

ELECTIONS OF YAKIMA COUNTY, IN PIONEER DAYS COMPARED WITH THE RECENT ELECTION*

On March 2nd, 1853, the Congress of the United States created the Territory of Washington, and soon following the President appointed Isaac I. Stevens governor. A Territorial Legislature was promptly called.

The Territory was laid out in sixteen counties. Fifteen of them were on the west side of the Cascade Mountains. The sixteenth was Walla Walla County on the east side of the Cascade Mountains and was defined as follows: "Commencing on the line on the north bank of the Columbia River, opposite the mouth of the Des Chutes River, following this line to the Rocky Mountains."

In 1858, the Legislature laid out Spokane County, and it died aborning. In 1859 a new county was laid out. This was Klickitat. The county included the entire area between the Columbia River and the Cascade Mountains. In 1863, Congress created the new Territory of Idaho. This cut off a large part of Washington on the east. In that same year the county of Stevens was established. It included the remaining area of Washington east of the Columbia and north of the Snake rivers. In the same act one more county came into being, which failed to organize. That was Ferguson County, bounded by the Simcoe Mountains on the south, Cascade Mountains on the west, Walla Walla and Stevens counties on the east, and Wenatchee River on the north.

The Legislature appointed a set of officers for Ferguson County. Only one (F. M. Thorp) was an actual settler. Just two years later the Legislature repealed the act creating Ferguson County and established another to be known as Yakima County, with the eastern boundary defined differently.

An act establishing and organizing Yakima County, was approved January 21st, 1865. A set of county officers was appointed by Governor Moore.

In 1868, the first election was held. Alfred Henson, G. W. Allen, and Thomas Goodwin were elected county commissioners. Chas. Splawn, sheriff; John Lindsey, assessor; E. W. Lyen, treasurer; S. S. Taylor, school superintendent; Henry Davis, coroner.

*Mr. Wiley, the author of this article, is a real pioneer of Yakima, dating back to the sixties. The paper was read at a recent meeting of the Yakima Valley Historical Society.—Editor.

The county seat was at the home of F. M. Thorp. I have no official figures on the number of votes cast in this election, but on the next election in 1870 the vote for the county seat was: Yakima City, 89; Flint's Store, 20; Selah, 18; Kittitas Valley, 3; total 130 votes.

The result of the 1870 election was: Delegate to Congress—J. D. Mix, Democrat, 71 votes; Selucious Garfield, Republican, 60 votes. Probate Judge—Alfred Henson, Democrat, 65 votes; A. M. Miller, Republican, 57 votes.

County Commissioners—John Beck, Geo. Taylor and C. P. Cook, all Democrats, over P. J. Flint, A. W. Bull and J. B. Nelson. Auditor—H. M. Benton, Republican, over G. W. Goodwin, Democrat. Treasurer—E. W. Lyen, Democrat, over J. P. Mattoon, Republican. Sheriff—Tommy Pierce, Republican. Assessor—W. M. Lindsey, Democrat, over Chas. Harper, Republican. Surveyor—C. S. Irby. School Superintendent—C. P. Cook, Democrat, over C. S. Reed, Republican.

The most hotly contested office was for Coroner—W. P. Crosno, Democrat, over Dave Heaton, Republican. Mr. Crosno won by a small majority.

Thus we see that the vote of Yakima County has increased from 130 votes in 1870, the second election, to 19,603 on November 6, 1934. L. B. Schwellenbach, Democrat, 10,483 votes for U. S. Senator, and Reno Odlin, Republican, 8,926.

WALLACE WILEY