

THE WALLA WALLA SEPARATION MOVEMENT

Leaving out of account the coast lines and international boundaries of the eleven Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states there are five instances where state lines follow natural boundaries while in twenty-five meridians and parallels of latitude serve as division lines. A glance at the map shows the artificial regularity of their outlines which were set by distant lawmakers at a time when the physical geography of the West was not well known and the inhabitants were few. As a result some attempts were later made by the people concerned to rectify what seemed to them to be mistakes in their territorial or state boundaries.

When economic and social interests do not coincide with legal connections the political cohesion of the different areas is of a very doubtful character. We have two examples of this in the Pacific Northwest. The first and the more noteworthy is found in the attempt of the people of northern Idaho¹ to separate from the southern part the territory during the period from 1865 to 1889. A second example of this principle is presented in the Walla Walla region—the four counties lying between the forty-sixth parallel and the Snake river. For some twenty years there was considerable uncertainty regarding ultimate disposition of this area. Washington Territory wished to retain the Walla Walla country while the people of Oregon sought to add it to Oregon. Meantime the inhabitants of the area at issue were not wholly united; there were shifting opinions; regional animosities influenced the people quite as much as reasons of economy and convenience.

When Washington Territory was created in 1853 Congress made its southern boundary the Columbia river to the point where the forty-sixth parallel of latitude intersects the river. From this point the forty-sixth parallel divided the territories of Washington and Oregon. Four years later Oregon sought admission to the Union, held a constitutional convention, framed a constitution, and in 1859 Oregon became the thirty-third state in the American Union.

The Oregon Constitutional Convention of 1857 named the Columbia and Snake rivers as the northern boundary of the state. By so doing they incorporated in Oregon a part of the territory

¹ *Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 21, pp. 133-137; 204-217; 281-293.

of Washington but there must have been a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of the delegates on this point as Article XVI which deals with the boundaries of the state contains this qualification: "But the Congress of the United States in providing for the admission of this state into the Union may make the said northern boundary conform to the act creating the Territory of Washington."

At the time the Oregon Constitution was drawn up few people were living in the country between the forty-sixth parallel and the Snake river. The Indian wars and the closing of the region to settlers by military authority had prevented the development of the region. But Fort Walla Walla, the U. S. military post was begun in 1856; the spirit of the interior Indians was broken by Wright's campaign in 1858; the military ban on settlement was lifted in the fall of 1858. Thereafter settlers entered the country in increasing numbers. The census of 1860 shows a population of 1,318 in Walla Walla county, the organization of which had been effected in 1859 and which after 1863 comprised the region south of the Snake river. The social and business relations of these people were with Portland and Western Oregon rather than with the towns of the Puget Sound area which had become the center of western Washington affairs. The Columbia river was the great route to the interior and the Oregon Steam Navigation Company with its steamboats and portage railroads at the Dalles and the Cascades furnished freight and passenger transportation between the coast and the up-river country. The river towns were busy scenes in those early days of gold mining, and settlement. A Wallula correspondent writes: "Mule trains loaded with goods are leaving every day for Kootenai and Boise. The town is literally besieged with pack trains and wagons; steamers are making daily trips from below and stages and saddle-trains are going in all directions loaded with passengers²."

Under these conditions the commercial relations of the Walla Walla country and of the whole interior served by the Columbia river artery became attached to Portland, the business center of the lower Columbia, and political allegiance tended to go along with business affiliations. The resulting condition of unstable political equilibrium lasted until about 1880. The movement lost force and died out mainly because the economic situation changed

² *Walla Walla Statesman*, April 7, 1865.

so remarkably during the later years of Washington's territorial period.

The legislatures of both the state of Oregon and the territory of Washington stated their desires repeatedly in memorials and joint resolutions. Governor McMullin of Washington territory warned the legislative assembly December 12, 1857 of the Oregon plan to secure the coveted region. After describing the incorporation of the area in Oregon by Oregon's constitutional convention, he continued, "I cannot therefore urge too strongly upon you the importance of sending to Congress a legislative protest against this attempt made to take from Washington a portion of her domain and thus change its boundaries between the two territories without even asking our consent." The response of the legislature took the form of a joint resolution passed December 15, 1857 which instructed Washington's territorial delegate, ex-governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens to use his influence in Congress to confine Oregon "so far as this territory is concerned to her present boundaries."

The Washington territorial legislature memorialized Congress in 1865-1866 and again in 1879 against the dismemberment of Washington territory. On the other hand the Oregon State legislature persistently memorialized Congress to separate the Walla Walla country from Washington and to make it a part of Oregon. There was a memorial to this effect in 1865; one in 1870; one in 1872; and another in 1876. In 1874 the lower house of the Oregon legislature framed a memorial which was not acted on by the Senate. The Oregon memorials were mainly based on the early claim as set up in the Constitution of 1857; the fact that the boundary sought was a natural and convenient line of division instead of the artificial line of the forty-sixth parallel; and the wishes of the people themselves who lived in the Walla Walla region.

The protesting memorials from Washington on the other hand emphasized the dismemberment of the territory that would result from the transfer of the Walla Walla region to Oregon and the indefinite postponement of all chances for the territory to become a state. In 1879 the memorial gave population and revenue statistics to show that practically one fourth of both the population and revenue of Washington would be lost by annexation.

Members of Congress from Oregon made several attempts to secure the boundary change by initiating Federal legislation. Sen-

ators Williams introduced a bill for this purpose (S. B. 197) in 1866. Senator Kelly did the same (S. B. 1501) in the third session of the 42nd Congress and in the same session Representative Slater introduced a similar bill (H. B. 3693) in the House. In the first session of the 44th Congress Kelly introduced another annexation bill (S. B. 65) while Representative Lane, at the same session, was the author of a House annexation bill (H. B. 630). This last was favorably reported by the committee on territories. The reason given by the committee in the main followed those of the memorials—the substitution of natural for artificial boundaries, the identity of interests between the Walla Walla region and Oregon, and the inconvenience arising out of the location of the seat of government (Olympia).

It is likely that the majority of the early Walla Walla settlers had no very strong convictions on the matter. They had recently come to the region which was a remote part of a newly created territory. Local loyalties are the outgrowth of time and these waited on the future. Immediate material reasons centering in costs and services of government and the convenience of the location of the territorial capitol were considerations which influenced them. The lack of common interests with the Puget Sound area is described in the only Walla Walla paper of the time in the following words: "As it is, the Western part of the Territory appears to the people of this valley like some foreign land, and it is about as little talked of or thought of by them as is the Chinese empire. No trade of any kind is carried on between the sections and there are no roads to offer inducement to trade or travel³." It is the newspapers that provide the principal source of information and there is a wealth of material in the Walla Walla papers, but those published in Western Washington do not contain so many articles and comments on the subject. Naturally they were opposed but either did not take the matter seriously or believed it better to avoid stirring up such a sectional issue.

There were two periods when the question was agitated. The first period was at the middle of the 1860-1870 decade and the second was about ten years later. As we have seen a memorial was framed by the Oregon State legislature in 1865 and in an editorial the *Oregonian* recites the benefits and shortcomings of annexation: Oregon had an early claim which deserves respect; a large amount of excellent country and several thousand people

³ *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 9, 1864.

would be added to Oregon; the boundary would be marked by nature. But on the other hand it would be disadvantageous to the interests of the Willamette valley by strengthening the forces east of the Cascades; it would threaten the supremacy of the Union party in Oregon as the Walla Walla people were mostly Democrats. However, the Oregonian concludes by favoring annexation if the satisfactory arrangements could be made.

William H. Newell⁴ had just come to Walla Walla and bought the *Statesman* and it may have been that he was not in touch with the situation for he announced editorially one week after his purchase that the promoters of the annexation movement were satisfied that a majority of the people living in the valley were opposed to the measures and therefore the movement had been given up.

For some reason—public opinion, pressure by interested persons, or the conviction that annexation was likely to come and would be a benefit—Newell changed his position the following week⁵. In a long article he presented the arguments in favor of annexation: Walla Walla's interests were neglected by the Puget Sound people; with them Walla Walla had no identity of interest or sympathy while only an imaginary line separates Walla Walla from Oregon where its real interests lay. Puget Sound was in a torpid condition; it would be fifty years before it would be ready for statehood. Oregon's special contract law tended to foster business development. Washington had no penitentiary and long time prisoners readily escaped from the jails. The only objections were the state debt of Oregon of \$200,000 and the Sunday observance law, but that was unpopular and would probably be repealed.

A lively interchange of opinions occurred and a number of letters advocating either annexation or the continuance of the *status quo* made their appearance in the columns of the *Statesman*, and "Dry Creek," "Citizen," "Fairplay," "J. N." and "Verno" asserted and denied that taxes would be raised, that the special contract law was of no particular value for business, that the

⁴ A Stalwart figure among the territorial editors. He was born in Pennsylvania, 1822, and died at Walla Walla in 1878. After an early training in publishing houses in New York and Baltimore he went to San Francisco and worked on both the *Herald* and the *Call*. Removing to Oregon he started the *Mountaineer* at the Dalles and from there moved to Walla Walla. Newell wielded much influence through the *Statesman* but his outright stand on many questions created much opposition. See Gilbert's *Historic Sketches of Walla Walla, Whitman, Columbia and Garfield Counties*, p. 353.

⁵ *Walla Walla Statesman*, November 24, 1865.

conveniences of annexation were largely imaginary⁶. The most noteworthy of these letters to the public was that of Frank P. Dugan⁷, one of the seven lawyers of that time in Walla Walla. Dugan opposed annexation and claimed that it was a scheme on the part of four of the Walla Walla attorneys to obtain offices that would be created by annexation to Oregon. Dugan went on to argue that taxes in Washington which were lower in millage and paid in greenback would be higher both in millage and from the fact that in Oregon they must be paid in coin. Dugan asserted that after Senator Nesmith's (Oregon) visit to Walla Walla he (Dugan) had prepared a call for a meeting in opposition to annexation and that it had been signed by over one hundred citizens. A week's notice was given and at the meeting the expression was unanimous against annexation. Of the petition which Anderson Cox⁸ had taken to Salem Dugan asserted he knew nothing but he implied that it was of little moment⁹.

Despite the fact that an annexation bill was introduced into Congress by Senator Williams of Oregon, the movement seems to have been laid aside for the time being. The *Statesman*¹⁰ announced in 1866 that the project was dead and that it would be unjust to proscribe a person who sought public office in Washington because he had espoused the annexation matter at a previous time for purposes of local convenience. This announcement on the part of the *Statesman* was called forth by a report from the west side of the territory to the effect that no one would be supported for the office of Congressional delegate who had favored annexation to Oregon.

⁶ One of the complaints frequently encountered was that of absences from the territories by federal appointees. John Miller Murphy in the *Washington Standard* (Olympia) for February 23, 1866, wrote: "It is a beautiful commentary upon our territory and justifies the expression of the lamented Lincoln that 'Washington territory officials gave him more trouble than all others'..... A stop should be put to this constant pilgrimage of territorial officials. All who go to Washington without being summoned there by the heads of their departments should be summarily removed from office."

⁷ A member of the territorial legislature in 1863 and 1864. In the 1864 session he was speaker of the House. In the Democratic convention of 1867 he came within two votes of nomination as senatorial delegate. In the county election of that year he became prosecuting attorney and for a number of years afterward was city attorney at Walla Walla.

⁸ Anderson Cox (1812-1872) came to Oregon from Iowa in 1845 and in 1862 moved to the Walla Walla country and settled near the present town of Waitsburg. Both in Oregon and Washington he took a prominent part in public affairs. He was three times elected to the Oregon legislature and at one time was a candidate for governor. He was elected to the territorial council from Walla Walla in 1865 to fill a supposed vacancy. When it was found that the vacancy did not exist Cox went to the capital of Oregon to use his acquaintance and influence to promote the annexation plan. At the time of his death he was receiver of the Walla Walla land office. With respect to the petitions of this time the *Spokane Times* of May 29, 1879, contains an article copied from the *Waitsburg Times* in which it is stated that in the fall of 1865 a majority of the voters in Walla Walla county signed petitions asking for annexation to Oregon and that these petitions were to be forwarded to Washington to be presented to Congress by Senator Williams but that for some reason which has never been satisfactorily explained the petitions never reached their destination.

⁹ *Walla Walla Statesman*, February 2, 1866.

¹⁰ *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 28, 1866.

But there were irons in the fire other than that of annexation to Oregon. The capital of Idaho had been moved from Lewiston to Boise in 1864 and a struggle ensued on the part of the people of North Idaho to be separate from the southern part of the territory which lay beyond the Salmon river mountains. At first it took the form of a project for an interior territory to be formed out of northern Idaho and eastern Washington with occasional suggestions of the additions of parts of eastern Oregon and western Montana. Later it became an attempt to be annexed to Washington territory.

There were many rumors of these plans afloat in the 1865-1867 period. The most definite proposition was presented by a Lewiston delegation which came to Walla Walla and proposed that a new territory be made from the eastern part of Washington and the northern part of Idaho with Walla Walla as the capitol. The meeting before which the proposal was made adopted a resolution that it would be better to have north Idaho annexed to Washington. This offer was declined by the delegates from the sister territory and the *Northwest Radiator*¹¹ assailed W. H. Newell for not concurring with the plan of the Lewiston delegates.

In September 1867 an important meeting was held in Lewiston and in this Frank P. Dugan was a leading speaker. He advocated the annexation of North Idaho to Washington, but he was also understood to have in mind the later creation of an interior territory. The *Pacific Tribune*¹² (Olympia) attacked the annexation project on the ground that Walla Walla wanted the capitol moved east of the Cascades and moreover that it was a part of a plot to deflect the Northern Pacific Railroad from Puget Sound to a terminal point on the Columbia.

After going over the newspapers of that time we conclude that the idea of Oregon annexation does not seem to have taken a strong hold on the Walla Walla people of the sixties. It was probably fostered, as Dugan said, in the main by men who had something to gain by the transfer. To others it was an object of considerable academic interest as is shown by the argumentative character of the letters written to the *Statesman*. But to the majority of the people, new settlers and to a considerable degree restless and migratory, the whole matter of territorial boundaries

¹¹ This was one of the early papers of Lewiston and was founded by Thomas Favorite in 1865 and was edited at this time by Alonzo Leland. It supported strongly the separation of northern from southern Idaho.

¹² *Pacific Tribune* (Olympia), June 3, 1868.

must have been a fluid, undetermined matter. With the passing of time, with the close of the epoch of placer mining, with a permanent, settled population, whatever difficulties existed would be felt more keenly.

This transition came about 1870 and the Walla Walla region settled down to a more humdrum life. The early seventies were rather drab and discouraging. Population grew very slowly. In 1870 it was only 23,955 for the entire territory and for a number of years showed little increase. The hard times of 1873 and the years following stopped the building of the Northern Pacific and many people accustomed to the feverish growth of western communities became discouraged. Walla Walla was now a wheat growing area and the large surplus had to be shipped down the Columbia after being hauled to the river. There were innumerable complaints against the rates charged by the Oregon Steam Navigation Company. On economic conditions an editorial in the *Union* may be quoted: "The prospects of this country are a little gloomy at the present, in fact they have been so for some years. Our situation has been such that it is almost a wonder that the people have not become discouraged before this time and given up all hope of better times for a number of years to come. . . . When we reflect that wheat is the great staple product and that it is a drug on the market at thirty-five cents a bushel; that there is no considerable demand for it at that price and that it is seldom that a sale can be effected for cash at any price—the greatest wonder is how our people can make a living at all¹³."

Economic depression led to political discontent and existing grievances to bitter recriminations against the territorial status of the region which to many seemed likely to continue indefinitely. With this as the prevailing mood, annexation to Oregon was revived as a means of partially escaping the ills of the situation. "We could then exercise some influence upon such questions as the improvement of the Columbia river, the regulation of freights and fares and many other issues that come right home to the pockets of our people¹⁴."

Most embittered was William H. Newell who had in the columns of the *Statesman* an outlet for his dislike of the "clam-eaters" of Puget Sound—a dislike that only partially can be charged up to the vituperative journalistic habits of the time.

¹³ *Walla Walla Union*, November 7, 1874.

¹⁴ *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 25, 1875.

Puget Sound was a "God-forsaken" country and as for Olympia, while there might be some good men and better women there, it was on the whole the most corrupt place of its size on the American continent and when he left the city it was with the pious hope that he would never again tread the streets of that modern Sodom¹⁵. To the *Olympia Courier* which feared that if the annexation of Walla Walla to Oregon came about it would mean the disintegration of Washington territory, Newell replied: "Such a result suits us exactly. For years the territory has been in a comatose condition and the sooner it is allowed to die out the better¹⁶." When Orange Jacobs asserted that the separation of Walla Walla would delay statehood the *Statesman* declared, "On the Sound the population is on the wane and east of the mountains the increase is so slow as scarcely to be appreciable. At our present rate of growth the child is not born that will live to see the admission of the State of Washington and it is this very fact that induces many of our people to favor annexation¹⁷."

The question of county division also played a part in creating dissatisfaction among the people of Walla Walla. The people who had settled about Waitsburg began to agitate the organization of a new county and the division of Walla Walla county as early as 1869. This movement was resisted by the residents of Walla Walla. Newell, then a member of the Territorial Council wrote, "The people of the territory are proud of Walla Walla county and not a single man in the legislature was willing to raise a sacrilegious hand to mar her grand proportions. The 'Empire County' of the Territory, it should be the pride of our people to protect her against the small men who for selfish purposes would hawk at her and tear her limb from limb¹⁸."

Although the advocates of county division were unable to secure their object in 1869 by 1875 they had enlisted enough influence in their behalf to obtain favorable legislative action. In response to this demand Columbia county with Dayton as the county seat was created by the Legislature November 11, 1875. The settled area in the eastern part of Walla Walla county had greatly increased and the inconvenience of the existing situation had become more marked. It was asserted that some of the residents in the most distant parts of the county had to go from fifty to eighty miles to the county seat.

15 *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 18, 1869.

16 *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 25, 1875.

17 *Walla Walla Statesman*, February 26, 1876.

18 *Walla Walla Statesman*, December 4, 1869.

Although the *Statesman* had already virtually conceded the necessity of a division, it now took the stand that this was but another evidence of the jealous unfriendliness of the people of Puget Sound. "The vote on dismembering the county shows that those who rule the affairs of the territory are careless as to our welfare and are ready to adopt any measure that promises to dwarf our influence. . . . with our business interests and associations all harmonizing with our Oregon neighbors we are allied with the people of Puget Sound—a people with whom we have scarcely a single interest in common and from whose selfishness and clannishness we have suffered great injury¹⁹." The *Walla Walla Union* which had been founded in opposition to Newell and the *Statesman* asserted that the matter of county division was not the principal reason for desiring annexation to Oregon but that it was the persistent unfriendliness which had always been meted out to Walla Walla by the dominant Puget Sound interests.²⁰

Just what proportion of the population in southeastern Washington favored union with Oregon it is impossible to say. In 1876 it is likely that a strong majority in Walla Walla county was willing to be transferred and in Columbia county, while the feeling was not so strong, there were many who favored the movement. On February 14, 1875 Senator Kelly of Oregon laid before the Senate of the United States a petition signed by 819 citizens of Walla Walla and Columbia counties praying for annexation. As the total vote at the preceding election was 1549 it is likely that the question if submitted to a vote of the people concerned would have carried. From uncompromising utterances of papers and public men in Walla Walla and the more cautious statements that are to be found in the Dayton newspapers, this seems a fair conclusion.

In this connection it is interesting to examine the *Walla Walla Union*. From 1869 the date of its establishment, down to 1875 it steadily opposed annexation to Oregon. In 1872 the *Union* stated that it believed the majority of the people in Walla Walla opposed annexation but petitions were being circulated in favor of it and that all sorts of arguments were being used to get signers. The *Union* was against the proposed plan because Oregon's taxes were higher and the people no better governed and no better off and because it would be good policy to have as

¹⁹ *Walla Walla Statesman*, November 6, 1875.

²⁰ *Walla Walla Union*, December 11, 1875.

many states as possible on the Pacific Coast.²¹ In 1874 the *Union* professed to believe that while nine-tenths of the people in Walla Walla favored the annexation of north Idaho to Washington and were opposed to their own annexation to Oregon, yet if they did not wake up and make their views known they might find themselves living in Walla Walla, Oregon²². In January 1875 the *Union* complained about the constant reiteration in Oregon papers of the annexation question and declared that of the 1600 or 1800 votes in the Walla Walla region not 300 would vote in favor of annexation.²³ Even in its first comment on county division the *Union* did not take the view that the division was unjust but that it was probably fair and reasonable.

But in its next issue the attitude of the *Union* changed and it became as zealous in behalf of annexation as the *Statesman*. Either it had become convinced that the people were now in favor of annexation or else other influences were brought to bear which caused a sharp reversal of editorial policy. Its own explanation was that public opinion had changed. "Since division a good deal of talk exists for annexation to Oregon. We will get less consideration from the legislature as the two counties will not work in harmony²⁴." The editor goes on to say that the neglect experienced from western Washington is so manifest that the situation if they were annexed to Oregon could not be worse. A little later the *Union* stated that a great change had come over the minds of the people so that the former majority against annexation had now become a majority in its favor and that now was the time to be active and to prepare petitions to Congress asking to be transferred to Oregon.

The week following the *Union* commented editorially on Senator Kelly's annexation bill. This provided for a vote on the part of the people in Walla Walla and Columbia counties and the *Union* declared that it had no fear of the results. "Those dissenting will be but a very small minority²⁵." The only objection to a vote which the *Union* offered was that it would delay annexation. The editor believed that the people of Columbia county would favor annexation but if they were opposed Walla Walla had votes enough to overcome them. "We expect the Puget Sounders will howl most dismally but they will have to console themselves with

21 *Walla Walla Union*, October 12, 1872.

22 *Walla Walla Union*, January 17, 1874.

23 *Walla Walla Union*, January 30, 1875.

24 *Walla Walla Union*, October 30, 1875.

25 *Walla Walla Union*, December 18, 1875.

the prospects of the annexation of Alaska to Washington territory."

The *Union* continued to zealously support the cause of annexation; in commenting in March 1878 on Senator Mitchell's bill²⁶ for annexation it remarks: "We believe ninety-one hundredths of the business men in Walla Walla and Columbia counties favor Mitchell's annexation bill. Why any considerable minority of our people should oppose it passeth understanding."

The *Dayton News*²⁷ gives a summary of the arguments presented by N. T. Caton of Walla Walla in a public meeting at Dayton in behalf of annexation: (1) Advantage of a state government (2) inducements to immigration and capital that would follow statehood (3) better protection of life and property (4) the courts would be more responsible to popular sentiment (5) improved educational opportunities (6) more influence in securing Federal assistance for river improvements, etc. (7) taxes would be lessened rather than increased (8) too many years must pass before Washington can hope to become a state.

In describing the meeting the editor cautiously wrote that Caton was listened to with great attention and the verdict was that he had dealt with the question fairly and intelligently. The *News* did not take a definite stand on the matter in 1876 but in 1877 it opposed annexation. After acknowledging that many people in Walla Walla and Columbia counties felt keenly the need for admission to the Union and that some were ready as a last resort to favor annexation to Oregon, the *News* went on to state: "But this we do not favor. We have 60,000 people and by the time we are ready to look for admission our population will be sufficient to entitle us to admission²⁸."

At the election of 1876 the people authorized a constitutional convention to adopt a constitution for what they hoped would be the State of Washington. Out of a total vote of 9904, 7328 voted on the question, 5698 for and 1530 against. In Walla Walla county, apathy on the question was noticeable; out of a total vote of 938 only 377 voted on holding a convention and only 85 were in favor, while 292 were opposed. Shortly before the election Newell attacked the statehood scheme in one of his most characteristic editorials:.... "Emmisaries from the Sound are now in our midst seeking to sow the seeds of dissention and divert us from

²⁶ Apparently a mistake as Senator Mitchell did not introduce an annexation bill in the second session of the Forty-fifth Congress.

²⁷ January 22, 1876.

²⁸ September 28, 1877.

the object we all have in view—an escape from territorial vassalage. The Democratic and Republican conventions—both run in the interests of the Sound—passed resolutions in favor of a constitutional convention. This is very much like tickling a child with a straw and deceives nobody. The territory has not now and at the present rate of growth will not have in the next fifty years the population requisite to authorize her to ask admission as a state. It is now a quarter of a century since the territory was organized in the interest of the owners of a few town lots at Olympia and today the prospect of becoming a state seems just as remote as the time when Columbia Lancaster took his seat in Congress as the first delegate from Washington territory. We have here a growing and progressive country but our enterprise is repressed and our energies retarded by being tailed on to Puget Sound—a live body linked to a dead carcass. Annexation to Oregon releases our beautiful valley from this deathly embrace and at once secures all the advantages of a state organization. Annexed to Oregon our influence would be felt in unlocking the Columbia river and that great high-way of nature would be open to the tide of our golden harvest. Annexed to Oregon our voice would be heard in the councils of the nation through the potential utterances of senators and representatives instead of as now through an emasculated delegate. Annexation will vivify every material interest of our valley and place us on the high road to prosperity. Friends of annexation, push on the column!²⁹

Despite the indifference and oppositions of Walla Walla the convention was held at that place and here the fifteen Washington delegates with one³⁰ from North Idaho drew up the Constitution of 1878. This was submitted to the people in the fall election of that year and ratified by 6462 to 3231. The vote for congressional delegate was about 3000 greater than the total of those voting on the constitution.

Many persons were indifferent; there was some opposition to the alleged unfriendly attitude of the Constitution to capitalistic interests;³¹ but the majority of those who voted against the Constitution believed that the territory was not ready for admission. Charles Besserer³² took this view; under existing conditions of

²⁹ *Walla Walla Statesman*, October 2, 1876.

³⁰ Alonzo Leland, editor and publisher of Lewiston, long prominent in the movement to separate northern Idaho from the rest of the territory.

³¹ The *North Pacific Times* (Tacoma) termed the Walla Walla constitution "That communistic abortion." Pierce county voted against the constitution—230 for and 339 against and was the only county of the Puget Sound group to oppose the adoption of the constitution of 1878.

population and wealth Washington was not able to support a state government; the people would lose nothing by waiting.

The vote of Walla Walla county is a matter of interest. In a total vote of 1226, 89 voted for the Constitution and 847 against. In Columbia county the vote was 426 for and 513 against. While other reasons undoubtedly played a part, the annexation issue must have been influential in the decisive vote which Walla Walla recorded against the Constitution of 1878.

Toward the close of the 1870-1880 decade the movement declined and there are fewer newspaper references to it. The territorial legislature of Washington adopted a memorial against the separation of the Walla Walla region in 1879 but this was probably unnecessary. The determining factors were the revival of business conditions that followed the long depression of 1873-1878 and the railroad building era which came with the return of prosperity. The railroads³³ pierced the Cascade barrier and knit the sections of Washington together. The population of eastern Washington grew rapidly after 1877 and for a time this portion of the state tended to outstrip that which lay west of the Cascades. By 1880 there were 75,116 people in the entire territory and ten years later there were 349,390. During these same years Oregon's growth was from 174,768 to 313,767. In the matter of wealth increase the account is even more surprising. Oregon's wealth in 1880 was \$154,000,000 and that of Washington Territory \$62,000,000. Ten years later the wealth of Oregon was \$590,396,194 and that of Washington \$760,698,725. It is a very wonderful decade and the prophets of gloom were confounded. In this period of rapid development the annexation movement was cast aside and today is nearly forgotten. Nevertheless it is one of the chapters in the political history of Washington and may be studied in connection with the attempts of the people of northern Idaho to be joined to Washington as examples of the political restlessness of populations when their legal and natural boundaries do not agree.

C. S. KINGSTON.

³² Charles Besserer was born in Germany and came to the United States at the age of 17. After a life of adventure and of many ups and downs he bought the *Walla Walla Watchman* and made it both a financial and journalistic success. He was a master of terse, vivid English and wrote with singular charm. His disposition was tolerant, humorous and kindly and his comments on Walla Walla affairs may be read today with pleasure.

³³ Even railroads that never came into existence exerted an influence in this direction—notably the Seattle and Walla Walla enterprise which was started by the people of Seattle when they were aroused by the choice of Tacoma as the terminal of the Northern Pacific. The Walla Walla papers contain many articles on this project which was to give them a deep water port and make them independent of the Columbia river outlet.