

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MsSC 73

Title: Elisha P. Ferry collection

Creator: Ferry, Elisha P.

Dates (inclusive): 1889-1894

Extent: 1 box (.2 linear feet)

Abstract: Elisha Peyre Ferry was a Republican lawyer who had twice been Governor of Washington Territory, the only one to serve two terms, and the first Governor of Washington State. Collection contains a letterpress book relating to Ferry's personal business matters, and some additional correspondence related to official matters.

Accession number: C1960.283X.42

Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research use. Photocopying and flatbed scanning of letterpress book is prohibited due to its fragility.

Biographical Note: Elisha Peyre Ferry was born on 9 August 1825 in Monroe County, Michigan. His parents were attorney Peter Ferry and Clarissa (née Peyre) Ferry. They soon moved west to the small town of Waukegan, Illinois, where Peter served as a judge.

Ferry graduated early from high school. He then studied at Fort Wayne Law School, Indiana, passing the bar examination at age twenty. He had a successful practice as a lawyer in Waukegan for the next twenty-three years. After getting established he married Sarah Brown Kellog (1827–1912). They had five children together, all of which were given the middle name Peyre.

The Ferry family lived according to a strict religious code. They were active both in church leadership and organization. Ferry was noted for his high ethical standards, both in his professional life and in the community. Ferry also was a member of the Masonic Fraternity, which flourished in the nineteenth century in the United States. He served as Grand Master in 1878. He was a founding member of the Seattle Scottish Rite and held the rank of a Thirty-second degree Scottish Rite Mason.

Ferry became the Presidential Elector of Illinois in 1852. He was elected as the first mayor of Waukegan in 1859, winning by a large majority. In 1862 he was a delegate at the Illinois State Constitutional Convention. During the American Civil

War, Ferry joined the Union Army, helping to organize the Illinois regiment. He became friends with Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln.

After the war, in 1869 President Grant appointed Ferry to the position of Surveyor General of the rapidly developing Washington Territory, and Ferry and his family moved to Olympia. In 1872 Grant appointed him Territorial Governor and, after the end of his four-year term, reappointed him to the same position. Both as Surveyor and Governor, Ferry was closely involved with the building of the Northern Pacific Railway, and took a personal hand in planning the extension from Tacoma to Olympia.

As governor, Ferry was successful in putting the Territory on a sound financial footing. He also regulated the rail fares, and centralized the penal system.

After a break from politics, working in Seattle in law and banking, Ferry was nominated as Republican candidate for the State Governor, when Washington was granted statehood on in 1889. He defeated the democrat, Eugene Semple.

Shortly after his inauguration, Ferry's health began to fail, and he was missing important votes. He resigned as State Governor in 1893. On 14 October 1895 he died of what was diagnosed as a cold, on board a steamer on Puget Sound.

Ferry County was named for him in 1899. He is also the namesake of Mount Ferry in the Olympic Mountains.

Scope and Content: This collection contains a letterpress book relating to Ferry's personal business matters, as well as some additional correspondence related to official matters.

Access Terms:

Ferry, Elisha P. (Elisha Peyre), 1825-1895
Washington (State) -- Politics and government
Washington (State). -- Governor (1889-1893 : Ferry)
Washington Territory. -- Governor (1872-1880 : Ferry)
Correspondence
Olympia, (Wash.)
Washington Territory
Pacific Northwest
Washington (State)

Related Archival Materials:

C1952.1068.8.8; C2018.0.8; C1957.1005.2; C1960.283X.35; C1960.283x.17; 1992.0.46; Elisha P. Ferry portraits

C1960.283X.19, [Governor Elisha Ferry and Military Staff] photograph

2011.0.86, Governor Elisha P. Ferry at Camp Ferry photograph

C1949.1224.2; C1964.26.4.10.5; Ferry house photographs

2003.0.902, *Message of Elisha P. Ferry, Governor of WT* speech

2003.0.1347, Report of the Governor of Washington Territory 1879

2006.0.607, Retiring message of Elisha P. Ferry

Preferred Citation: MsSC 73, Elisha P. Ferry collection, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma (Wash.)

Contents List

Box 1

Folder	Content
1	Letterpress book, 24 December 1889 – 8 October 1891 300 pages. Mainly relating to Ferry's personal business matters, with some correspondence relating to governmental matters. PHOTOCOPYING & FLATBED SCANNING PROHIBITED
2	Correspondence, 1891 – 1894 14 letters. Carbon or handwritten copies of outgoing correspondence on a variety of personal business.