

## DOCUMENTS

The following documents throw light on the beginnings of the economical and political history of the territory of Washington at a time when it embraced Idaho and parts of Wyoming and Montana. The documents are among the manuscript collections in the University of Washington. They were rescued from the garret of the old capitol building in Olympia upon the request of Governor John R. Rogers in 1897.

### *Beginning of Government Surveys*

The following letter was written by Governor Isaac I. Stevens to the United States Commissioner of the General Land Office. It was dated at Olympia, Washington Territory, December 28, 1853, two months before the first Territorial Legislature assembled:

I will respectfully call your attention to the importance of establishing a separate Surveyor Generalship for this Territory and of the surveys being made according to the geodetic method.

This Territory is, as you are well aware, just attracting the attention of settlers, and though now numbering only five thousand inhabitants, a large emigration is expected next year, and under the donation law the best land in the Territory will be occupied. The commercial advantages of the sound are unrivaled, have already attracted the attention of all parts of the country, and a flourishing trade is rapidly springing up. In consequence of the military road now in progress of construction across the Cascade Mountains, and to be completed the ensuing year, communications between the Puget Sound region and the east of the Cascade Mountains will be established; and land east of the Cascades will at once be brought into requisition for grazing and the usual crops of the husbandmen. Already are several fine valleys partially occupied by a hard and industrious population. I will particularly mention the Wallah Wallah and Colville Valleys. A beginning has been made in the valleys of the St. Marys and Spokane Rivers. Under these circumstances I will urgently recommend the passage of a law establishing the office of Surveyor General for this Territory, and directing these surveys to be spread as rapidly as possible over the valleys and on the routes of the great railroad communications. The method to do this, most rapidly, most easily, and in the most accurate manner, is undoubtedly by the geodetic method. The peculiar geographical formation of the country especially calls for it; much of the country is occupied by extensive mountain ranges of which the surveys need not be undertaken till the arable and grazing land is disposed of. The series of primary triangles need not be spread over the Territory at all till by a secondary and tertiary series

the wants of settlement are entirely provided for. Thus the St. Marys Valley between the Rocky and Coeur d'Eleine Mountains, which has already attracted the notice of emigrants, and extends across nearly the whole width of the Territory, could be easily surveyed in a single season with the several valleys leading into it from the Rocky and Coeur d'Eleine Mountains. So with the Wallah Wallah Valley and the Colville Valley, the Coeur d'Eleine Prairie, the Spokane Plain and the Coeur d'Eleine Valley. I regret that I cannot now send a sketch of the exploration which has been made of the Territory, in the progress of the railroad survey, and which would furnish the strongest argument in favor of surveys by the geodetic method. This method is peculiarly adapted to the region west of the Cascades, where between the Olympia and Cascade Ranges the magnificent waters of the Sound, with its numerous beautiful and fertile islands, enter far towards the southern boundary of the Territory. These islands are now partially, and will be another year entirely, covered with claims, as will the adjacent shores of the Sound, and the fertile valleys of the rivers for a considerable distance from their mouths.

As soon as a sketch of the Territory can be prepared, I will send a copy of it to your office, with information in reference to the generality of arable land in the Territory, the valleys first requiring surveys, and such other information as may bear upon the subject matter of this communication.

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### *Early Political Scheme*

The following pair of letters relate to one of the most interesting men in early territorial history. Charles H. Mason was born at Fort Washington on the Potomac, the son of Major Milo Mason of Vermont. He graduated from Brown University with distinction in 1850. In his twenty-third year he was recommended to the President for appointment as District Attorney for Rhode Island. Instead of that office he received appointment as the first Secretary of the new Territory of Washington. As he himself states, he often served as Acting Governor. He was reappointed, as the petition requested. Governor Fayette McMullin, whose request he rejects, was removed from office, and Secretary Mason again became Acting Governor. The *Olympia Pioneer and Democrat* of July 29, 1859, recorded his death and published an extended eulogy. The Legislature had created a county under the Indian name "Sawamish." This name was changed to Mason in honor of the brilliant young officer.

Olympia, Dec. 12, 1857.

To the President of the United States:

Sir:—The undersigned Democratic members of the Legislative Assembly of Washington Territory would most respectfully recom-

mend Hon. Charles H. Mason as Secretary for the Territory of Washington.

He has held that position for the last four years, and by his faithful discharge of official duties commanded our highest respect and warm admiration, and as a sound and efficient Democrat we most cordially endorse him.

We are, Sir, respectfully,  
Your obedient servants,

(Signed): W. W. Miller, R. V. Peabody, B. F. Shaw, Stephen Guthrie, William H. Morrow, Thomas W. Glasgow, Thomas J. Fletcher, J. S. M. Van Cleave, J. Bullard, Henry Jackson, Archibald Taylor, David Phillips, Silas B. Curtis, R. S. Moore, William Hutchinson, James Seavey, C. C. Phillips, C. S. Irby; A. J. Cain, Clerk of the House of Representatives; Rufus Willard, Assistant Clerk; H. J. G. Maxon; C. C. Pagett, President of the Council; S. B. Crockett, Crumbine La Du, C. B. Baker, Lewis Van Fleet, James W. Wiley.

(Signed): O. B. McFadden, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court; Fayette McMullin, Henry C. Wilson, T. D. Hinckley, James Tilton, United States Surveyor General for Washington Territory; J. T. Turner, Chief Clerk of the Council; Travers Daniels, Assistant Clerk of the Council.

Those thirty-four names, written sixty years ago, are still echoed in the names of a number of present-day citizens. They will be interested in the efforts of their fathers to secure a political favor for a worthy man. A little more than three months from the date of the petition Mr. Mason wrote the following letter to Governor McMullin:

Secretary's Office.  
Olympia, March 25th, 1858.

His Excellency  
Fayette McMullin,  
Governor Wash. Terr'y.

Dear Sir:—

Your letter of this date referring to my contemplated departure for the States, in the steamer which is hourly expected, and in which you state "you do not wish me to leave until your return from the States," &c., has just been received.

In reply I have to state that I was not aware until yesterday evening in our conversation that you contemplated leaving the Territory during the present Spring. I then first learned that some time since you applied for a leave of absence, time so long passed that you expected an answer by the coming steamer.

My application was based upon a peculiar state of affairs, which even at the moment demanded my personal attention. Before however the leave which I now have was received, the Legislative Assembly was in session, and my actual presence was absolutely necessary. Having delayed that long, I deferred my departure until I could close

up the work incident to the last session, which has now been accomplished.

The present is the most opportune time for me to be absent, and the duties that call me away are as imperative as any personal duties can be.

I have been in this Territory for four and a half years, twenty-one months of which I have had to discharge the duties of both Governor and Secretary of the Territory, together with the Superintendency of Indian Affairs, and during that whole time I have never left it except on business.

I have therefore to regret that at this moment, when I have but a brief period to attend to most pressing matters, that I cannot comply with your request.

I have the honor to remain,

Yr. obt. servt.,

C. H. MASON,

Secy. Wash. Ter.

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*Futile Attempt at Extradition*

During the international dispute over the possession of the San Juan Islands, a number of American soldiers were landed on San Juan Island from Fort Bellingham. Some of these deserted, giving rise to the following correspondence:

Executive Office.

Olympia, Washington Territory,

March 31st, 1858.

Sir:—

Agreeable to the provisions of the Treaty of 1842 between Her Majesty's Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States, it becomes my duty to request that you will cause to be delivered into the custody of Capt. George E. Pickett, who is hereby authorized to receive them, the following named persons to-wit: Mathew Doyle, John Fallen, Martin Lennard, Solomon Pinkerhoff, Thomas Wilson and George Francis, who stand charged with the crime of robbery in this Territory.

I enclose herewith the affidavits which constitute the charge, together with an accurate description of the persons charged; and a list of the property taken. I have been informed that these persons are on the Island of Vancouver, and within the bounds of the territory over which your executive authority extends.

With sentiments of high regard, I am,

Your Excellency's obt. servt.,

(Signed) F. McMULLIN,

Gov. of Washington Territory.

To His Excellency,

James Douglass,

Governor of Vancouver Island.



Victoria, Vancouver Island,  
16th April, 1858.

Sir:—

I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 31st of March, making requisition on this Government for the rendition of certain refugees from justice, who are supposed to be at present resident in this Colony.

I have also received the affidavits made before E. C. Fitzhugh, Esquire, United States Commissioner, declaring the offences with which the individuals in question are charged.

A careful perusal of those documents has satisfied me that the offences stated in the affidavits are not within the terms of the Treaty. The cases provided for in that instrument are "murder," "assault with intent to commit murder," "arson," "robbery," "forgery," and the "utterance of forged paper."

The intention in the present instance is doubtless to bring the offences under term robbery. Robbery is defined to be the felonious and *forcible* taking from the *person* of another, goods or money, or putting him in *fear*. To constitute robbery therefore there must be a theft from the person of an individual effected through force or fear. The affidavit does not state any such offence, but simply the desertion of certain individuals and the felonious taking or stealing certain articles from the United States, and a canoe belonging to F. D. Warbass, Suttler.

The evidence contained in the affidavit in fact merely goes to prove a larceny, and I am therefore of opinion that I have no authority in this case to order a rendition of the individuals in question.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obt. servant,

JAMES DOUGLAS,  
Governor.

To His Excellency,  
Governor McMullin.