

## NEWS DEPARTMENT

### *Death of Harry B. McElroy*

On March 18, 1928, Harry B. McElroy died at his home in Olympia where he had lived all his life. He was born in that city on February 22, 1861. His education was obtained in the local schools and in a military academy in Oakland, California.

His father, Thornton F. McElroy, with James W. Wiley, established in Olympia the first newspaper published north of the Columbia River. The first issue appeared on September 11, 1852, and was named *The Columbian*, its main purpose being to advocate the organization of the new Territory of Columbia. The point in that name was lost when the new Territory received the name of Washington. The newspaper's name was changed to *Pioneer* and later to *Pioneer and Democrat*. That father bequeathed to his son a respect for genuine newspaper effort and a desire for saving historical documents and records. The son inherited the father's file of the first paper and to the time of his death added a perfect copy of each issue of the paper deemed to be the successor of *The Columbian*. He had the most perfect file known of newspapers covering the entire history of the Territory and State of Washington.

Harry McElroy was the kind of man toward whom his many friends felt a peculiar tie of loyalty. He loved the pioneers but while among them constantly he always insisted that he was not himself a pioneer, only "one of the next generation." In 1915, the present writer was preparing for the editorial page of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* a series of brief biographies on "Living Pioneers of Washington." An effort was made to include Friend McElroy. He instantly replied: "You have the wrong subject. I am not a pioneer. Never suffered a real hardship in my life—simply had the good fortune of being born here." In his well known cordial manner he continued his letter of refusal, adding: "If I should ever die and the feeling then prevails that something ought to be said of me for publication, you might dig up this letter and get an item from it for your column in the newspaper."

That time has come and here is the item as he wrote it on December 1, 1915: "Just so you can hear it (no louder and not

for publication) I feel like saying that I am proud of several things in my career namely: First, of my judgment in selecting a wife who could get along with me; Second, of our two children; Third, of the fact that seven persons of character and means who knew me for many years have, at various times, selected me to execute their wills without bond and I believe I have been faithful and successful with each trust executed; Fourth, of my friends."

That autobiography is brief, it is characteristic, and it is worth while. Among the many who will miss his constant and cordial helpfulness are those concerned with the work of the *Washington Historical Quarterly*. He was one of the valued contributing editors for the past ten years.

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#### *Life of Owhi*

Judge William C. Brown, of Okanogan, has contributed a valuable publication on the Indian history of the Pacific Northwest. It appeared in the *Wenatchee Daily World* covering nearly two full pages in the "Greater Central Washington Edition." The article is based on a remarkable statement by Owhi who is counted one of the very last survivors of the Nez Perce war of 1877. The statement, which deals largely with that war, was given by Owhi to Dr. Walter S. Johnston while agency physician at Nespelem. Dr. Johnston gave the statement to Judge Brown. The one restriction placed by Owhi upon the transaction was that the statement should not be published until after his own death. Judge Brown in presenting the statement has drawn upon his own well known store of knowledge for explanatory paragraphs. There is no indication that he intends to put this material into book form and, if that be true, it would be well for librarians and collectors to save copies in its present form. The material is too important to be neglected.

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#### *History of the State College*

Dr. Enoch A. Bryan who served as President of the State College of Washington for almost a quarter of a century is about to publish a history of that institution. He is now serving the College as Research Professor of Economics and Economic History. For six years after having the presidency he held the position of Commissioner of Education in the State of Idaho. He is certainly well equipped to make the forthcoming work adequate and interesting.