

It takes more than a good resume to get a government contract.

Elisha Peyre Ferry (1825-1895)

From: “An Illustrated History of Washington”ⁱ

HON. ELISHA P. FERRY. No star in constellation of States shines with brighter effulgence than that of Washington, whose brilliancy is due to the concentrated glory of her most honorable citizens. Among those conspicuous for their services in her cause, no one is more justly deserving of notice than the gentleman whose name heads this brief biography.

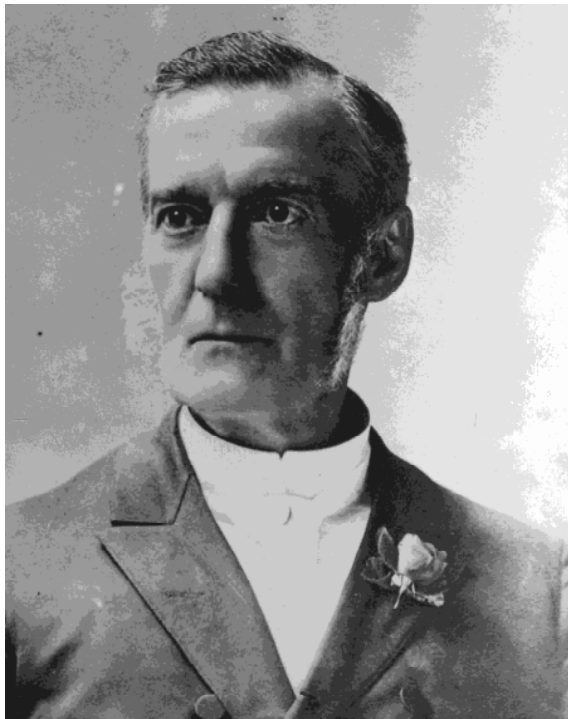


Figure 1. Elisha P. Ferry. (From State of Washington, portraits of Territorial Governors.)

This honored citizen was born in Monroe, Michigan, August 9, 1825. His preliminary education was received in his native city, after which he studied law, both there and in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and was admitted to the bar in 1845, being then-but twenty years of age. In 1846 he removed to Waukegan, Illinois, where he began practicing his profession, and of which place he was continuously a resident until July, 1869, at which time he removed to the Territory of Washington. He brought with him an extended experience in public affairs, having been prominent in the State of Illinois. He was the first Mayor of Waukegan, and in 1852 and 1856 was Presidential Elector for the district in which he resided. He was a

member of the constitutional convention in Illinois in 1861, and from that year to 1863 was Bank Commissioner in that State. During these years he was a member of Governor Yates' staff, as Assistant Adjutant-General, with the rank of Colonel, and assisted in organizing, equipping and sending into the field a large number of Illinois regiments. In 1869 he was appointed Surveyor-General of Washington Territory and in 1872 was

appointed Governor of the Territory and re-appointed in 1876, all of which positions were conferred on him by President Grant. He served as Governor until November, 1880, when he removed to Seattle and became a member of the law firm of McNaught, Ferry, McNaught & Mitchell. In September, 1887, he retired from the practice of the law and entered the Puget Sound National Bank as vice-president. September 4, 1889, he was nominated by the Republican party for Governor of the State, and on October 1 was elected to that office, serving in that position with his usual probity and ability.

The Governor has been a strong, consistent Republican since the organization of the party and was a member of the first Republican convention held in the United States. Religiously, he is an active member of the Episcopal Church. In the various walks of public and private life he has been the same conscientious, able citizen:

On the day when he retired from the office of Governor, January 11, 1893, the following appeared as an editorial in the Post-Intelligencer, the leading Republican paper in the State of Washington.

"THE RETIRING GOVERNOR"

"Governor Ferry will carry with him into private life the hearty respect, esteem and good wishes of the best men of the State, without distinction of party. Governor Ferry brought to the administration of his responsible office the ripe, well-garnered treasures of an upright life of energetic and varied experience. Born in Michigan, he was admitted to the bar at twenty years of age. For twenty-three years he practiced his profession in Waukegan, Illinois. During the war he rendered patriotic service upon the staff of Governor Yates, of Illinois. He came to Washington in 1869, was appointed Surveyor-General, and then Governor of the Territory by President Grant. He was eight years Territorial Governor, retiring in 1880 to resume the practice of his profession. In 1887 he became a banker, and in 1889 was elected the first Governor of the new State of Washington.

"He was easily the best equipped man in the whole State for the position; he had been twenty years a resident of the Territory; his experience as Surveyor-General and Territorial Executive had made him familiar with the natural resources of Washington and its most imperative wants. He brought to the administration of his office the technical professional knowledge of a sound lawyer, and a practical knowledge of finance and business. As a lawyer and a man of affairs he was admirably fitted for his position.

"He has 'more than met the high expectations of his friends. His official term has included some trying experiences, but in every instance Governor Ferry has discharged his responsibilities with dignity, wisdom, tact, firmness, probity and resolution. He

retires to private life followed by the hearty plaudits of his fellow citizens of all parties, who tender him their best wishes for happiness and comfort during all the years that are before him."

From: ["harmonyfreemason.blogspot.com/2004/12/harmony-lodge-18-history.html"](http://harmonyfreemason.blogspot.com/2004/12/harmony-lodge-18-history.html)

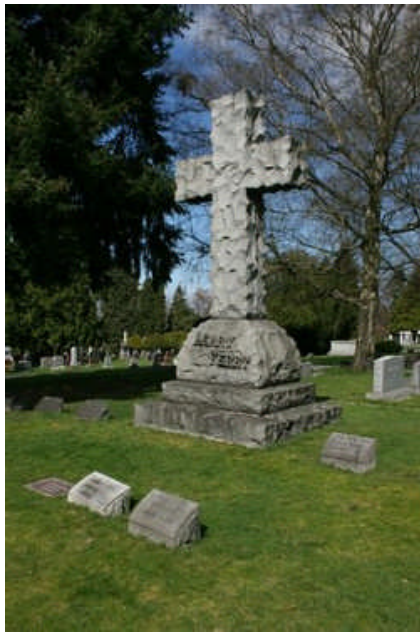


Figure 3. Tombstone of Elisha P. Ferry in Lake View Cemetery in Seattle. (From findagrave.com.)



Figure 2. Elisha P Ferry grave marker next to tombstone in Lake View Cemetery in Seattle. (From findagrave.com.)

Brother Elisha P. Ferry was born in Monroe, Michigan, August 9, 1825, and received his education in his native state. Studied law in Indiana and was admitted to the bar in 1845, being but twenty years of age. Moving to the state of Illinois he began the practice of his profession, was active in politics and a member of the first Republican National Convention. He rendered distinguished service on the staff of Governor Yates, of Illinois, with the rank of Colonel during the war of the rebellion. In 1869 he was appointed Surveyor General of the Territory of Washington and moved to Olympia to take charge of the duties of his office. He was one of the charter members of Harmony Lodge and was the first Senior Deacon. Was elected Senior Warden in 1872, Worshipful Master in 1873, 1874, 1875, and Junior Warden in 1876, Senior Warden in 1877. Brother Ferry was elected Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Territory of Washington in 1878 and also re-elected as Worshipful Master of Harmony Lodge, No. 18, for the same year. In 1872 he was appointed Governor of the Territory of Washington and reappointed in 1876. In 1880 he moved to Seattle and engaged in the practice of law, and later in the banking business, being vice-president of the Puget Sound National Bank. On September 4, 1889, he was nominated for Governor of the newly created State of Washington. Removing again to Olympia to assume his new duties, Harmony Lodge, on December 11, 1889, re-elected him as Worshipful

Master. The election was confirmed but he was never installed. Brother Ferry was active in Grand Lodge work, serving in various offices and committees as well as that of Grand Master. He retained his membership in Harmony Lodge until his death, which occurred October 14, 1895.

ⁱ Hines, H. K. (Harvey Kimball), 1828-1902, **“An Illustrated History of the State of Washington”**: containing a history of the State of Washington from the earliest period of its discovery to the present time, together with glimpses of its auspicious future, illustrations and full page portraits of some of its eminent men and biographical mention of many of its pioneers and prominent citizens of today: Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co. 1893.