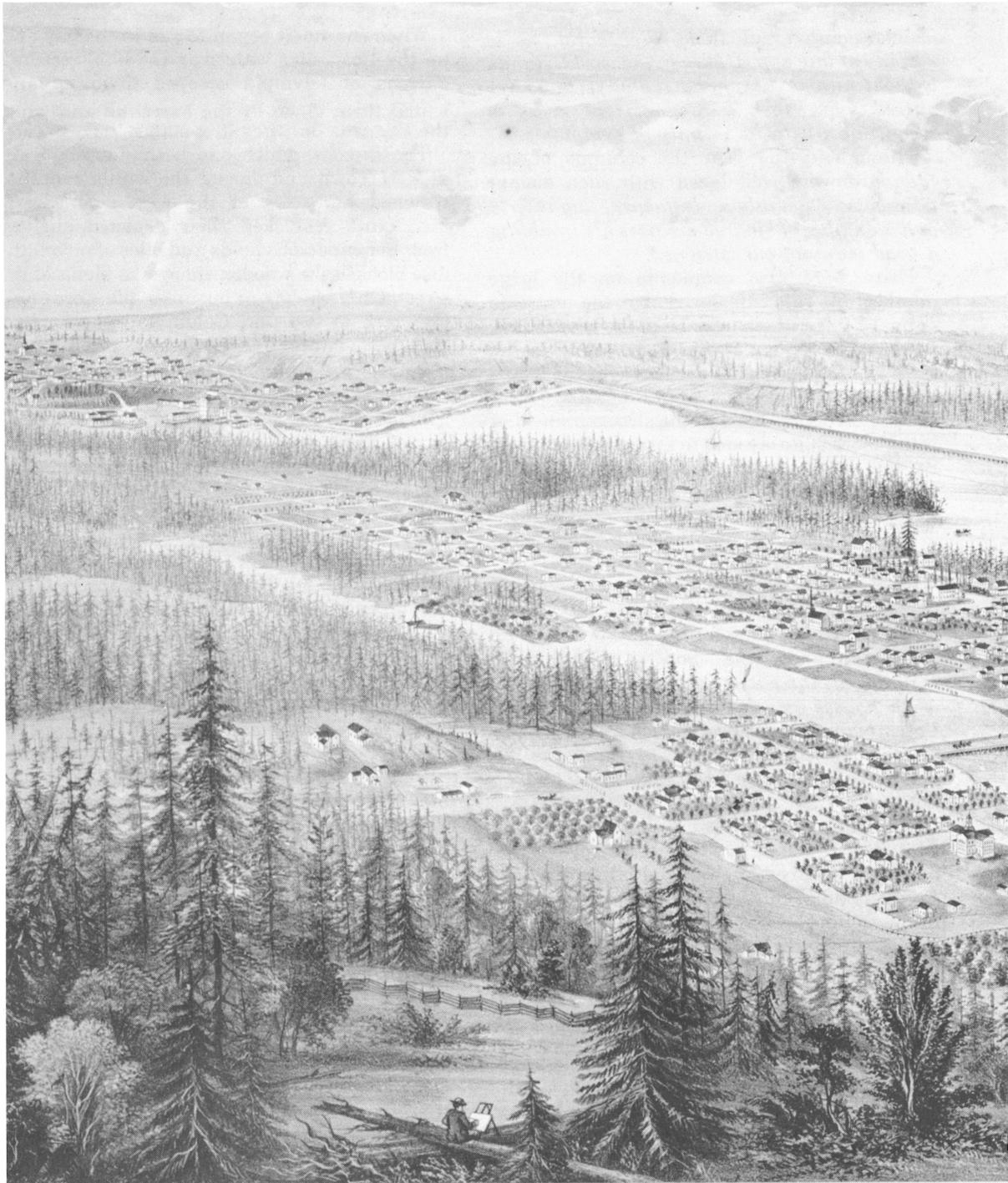
When the smelt began to run in the bay and up the Deschutes waterway the impoverished citizens of Olympia scooped them up and salted them down by the barrellfull and when the tide was out they dug clams.

The *Dakota*, which had been stopping only at Port Townsend during the winter months, resumed her calls at the west side wharf. Merchants restocked their depleted shelves from her capacious holds and piles of merchandise blocked the wooden sidewalks along Main street. Only one major business, the store of W. H. Clark at 3rd and Columbia, was located elsewhere, and the *Standard* consistently bewailed "the provincial idea that Main street constitutes the whole of the city of Olympia."

Included in the *Dakota's* consignment to the City of Paris store was a clothing dummy of lifelike appearance, which the proprietor, Mr. Toklas, dressed in a style described by Murphy as that of a "Broadway swell." This splendid effigy stood at the store's entrance, to the subsequent confusion of a number of the townspeople. One gentleman was observed to rush up to the dummy with extended hand and a loud, "Good morning, Mr. Toklas!" He seemed quite offended for several moments when the dummy failed to respond to his hearty greeting. Murphy claimed in a *Standard* "local" that "an inebriated individual spent some time on election day trying to ascertain if the dummy was registered so as to vote him for the whiskey ticket," but Murphy didn't always let the truth interfere with a good story.

A WAGON-LOAD OF VOTERS

The reference to the whiskey ticket was in relation to the annual spring town election, which attracted the usual widespread and general apathy of the citizens. Only the temperance crusaders and the saloon men took much interest in such matters. It was a matter of principal with the wearers of the blue ribbon and a matter of survival for the liquor vendors. If reform-minded candidates should be elected and enforce the Sunday closing laws, the license regulations and other such bothersome rules and regulations it would be extremely bad for business. The saloon men invested in a form of business insurance by rounding up itinerant loggers, town loafers and any drifters



H. Glover, Portland, Oregon.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the

WATER.

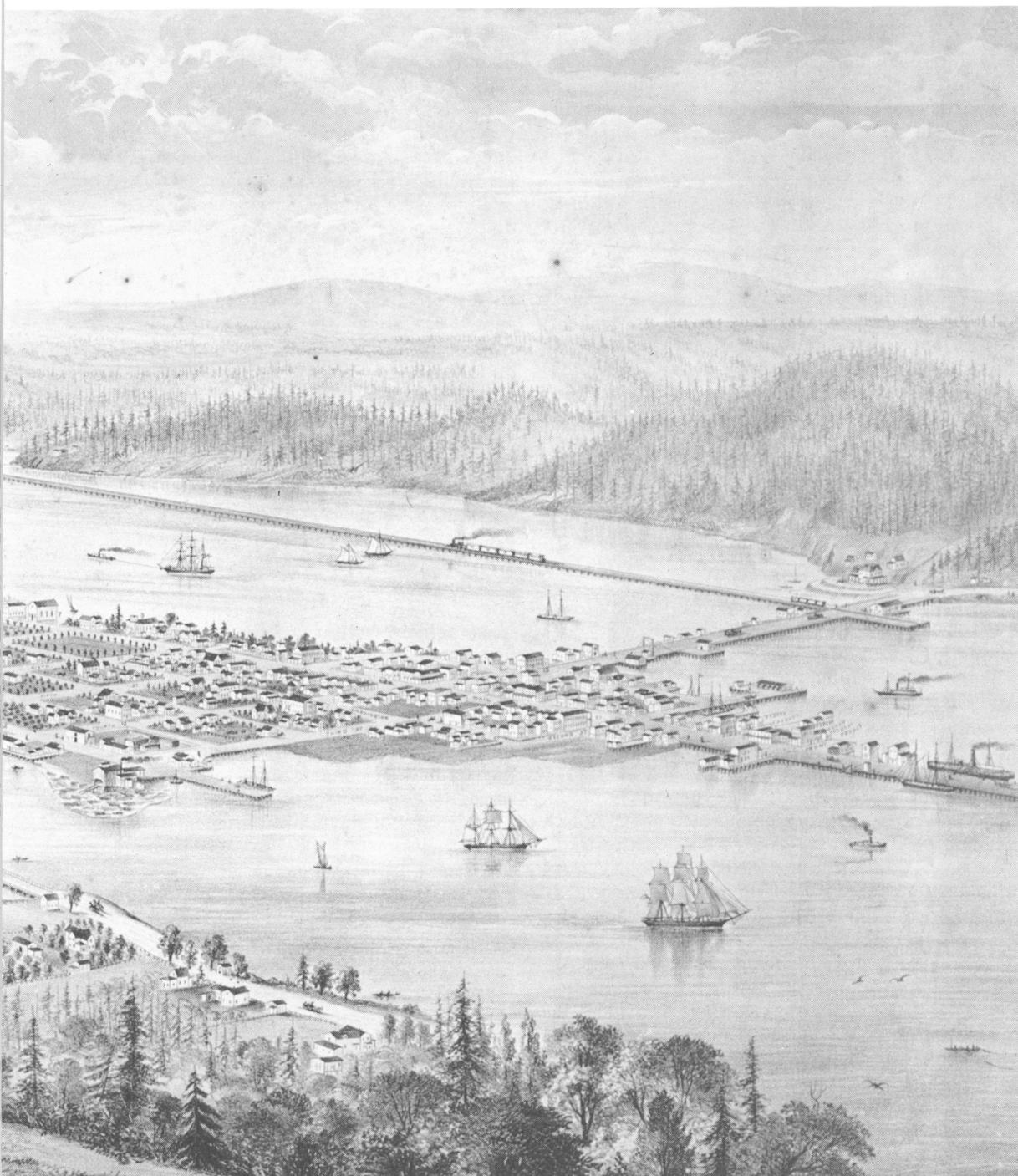
BIRD'S-E

REFERENCES

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Hospital Building.</i> | 5. <i>Masonic Hall.</i> |
| 2. <i>Public School.</i> | 6. <i>Baptist Church.</i> |
| 3. <i>Congregational Church.</i> | 7. <i>Unitarian Church.</i> |
| 4. <i>Catholic Church.</i> | 8. <i>Presbyterian Church.</i> |

CITY OF
EAST OLYMPIA

Puget Sound, 18



U. S. Census, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress.

A. L. Blanchard & Co., Lithographers

VIEW OF THE
OLYMPIA,
 AND TUMWATER,
 Washington Territory.

REFERENCES:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9. Episcopal Church. | 15. Methodist Church. |
| 10. Court House. | 14. Champion Hall. |
| 11. Odd Fellows' Hall. | 15. Good Templar's Hall. |
| 12. Town Hall. | |

BUDD'S IN

who happened to be in the neighborhood, plying them with bad liquor, worse cigars and a little spending money, and transporting them to the polls to participate in the democratic process.

Both the *Echo* and the temporarily enlightened *Standard* editorialized against this form of organized mass voting, and even Elisha Gunn of the *Transcript* didn't entirely deny that it existed, but as the spokesman for the town's more sporting business community, he denied that it was as widespread as Murphy and Gale claimed. Murphy self-righteously put him properly in his place when the *Transcript* attempted to minimize the problem with the statement that only one wagon-load of voters had been hauled to the polls by the saloon men. "We know how difficult it is," the *Standard* philosophized, "for a man who eats his principal sustenance from a bottle to tell the truth."

WOMEN ARE PEOPLE?

By late September the territorial legislators were gathering in the capital city for another biennial session. They found the pioneer Washington Hotel at 2nd and Main rejuvenated and back in business as the New England under the proprietorship of William and E. T. Young. A handsome coach met all trains and steamboats and conveyed guests to the New England House in style and comfort, free of charge. William Young died at the hotel soon after its reopening . . . from "paralysis of the lungs," according to the coroner's jury, but his brother, E. T., remained for many years and became one of the town's most respected civic leaders.

The legislature no sooner convened than it threw John Miller Murphy into a fit of indignation by adjourning for six days to attend a reception in Portland for President U. S. Grant. Warming up with charges of "legislative junketing" and "pompous recreation," Murphy concluded that "by this freak of toadyism our honorable legislators will cause an expenditure of the peoples' money amounting to above \$1,000, for which the territory receives no value."

By early October the junketing lawmakers were back in town, in time to visit the territorial fair, which was being held at the new fairgrounds south of town near Tumwater. It featured such varied attractions as a fine

display of beets, a notable exhibition of Berkshire pigs, a 28-inch oyster shell from Scow Bay, a case of stuffed birds and, as reported by Murphy, "a splendid exhibit of cheeses," one of which, he later reported joyfully, "found its way to our table."

There were also numerous medicine shows, displays of revolving patent flour-sifters and fancy articles made by the ladies aid society of the Episcopal church. There was also horse racing and gambling, but the fall rains had come to greet the legislature, and the fairgrounds were nearly two miles from town on the muddy Tumwater road. The livery stables charged 50 cents for the ride out in a hack, four-bit pieces, along with other varieties of legal tender, were in short supply and the turnout was disappointing.

Governor Ferry addressed the assembled legislators, modestly proclaiming that, under his administration, health had prevailed, the seasons had been propitious, the fisheries productive, agricultural interests prosperous and commerce and industry thriving.

He delivered himself of a complaint which was to be voiced by many future governors. The legislature of 1877 had dallied until the last few days of the session and "important measures were then crowded to passage with undue haste." More than two-thirds of the bills passed had descended upon the governor in a paper blizzard within 12 hours after adjournment, many of them "interlined so imperfectly that their meaning was obscure and the provisions incongruous."

He expressed the wistful hope that the members this time would "confine legislation to the more important subjects, and mature the same, rather than embrace all objects in a crude jumble of conflicting and inconsistent laws."

Ferry further reported that the territorial treasury had collected \$112,365.30 in taxes during the past year, had disbursed \$109,487.98, leaving a balance of \$2,878.32. There was no public debt.

No sooner had the governor departed than the legislators began their response to his plea to stifle trivial legislation by introducing bills to amend an act prohibiting hogs from running at large in Stevens county, to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquor to half breed Indians, defining lawful fences in Columbia county, establishing a minimum length of skirts for

female children in the public schools and to dissolve the bonds of matrimony between D. C. Belshea and Zutoda Belshea, as well as a resolution inviting General U.S Grant to visit the territorial capital.

The year drew to a close with modest reports of progress recorded in the columns of the *Standard*.

"The new sidewalks and crossings recently put down were not a whit too soon," Murphy editorialized as the gentle rains of October became the chilling downpour of November. *"While our gutters are filled to the brim by the late rains, and the streets like mortar beds, it is pleasant to be able to perambulate the town dry shod."*

Mr. Munson, the local agent for the McKennon Stylograph, a primitive version of the fountain pen, presented Murphy with one of these latest marvels of American inventive genius. The publisher, who dearly loved gadgets, recommended it highly, informing his readers that they could purchase various models from Mr. Munson at prices ranging from \$3.50 to \$5.50.

Another scientific wonder which attracted the attention and admiration of the *Standard's* editor was the marvelous hot air furnace installed in the cellar of T. F. McElroy's elegant new mansion.

But there were not noticeable improvements in public health, Murphy sadly reporting:

"We believe not until the present reign of diphtheria have the ears of our people been so often pained by the sad and measured tolling of the funeral bell. Seven children have been snatched away in about ten days."

The town's newspapers carried recommendations for fumigation of homes and hopes that cold weather might end the epidemic, but there were no suggestions as to the control of raw sewage, promiscuously strewn garbage, rats and flies.

ENTER THE 1880's

The census of 1880 made it clear that Olympia was no longer the metropolis of Washington territory. The capital city had gained only a few hundred citizens in the decade since the last census, and could now boast a population of 1,532, but Seattle, aided

by John Pinnell, the territorial university and aggressive civic boosterism, had more than doubled that, attaining a population of 3,533. Tacoma, hit hard by the bankruptcy of the Northern Pacific and the subsequent hard times, was trying to catch up, but was able to muster only 1,098 citizens for the census-takers to count.

The decade of the 80's was ushered into the Puget Sound country in January with "the great snow storm," which was recalled to their dying days by those who had to cope with it. At Olympia the snowfall reached six feet on the level, with mountainous drifts. Young trees bent over under its weight and remained hunchbacked as they grew to maturity. A huge tree in front of Reynold's livery stable on lower Main street threatened to fall and was cut down and sawed into cordwood. Improvident householders whose woodsheds were empty bought it all within an hour at the unheard-of price of \$12 a cord.

Intervals of heavy rain between blizzards soaked the accumulated snow and multiplied its weight. Wooden awnings collapsed onto the snow-blocked streets. The old *Pioneer and Democrat* building, built on piles over the bay at the upper end of Main street and in use as the surveyor-general's office, was completely demolished. The roof of the Ward and Mitchell sawmill near the Swantown bridge collapsed and the machinery was engulfed in snow. A two-story building on Third street, "occupied by Chinamen," went down beneath the accumulated weight of wet snow, and there were major landslides along the steep banks of Capitol Hill above the Deschutes waterway.

Southwest gales swept the rain in from the Pacific, causing heavy swells in the shallow harbor. The rickety wharfs swayed so badly that prospective steamboat passengers sometimes got seasick while waiting for the boat. The *Messenger* clawed her way out from Percival's dock just as J. C. Percival's big new warehouse suddenly collapsed, the wreckage crashing into the bay where the steamer had been tied up.

The town had no equipment capable of making even a dent on the thick white blanket. Town fathers and citizens alike simply stoked their stoves, counted their firewood, and waited philosophically for the warm Chinook wind which was sure to come eventually.

A THIRD TERM? NEVER!

By March things were back to normal and Murphy of the *Standard* was able to concentrate on the rascality of Republican politicians rather than the unusual nature of the weather.

His ire was focused on the determined campaign of Elisha P. Ferry to get himself appointed to an unprecedented third term as governor. The *Standard* reported the "strong pressure on (Congressional Delegate) T. H. Brents by 'the territorial ring of office-holders' for the appointment of Ferry to another term." The leader of the drive, he said, was Francis Tarbell, the territorial treasurer, who like the rest of the official family, owed his job to Ferry's influence and would probably be among the unemployed if his patron were replaced.

Murphy was not in favor of a third term for anybody, and especially not for Ferry. "The mere suggestion of a third-term governor should be as much condemned as the proposition for a third-term president," he insisted. "Rotation in office is as essential to the purity of the civil service as a succession of crops is necessary to maintain the integrity of the soil."

Ferry and his cohorts apparently overreached themselves in their grab for another term of office. The resulting furor in the Republican party prompted Hays to appoint a new territorial governor and Ferry, his family and their cow returned to Seattle, where the ex-governor took up the practice of law and bided his time.

William Augustus Newell, M.D., former congressman and the first Republican governor of New Jersey, was appointed the eleventh territorial governor of Washington.

Murphy would have much preferred a Democrat, of course, but he rejoiced nevertheless in the downfall of "Elisha the Prophet" by resorting to the Biblical prose of Francis Henry:

"The federal clique sorroweth and will not be comforted. It pulleth its hair, it putteth ashes on its head, its lamentations are heard far and near, for Elisha that was is not, and the place which knew him will know him no more forever. Amen and amen."

Within the decade, Murphy would find that he had been premature in publishing Ferry's obituary as a political corpse.



W. A. NEWELL
1880-1884

Dr. Newell, who was 63 years of age when he arrived in Olympia, had behind him a distinguished career, both professionally and politically. He had been Abraham Lincoln's personal physician for a time and, as a congressman from New Jersey, had attended John Quincy Adams when that great orator and statesman fell to the floor of the house with a fatal stroke in 1848. He was instrumental in establishing the original bureau of agriculture and the federal lifesaving service.

Unfortunately, the good doctor was always financially hard up. Between terms in public office he was forced to rely on the practice of medicine, and few doctors in those days got rich. Newell seems to have been even less of a financial success than most of his colleagues, and the dignity of his position as territorial governor was somewhat tarnished by the expedients he resorted to to avoid spending money and his tendency to put the arm on people for small loans.

GOD BLESS THE OLYMPIA OYSTER

Perhaps the most important event to befall the capital city in 1880 was the result of an ex-steamboat man named Woodbury Doane taking note of the abundance of delicious oysters to be had for the taking from the mudflats which surrounded Olympia in just about every direction.

Captain Doane, a big, handsome, good-natured adventurer had come west from Maine during the California gold rush of 1849. He piloted the first steamer up the Fraser river during the later gold rush in British Columbia. He explored the interior of British Columbia, followed the course of the Mackenzie river and Great Slave lakes to the headwaters of the Mackenzie, crossed the mountains between Alaska and the Northwest territories, and followed the Stikeen river to its mouth. He later settled down to steamboating on the more placid waters of Puget Sound and was widely known and liked in Olympia as mate of the old *Eliza Anderson*.

After retiring from maritime pursuits he served for a while as night watchman on the two-man Olympia police force, and in 1880 he rented a tiny stall on 5th street between Main and Columbia, erected a hand-lettered sign and opened Doane's Oyster House. Somewhere in his wanderings he had acquired the recipe for an oyster pan roast which has frequently been described as fit for the gods.

At first the captain and his two sons gathered the little Olympia oysters on the early morning low tide, took them to the stand on 5th street, cleaned and shelled them, and were ready to prepare the succulent Doane's oyster pan roasts for the lunch trade. As the fame of this delicacy spread far and wide the oyster house expanded, Indians were employed to gather the principal ingredient, Chinese chefs were trained to prepare the specialty of the house, sworn to secrecy as to the recipe, and Captain Doane prospered. Long after his death in 1903 Doane's Oyster House remained as the center of epicurean delight in the capital city, and the famous pan roast is still a favorite of seafood gourmets who patronize its lineal descendant, the Olympia Oyster House.



Cap. Doane made the Olympia Oyster famous.

Another seafaring man who was destined to have a long and prominent part in the community's affairs, Captain Samuel Willey, arrived on the scene in 1880 from the woods of Mason county, where he had operated a logging camp. He bought the little propeller steamer *Susie* and placed her on the run between Olympia, Arcadia (where a clam cannery had recently been placed in operation) and Oakland, then the Mason county seat. His three sons, La Fayette, George and Philander, made up the crew of the *Susie*. Since the profits were all kept in the family, the Willeys prospered and, three years later, replaced the *Susie* with the larger, although still diminutive, sternwheeler *Willie*. They continued to dominate that route for many years and later took over control of the steamboat trade to Tacoma and Seattle.

The ocean steamer *Dakota* was still paddling regularly to the west side wharf, bringing general cargo, merchandise for the local stores and a scattering of passengers, and departing with water pipe, wool and hides. In August she brought a party of 25 men, women and children intent on establishing an agricultural colony near Olympia. The group was, for some unexplained reason, referred to as the "Newell

Colony," and it has been widely assumed that they were brought west by Governor Newell. The new chief executive was, in fact, barely able to finance his own journey and, as far as is known, had nothing to do with their arrival. He was on hand to welcome them, however, along with a delegation from the recently organized Olympia Board of Trade. Quarters were found for them until they located a site for their colony, and when they took claims west of town near Black Lake the town trustees even contributed toward building a road to provide access for them.

Despite this auspicious welcome, and the opinion of the *Standard* that the Lindquists, the Frisches and the other members of the party were "*hardy-looking people, apparently well adapted to constitute the cornerstone of the great social and political fabric which is in time to be erected,*" the colony, like the statesman whose name it bore, failed to prosper. Like many settlers before them, they found the task of clearing the thick stands of virgin timber a hopeless one for men without machinery, and all but a family or two drifted away to other pursuits.

Generally, however, times were better in 1880 than at any time since the panic of 1873 had set in. The local papers were fond of boasting that all of the seven local churches and most of the remarkably large number of fraternal organizations owned their own buildings, as did five of the six drygoods merchants and three of the five hotel proprietors.

For the first time, local merchants began using dimes and "half-dimes," or nickels, in making change. Hitherto the smallest coin available had been the "two-bit" piece and if a customer bought a 15-cent item the storekeeper took his quarter and returned nothing except a friendly farewell. As with most new-fangled ideas, especially in Olympia, the small change was at first received with a good deal of contempt by those who were benefitted, but it soon became an accepted part of everyday transactions.

The first militia company since Indian war days was formed during the year by Captain R. G. O'Brien, an Irish immigrant who had become an officer of Illinois volunteers in the civil war following an undistinguished career as a farmhand and drygoods clerk. His military service and title opened the way to

political appointment, and he was brought to Olympia in 1870 by Governor Salomon as assistant assessor of internal revenue. He later became clerk of the U. S. district court, but, like Francis Henry, he longed for the romance and glory of brass buttons, epaulettes and sword. He had gotten himself elected to the honorary position of territorial quartermaster-general in 1878. Aided by the prestige of commanding an actual militia company, he was named adjutant-general in the 1882 election, continuing in that office for many years and going down in the state's military history as the "father of the Washington National Guard."

MY WIFE HAS FLEAS!

In October the first presidential visit was made to the territorial capital by President Hays, who was making a western tour. The reason for this, according to the *Standard*, was his wish to escape for a while from the terrible mess his administration had made of things at Washington, D.C.

One might have expected such an historic event to be heralded in bold type in all three of the town's remaining weekly newspapers, the *Standard*, *Courier* and *Transcript* (the *Tribune* had been moved to Tacoma by the Prosches in 1873 and the *Echo*, after trying to become a daily had folded in 1877, along with the *Daily Courier*). Bagley and Gunn did, indeed, devote much space to the arrival of the Republican president, but it was necessary to read the *Standard* very carefully to get the word. A single short paragraph buried on an inside page reported that the chief executive and his party had arrived by stage coach, *Mister Hays* had made a speech from the balcony of the Pacific Hotel, and had then departed on the steamer *Geo. E. Starr*, "chartered to carry them over the Sound."

Murphy would have devoted more space to anyone who presented him with a cheese.

Although one might not know it by reading the *Standard*, the town made the visit quite an occasion, firing the inevitable cannon, ringing the church bells and marshaling the fire and militia companies as a guard of honor.

Most of the territorial officials accompanied the presidential party on its tour of the lower Puget Sound settlements, among them the

current territorial secretary, Colonel N. H. Owings. At Port Townsend, the gallant colonel was delegated to escort Mrs. Hays while the president went on ahead to address the citizenry. From the dock the first lady saw a Clallam Indian camp on the beach and became possessed with the urge to inspect it at close range.

Owings, who had been in the territory long enough to know something about Indian camps, tried to dissuade her, but to no avail. He took her to the camp, ceremoniously introduced her to the chief, and waited outside while she inspected the interior of the mat and driftwood shelters, which were inhabited by numerous dogs and fleas as well as Indians.

The secretary noted that Mrs. Hays appeared to be extremely uneasy during the meeting they attended later, but he maintained a tactful silence.

Not so the president. The next morning he drew Owings aside and said, "Mr. Secretary, hereafter when you take my wife to visit an Indian tepee kindly inform me of the fact; then being forewarned I shall sleep alone."

SUMMER SICKNESS

The spring of 1881 brought the first major infestation of tent caterpillars, the town's famous shade trees providing an inviting habitat for them. Ladies strolling the wooden sidewalks were forced to keep one eye on protruding nailheads and the other peeled for the nasty creatures dropping from leaves overhead. The descendants of those 19th century pests still periodically infest the vacant lots and orchards of the area, although the majestic maples have long since vanished.

There were other problems as well. As the weather warmed the accumulating sewage of the town obtruded upon the olifactory senses of even the least fastidious citizens. Most of the overflow eventually made its way to the mudflats, which became increasingly malodorous at low tide. Diphtheria and croup continued to take their toll of the juvenile population, and there was fear that a smallpox epidemic which had broken out in Tacoma would extend itself to Olympia.

The town water system remained a source of much irritation. Under the best of conditions it was subject to frequent breakdowns. During heavy rains it delivered muddy ground water well laced with the flotsam and jetsam of flooded Moxlie creek. When the weather got hot the pressure dropped as the thermometer went up and all water was frequently shut off after nine or ten o'clock at night, when the water company apparently felt all decent citizens should be in bed anyway. In August the *Standard* began an editorial campaign urging the town trustees to buy the water system, pointing out that the water company's pump had been out of commission for months and that "*the upper portions of the town are almost at the mercy of fire*".

Furthermore, there was increasing evidence that the little wooden town was very likely to be wiped out by a major conflagration. As early as April the *Standard* had reported eight minor fires within the past two weeks, although there had been no general alarm for a year prior to that time.

During the long rainy season, heavy accumulations of moss grew on the shingle roofs of the wooden buildings and during the shorter periods of sunshine the moss dried and provided a natural tinder box for the reception of sparks. For many years Murphy and the fire department heralded the coming of spring with pleas to property owners to please scrape the moss off their roofs, but they seldom responded. Murphy was somewhat embarrassed during one hot spell when dry moss on the *Standard* office caught fire, an unfortunate incident which his rival editors were a long time letting him forget.

Despite the *Standard's* continuing editorial campaign for a new steam pumper, the old *Columbia* hand-pumper and the converted farm wagon of the Barnes Hook and Ladder Company remained the only fire protection equipment. Forest and brush fires continued to ring the town periodically in the summer and wood-burning kitchen stoves continued to emit sparks from hundreds of chimneys in even the hottest weather. There was good reason to be nervous about the threat of fire.

The shooting of President Garfield by an assassin cast something of a cloud over the town's annual Fourth of July celebration, although early reassuring bulletins on his improved condition avoided its cancellation.

The *Zephyr* and *Messenger* brought excursionists from Seattle, as did the *Annie Stewart*, which brought along the Pacific Cornet band to add to the festivities. The *Daisy* and *Phantom* hauled capacity loads of excursionists from Tacoma and the mill ports. The revenue cutter *Oliver Wolcott* was also in the harbor to add its noisy salutes to those of the town cannon. The festivities included the usual parade, including a "liberty car" bearing the local belle chosen as the year's goddess of liberty and drawn by 50 brawny loggers. There was a clambake in the public square, along with the usual oratory and band music from both the Olympia and Seattle cornet bands. There were rowing races and Indian canoe races in the harbor when the tide came in, and local youths splashed noisily into the bay from the greased pole protruding from Percival's dock. Jimmy Dofflemeyer made it to the end and back and won the prize, a five dollar gold piece.

In October there was more excitement, as the fair opened on the remote grounds south of town and the legislature assembled at the not quite so remote territorial capitol.

Murphy was critical of the fair's management, sounding almost as sanctimonious as had the late *Daily Echo* when he reported in the *Standard* that, in addition to betting on the horse races at the fairgrounds, "*other gambling devices are notoriously conspicuous, while liquors are sold on the grounds for the first time.*"

"*Is this progress?*" Murphy's editorial asked plaintively. "*If so, in what direction?*"

Despite the liberalized policy of the Washington Industrial Association, which managed the fair, it had difficulty competing with the legislative assembly in entertainment value and again failed to meet expenses.

A TORRENT OF TRIVIA

The 1881 legislature was, as the *Standard* had indicated earlier, strongly Republican. The council was made up of eight Republicans, three Democrats and one independent, while the house of representatives was 15 to nine Republican.

Henry Villard, who had picked up the pieces of the bankrupt Northern Pacific and was putting it back together, came to Puget Sound

in his own splendid new ocean steamship, the *Queen of the Pacific*, and was invited to address the legislature. In an aside to the eager townspeople of Olympia he informed them that, in his opinion, the maple-shaded capital city was "already so pretty a town that more railroads would spoil it".

The loyal Olympians didn't know whether to feel flattered or put down.

Despite its Republican majority, Murphy and the *Standard* viewed the legislature with some optimism:

"Our law-makers, this session, are, by common consent, pronounced as promising a class of men as ever graced legislative halls. If physiognomy and brain indications warrant anything like favorable conclusions, then have the people of the Territory a just right to expect good results from their deliberations."

The editorial opinion of the *Standard* was revised downward considerably as what turned out to be the longest session in territorial history droned on, grinding out a record number of bills on almost every subject imaginable.

Governor Newell, his hair and whiskers freshly dyed in his continuing and much laughed at efforts to look younger than he was, delivered his message to the legislators and was followed by ex-Governor Ferry, who delivered what he termed a retiring message. As might be expected, Murphy composed a less than flattering summary of Ferry's remarks:

"He congratulated the people upon the healthful condition of the Territorial finances and divided the credit for it between himself and the previous Legislatures. The people, who have groaned under heavy taxation, like the soldier who does the hard fighting in the field while the officers receive all the glory, were not mentioned in his panegyric. He then told the people what a serious loss they had sustained in his removal from office."

Despite the alleged healthy condition of the territorial treasury, the federal government had cut the legislative funds so sharply that there wasn't money for Public Printer Bagley to produce journals of both houses or of the governor's message. Only a house journal was printed. The days of the public printing gravy train were indeed past, for a while at any rate.

Early in December a special session was called by Governor Newell, who wanted more time to consider the bills already passed. As a

result, about 300 measures were ground out, including such vital legislation as acts to prohibit fowl from running at large in Pacific county, hogs from running at large on Fidalgo island and goats from running at large in Klickitat county; to regulate rates of toll for grinding corn, and a true classic which placed the legislature squarely on the record as opposed to even a vague hint of incest.

This remarkable set of marriage laws not only prohibited bigamy, but banned marriages between "persons of kinship nearer than second cousins" and prescribed a one to 10 year penitentiary sentence for marrying one's "father's sister, father's widow, wife's mother, daughter, wife's daughter, son's widow, sister, son's daughter, daughter's daughter, son's son's widow, daughter's son's widow, brother's daughter or sister's daughter, and for any woman to marry her father's brother, mother's brother, mother's husband, husband's father, son, husband's son" . . . and so on to the outermost twigs of the family tree.

Another stout blow was struck in defense of morality when an even tougher (and less frequently enforced) Sunday closing law was passed making it illegal to operate almost any kind of business on the Sabbath.

The solons did, however, approve gambling, if conducted by churches or recognized charities . . . a dispensation which has a modern ring to it.

A bill granting woman suffrage passed the house amid much falsetto cheering from the galleries, but, despite an impassioned oration by Elwood Evans, it didn't make it through the council. Murphy, who supported women's rights if they weren't too loud about them, took considerable pride in the fact that the measure was introduced by George Comegys, a prosperous Whitman county rancher, who had crossed the plains with him as a small boy in 1851.

Its failure to enfranchise women caused the council some minor embarrassment later in the session when the *Standard* pointed out that Governor Newell, in addition to having one daughter on the public payroll as his private secretary, had appointed the other to the post of territorial librarian, which was a public office and thus barred to women along with the right to vote. (An 1877 law had modified the all-male code slightly, making "women the equal of men in all matters affecting school interests, and no further"). Murphy pointed to the confir-

mation of Miss Newell to her post by the council, including the seven members who had voted against women's right to hold other than school offices, as "*one of the inconsistencies peculiar to the present assembly.*"

The councilmen tried to push through as quietly as possible a bill permitting women to serve as librarians, but unexpected opposition arose and it was defeated twice. It was then left to cool for a time, while a number of its opponents were delegated to inspect the territorial penitentiary and hospital for the insane, about which scandalous rumors were being circulated.

In the absence of seven of the obstructionists, the bill was finally passed, and Governor Newell returned the kindness of the legislators by refraining from vetoing a single one of their bills.

Previous governors had been accustomed to rent office space for themselves in downtown Olympia, but the always financially embarrassed Newell took over the territorial library rooms in the capitol building to save that expense. When his daughter was out he frequently ambled from his inner sanctum to check out books for clients of the library, a charming example of territorial informality which Murphy found as amusing as the governor's use of hair and beard dye. When the seemingly endless session finally adjourned, the *Standard* described how "*the Governor from his seat in the Library room of the Capitol, like an eagle from his aerie, looks down with complacency on the lesser birds taking their flight.*"

The capitol itself Murphy described as standing "*like some banquet hall deserted*". And this quotation calls to mind that the last banquet dispensed within its revered precincts was neither carved with a knife or eaten with a spoon."

Murphy was doubtless referring to the traditional liquid refreshments of *sine die*. If there was any doubt in his readers' minds, he settled it with this additional comment:

"*Nobody would have the rashness to assert that any of the honorable legislators were drunk when the session closed, but we can bring ample proof to show that many of them were not sober by a jug-full.*"

The town lost an institution in 1881 when Aunt Becky Howard had a stroke and died. Her obituary in all the local papers referred to her respectfully as Mrs. Rebecca Howard, as she

would have wished, and the respectability she had gained during her years at the Pacific House is further attested to by the fact that her funeral was conducted from the Episcopal church.

Among the multifarious bills passed by the last legislature was a third charter for the capital city. This one made Olympia a third class city, providing for a mayor and two councilmen from each of three wards. Mr. Ouimette, former mayor and moving spirit of the Olympia-Tenino railroad, had decided that the financial pastures were, after all, greener in Tacoma. With Villard at the head of the rejuvenated Northern Pacific, the gap in the track between Dakota and the Pacific was rapidly being filled and there was talk of a Cascades division over the mountains to tidewater on Commencement Bay. Mr. Ouimette sold out the stock of his Olympia store, moved to Tacoma at just the right time and subsequently cashed in on his foresight. He was succeeded as mayor by Dr. Ostrander.

Olympia was deeply hurt at Ouimette's desertion to the enemy and his name was removed from the locomotive of the narrow gauge line, which had been renamed the Olympia and Chehalis Valley Railroad. It became just *Number 1* again.

MAY WAS A HELL OF A MONTH

In May the staid capital city was badly shaken up by one of the worst earthquakes in its brief history. The *Standard* classed it as "major," reporting that "*buildings creaked like ships at sea, while the tall shade trees were violently agitated, their branches thrashing together in a manner produced by no other natural means.*"

The panic into which the tremor threw the populace was attested to by the fact that "*half-clad women and crying children poured forth into the streets like bees from a hive, to be reinforced by stalwart men who showed scarcely less trepidation.*"

It took something special to get an Olympia housewife of 1882 out on the street without all her clothes on.

The quake prompted Murphy to provide a bit of editorial advice as to how to cope with such situations. It is probably as valid today as it was then:

"Our advice to all is: cultivate amicable relation with your neighbors; keep the conscience clear and trust in Him who holds the waters of the Earth in the hollow of his hand, and who has promised that not a swallow shall fall to the ground without His knowledge, and all will be well in time and eternity.."

Since the town was made up almost entirely of low and limber wood frame buildings, the damage was limited to shattered nerves and crockery and toppled chimneys, but worse was yet to come.

At two o'clock on the morning of May 18, "*our people were.*" as the *Standard* put it, "*aroused by the dread sound of the alarm bell, and even before clothing could be hastily donned, a ruddy glare indicated unmistakably the serious nature of the misfortune to occur to our beautiful town.*"

The wood-burning cookstove of the Vienna Restaurant, located between Joseph Chilberg's grocery store and Cap Doane's oyster stand on Main street between 4th and 5th, had set fire to the wooden wall behind it. The fire was discovered by a night watchman, who first tried to put it out with a bucket of water. When that didn't work he dashed down Main street and up 4th to Columbia to sound the alarm.

By the time the old hand-pumper *Columbia* arrived on the scene the flames had spread through the restaurant and were rapidly attacking Doane's oyster stand, Chilberg's grocery, the post office and the drygoods store of Toklas and Goldstein on the northeast corner of 4th and Main.

Unfortunately, while the *Columbia* arrived on the scene in good time, the firemen had forgotten to bring along the cart which carried all the hose. It took them about 15 minutes to go back and get it, during which time the flames continued to spread and the rival Barnes Hook and Ladder men distinguished themselves by rescuing two young women and several children who had been asleep above Chilberg's store and hadn't awakened until the outside stairway was on fire.

When the gallant laddies of the *Columbia* Engine Company finally got it all together, they concentrated on the buildings at the north end of the block. The fire, in the meantime, crept less spectacularly south and soon broke forth in the Olympia Beer Hall, Robert Frost's hardware store, a stove and tinware emporium, Charles Talcott's jewelry, grocery and ice



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION was evident in this photo of the big fire at 4th and Main.

cream soda store and other buildings. A brisk wind sent flaming brands all over the downtown area, which had been drying out under several days of sunshine. It looked for a while as if the whole town was done for.

But, as the saying goes, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. A plump German named Phillip Hiltz proved the truth of that adage.

Hiltz had come to Olympia in 1870 in the retinue of Governor Salomon, and had stayed on to become the proprietor of a high-class family beer garden and restaurant. Having assured himself that his own premises were out of the immediate path of the fire, he observed that the printing plant of the weekly, *Courier* and a couple of other buildings owned by Clarence Bagley at the southeast corner of 5th and Washington were about the only structures in the entire square block area not yet on fire.

The enterprising Hiltz ambled down to the *Courier* office, where Bagley was frenziedly trying to move his printing equipment to

safety. It seemed certain that his buildings would be the next to go.

Hiltz offered Bagley a ridiculously small sum for his buildings. Bagley, convinced that they were going to be reduced to ashes in the next few minutes anyway, decided that he might as well salvage all he could. He paused from his labors long enough to sign the deed and hand it to Hiltz, whom he decided must have gone crazy from all the excitement.

The fat German was not crazy, however. No sooner was the deed in his pocket than he trotted off to where the men of the *Columbia* were puffing at the hand-brakes. There, in stentorian tones, he announced to firemen and volunteer citizens alike that if they saved the Bagley buildings he would open his beer garden to all for a full day of unlimited refreshments on the house.

The entire firefighting effort was immediately transferred to these three buildings and they alone survived the holocaust.

To make the whole thing more improbable, a heavy rain shower doused the town at this

strategic moment, although the skies had been clear for days and remained so for some time thereafter.

As a result the remainder of the town was saved, along with Mr. Hiltz's new acquisitions.

And, for once in the history of Washington territory, a citizen made a profit at the expense of the public printer.

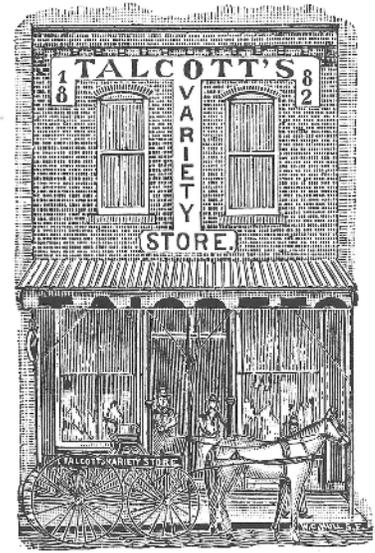
John Miller Murphy was somewhat ambivalent in his reaction to the big fire. While he viewed the sudden rain shower as an act of divine providence, proving that God was on Olympia's side, he also considered the fire something of a blessing, since it was likely to result in fireproof buildings for the business district and that long-awaited steam pumper to help keep them that way.

In this he was correct. The citizens were frightened badly enough to approve a fire protection bond issue and the city fathers eventually placed an order for a brand new Silsby steam fire engine.

Thus reassured, the burned-out property owners did, indeed, replace many of their former wooden buildings with structures of brick and stone. William Billings, although running for sheriff again, reopened his brickyard on the east side and began turning out 14,000 bricks a day. Among the rebuilders was Charles Talcott, who had come to town in 1872 with his entire stock of watches and jewelry in a satchel, which he packed up and took home with him every night for safekeeping. He had prospered by branching out into any area which looked profitable, including the town's first soda fountain, and he didn't stop making an honest dollar while his new brick building was being built. He erected a stand in front of the construction site and dispensed lemonade and soft drinks throughout the summer.

The entire press of the town, led by the *Transcript*, was united in its outrage at the water company, the pressure having been at its usual low point when it was needed. The company bowed to this barrage of indignation and sent for a new steam water pump, another move which was hailed by Murphy as a major step in the right direction.

"Hitherto," he commented scathingly, "there has been nothing more uncertain under Heaven than when the water supply would serve you, and nothing more certain than that the bill would be presented promptly at the end of each month."



TALCOTT'S brick building was one of the early non-wooden structures in Olympia. The seal of the state was designed here in 1889.

Despite all these forced improvements at the territorial capital, the Democratic congress turned down the second plea for statehood made by Washington's Republican Delegate Brents. The opposition claimed that Washington's 1880 census population of only 75,000 couldn't afford the burdens of statehood. It just wouldn't be good for them.

The citizens of Olympia, having grown somewhat cynical after observing the activities of politicians at close quarters for nearly thirty years, suspected a less altruistic motive for the refusal.

The way Washingtonians were voting in those days, statehood for them would mean two new Republicans senators and a Republican congressman in Washington, D.C. And that could upset the whole precarious power structure in congress.

It wasn't the number of citizens that was keeping Washington territory from the sisterhood of states. It was the way those citizens were voting.