

The
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COLLECTING PORTRAITS OF WASHINGTON'S
GOVERNORS.

On several occasions the Legislature of the State of Washington by resolution has suggested the collection of the portraits of the gentlemen who have served the territory or state as Chief Executive, these portraits to remain in the capitol building. This is in conformity with the custom followed in most of the states of the union of preserving the portraits of the governors, and is in line with the practice of the national government of preserving the portraits of the presidents and of the cabinet officers in their succession. The work of collecting these portraits in some of the states was begun only in recent years and the collections were completed only with considerable difficulty and at considerable expense. It is eminently fit and proper that each state should own such a collection, which is in fact part of the history of the commonwealth. The student of history and every citizen has an interest in learning something of the personality of the men who have served as the state's Chief Executive.

Prior to my inauguration as governor, seventeen gentlemen had served as governor either of the territory or state. The succession was as follows:

Governors of the Territory: Isaac I. Stevens, 1853-1857; Fayette McMullin, 1857-1859; R. D. Gholson, 1859-1861; W. H. Wallace, 1861; William H. Pickering, 1862-1866; George E. Cole, 1866-1867; Marshal F. Moore, 1867-1869; Alvin Flanders, 1869-1870; Edward S. Salomon, 1870-1872; Elisha P. Ferry, 1872-1880; W. A. Newell, 1880-1884; Watson C. Squire, 1884-1887; Eugene Semple, 1887-1889; Miles C. Moore, (7 months) 1889 to statehood.

Governors of the State: Elisha P. Ferry, 1889-1893; John H. McGraw, 1893-1897; John R. Rogers, 1897-December, 1901; Henry McBride, December, 1901-January, 1905.

On assuming office I found the only portrait of a former governor in the executive chambers was that of Governor Salomon, who is now a resident of San Francisco. In the summer of 1905 I began by correspondence an endeavor to collect all of the portraits of the former governors to have them preserved in the executive offices. Having no special appropriation of public funds for this purpose it was impossible to seek elaborate or permanent portraits. But I did deem it essential to secure some portrait—either photograph or engraving—at this time, for the task of making the collection would grow more difficult year by year. The result of my efforts in this direction has been that I have collected all but one of the portraits. The missing one is that of Governor R. D. Gholson, who remained in the territory only a year and returned to his old home in Paducah, Kentucky, some months before his retirement. I am in hope of securing this missing portrait before the assembling of the legislature in January, 1907.

The portraits I have secured have all been framed and are now hanging in my office. They are all pronounced excellent likenesses, and in the event that at some future time the legislature determines to have them put in more permanent form, as is the practice in some other states, the artist will have an authentic base upon which to work.

Beginning with the portrait of Governor Salomon, the second picture secured was that of Governor Marshal F. Moore, which was presented by Mrs. R. G. O'Brien, of Olympia. Governor Moore was a general officer of the Union Army during the Civil War. His remains are buried in the Olympia cemetery.

Following this Governor Miles C. Moore presented a handsome portrait of himself.

The late Capt. P. B. Johnson, of Walla Walla, interested himself in this matter and through his efforts Miss Marguerite Mitchell Painter, of Walla Walla, loaned me an excellent portrait of the late Governor Alvin Flanders, which I had copied in Olympia. Governor Flanders was an intimate friend of Mr. William C. Painter, the father of Miss Painter.

The task of finding a portrait of Governor Fayette McMullin was difficult, Governor McMullin having returned to his home in Virginia after having served his term here. However, Mr. Roderick Sprague, of this city, secured from Miss Addie Wood, also of Olympia, a small *carte de visete* photograph of the late governor, Miss Wood being a relative of the McMullin family. This small portrait was enlarged for me by Mr. Asahel Curtis,

of Seattle, who reproduced from a somewhat faded print a very excellent picture.

Judge Mason Irwin, of Montesano, contributed a splendid photograph of Governor W. A. Newell.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Frank Hogan, of Spokane, a steel engraving of Governor George E. Cole was secured long prior to the death of the governor.

Governor Eugene Semple forwarded personally a good engraving of himself.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Asahel Curtis and Mr. S. P. Weston, of Seattle, photographs of Governors Isaac I. Stevens and Elisha P. Ferry were donated to the office.

Governor Watson C. Squire presented an excellent portrait of himself, framed and ready for hanging.

Mrs. William S. Mayfield, of Seattle, a granddaughter of the late Governor William Pickering, presented an enlarged copy of an old daguerreotype, the only portrait of Governor Pickering known to be in existence. Mrs. Mayfield relates the story of the manner in which this original portrait was secured in an interesting fashion:

"The old home was burned at one time and the picture of my grandmother was destroyed among other keepsakes Grandpa had cherished. He felt the loss of these pictures so keenly that he could never be induced to have one taken of himself as much as the family used to urge it. But one day as he was talking to an old friend of his who was a photographer by the name of Harwick, Mr. Harwick suddenly caught the opportunity, saying: 'Now, Governor, sit still; I am going to take your picture.' There was no chance given Grandpa to even brush his hair or arrange his necktie. So that accounts for the careless appearance. If Mr. Harwick had not used strategy at that time there would have been no picture in existence. The family were very grateful to Mr. Harwick for seizing the opportunity while Grandpa was in his gallery talking to him, for he could never be induced to 'sit for his picture.'"

The portrait of Governor Wallace was secured through Mr. J. N. Bradley, of Tacoma, and Mr. W. H. Gilstrap, Curator of the Ferry Museum. The latter gentleman copied photographically for me the very excellent portrait of Governor Wallace which now hangs in the Ferry Museum in Tacoma.

From local photographers I secured the photographs of Governors McGraw, Rogers and McBride.

The search for the Gholson portrait is still in progress. Senator Piles has interested himself and secured some data in the Congressional Library on which to base a search. Governor

J. C. W. Beckham, of Kentucky, is helping and hopes to be able to secure the portrait before very long. Mr. Edward O. Leigh, Governor Beckham's secretary, has expended considerable effort on the work. I have been fortunate in locating in Paducah, Kentucky, the former home of Governor Gholson, an old friend of mine, Richard T. Lightfoot, who thinks he will be able to secure a portrait from some of the family connections.

While I was making this original collection I was surprised and pleased to learn of an arrangement which former Governor John H. McGraw had made with Mrs. Minnie Sparling Brown, of Seattle, to paint the portraits of the former governors of the State of Washington, which arrangement had received the sanction of Governor McGraw's successor, Governor John R. Rogers. Mrs. Brown had undertaken the work of course without any formal contract or formal promise, but ill health prevented the completion of it at an early date. She continued the work, however, over several years and on April 18, last, delivered at my office portraits in oils of the four gentlemen who have served before me as governor of the State of Washington. The portraits are pronounced by those learned in art to be of the first quality, and certainly they all are magnificent likenesses. Mrs. Brown will ask the coming Legislature to appropriate a suitable sum in payment for these pictures and she should be paid liberally.

With a view to preserving still more historical portraits at the capitol I am now endeavoring to secure portraits of all of the twenty-six gentlemen who have served the state or territory in Congress, either as territorial delegate, representative in Congress, or senator. Several of the territorial governors later served as territorial delegates, viz: William H. Wallace, Isaac I. Stevens, George E. Cole and Alvin Flanders; while Governor Squire served as United States Senator. All of these portraits we already have. These with others that have been presented give the office eighteen of the total number to be collected. The others are all promised and I hope to secure them before many weeks have passed.

It is rather interesting to note that the expense of making the collection of photographs and engravings of former governors and members of the Washington delegation in Congress has been slight to the state. The total expense so far for copying, framing and the like, has been less than \$25.00. The chief expenditure has been of labor incident to writing the letters. It is probable that fully 500 letters were required to secure the pictures I have enumerated. I have learned that in assembling historical matters of this sort, patience is the chief requisite to

success. People are willing to help and will do so, as instanced by the fact that in the whole correspondence I found no one who did not evince a desire to assist in the work, but good intentions need a little gentle prodding at times, and if one will only follow things up and write enough letters he is pretty sure to accomplish what he starts out to do in a work of this character. Incident to making the collection considerable historical data of value has come to light and convinces me more than ever of the necessity for the better preservation of the sources of our state's history and the proper assembling of them.

In closing I desire to thank the press of the state for the valuable assistance it rendered me. Through the publicity given the plan of collection I was able to receive information and portraits that otherwise could not have been secured.

ALBERT E. MEAD.