

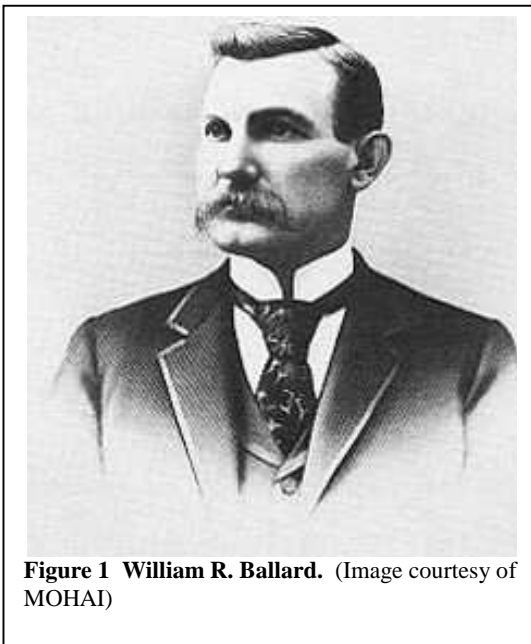
*It takes more than a good resume to get a government contract.*

## William Rankin Ballard (1847-1929)

From: "An Illustrated History of the State of Washington,"<sup>i</sup> 1893.

'  
*CAPTAIN WILLIAM R. BALLARD, president of the Seattle Savings Bank, and prominently connected with other financial institutions of Seattle, was born in Richland county, Ohio, August 12, 1847.*

*His father, Dr. Levi W. Ballard, a native of New Hampshire, was educated in New England and from there removed to Ohio, where he followed his profession and where he was married to Miss Phoebe McConnell, of that State. Mrs. Ballard died in 1848, leaving two children, Irving and William R, who were taken and cared for by their grandparents. In 1851 Dr. Ballard crossed the plains to California, mined one year and then returned to Ohio. In 1853 he again crossed the plains, this time coming to Oregon and locating at Portland, where he engaged in the practice of his profession until the fall of 1855. The following winter he was in the Indian war, acting as surgeon in the Rogue River Valley. In 1856 he returned east, and in the spring of 1857 was married, in New Jersey, to Miss May Condit. His children then joined him and they started for the Pacific coast, embarking from New York on the old steamer Northern Light for Aspinwall, thence by the Isthmus to Panama, where they took passage on the Brother Jonathan, landing in Portland in March, 1857.*



**Figure 1 William R. Ballard.** (Image courtesy of MOHAI)

*Dr. Ballard located a farm near Roseburg, Oregon, where he was engaged in agricultural pursuits and also in the practice of his profession up to 1861. Then he moved to Wilbur, Oregon, to give his children the educational advantages of Umpqua College. In 1865 he moved to the Sound country and purchased 160 acres of land, on a portion of which he laid off the town of Slaughter in 1887, and there he still resides. William R. Ballard was educated in the public schools of Roseburg, and at the Umpqua College, where he completed an academic course. Removing with his parents to the Sound country, he then*

*spent three years at home, rendering his strength in the reclamation of a farm in the*

*midst of a wild and undeveloped country. In 1868 he entered the University of Washington and passed one year in study, and then began teaching school in King, and later Pierce and Thurston counties.*

*Evincing a natural aptness for mathematics, his attention was turned to surveying, which he followed during the summer of 1873 in Pierce county, and, becoming so proficient in that line of work, he secured a contract in 1874 to survey the Yakima Indian Reservation. Upon completing, his work, some complication arose in regard to the payment therefore, necessitating his going to Washington, District Columbia, in 1875, where he passed the winter in securing a settlement.*

*Returning to Seattle, he then accepted the position of mate on the steamer Zephyr, owned by his brother, and engaged in the passenger service between Seattle and Olympia. In the fall of 1877 he was made captain of the vessel, in 1881 became part owner, and in 1883 sole owner. He continued running the steamer until June, 1887, when he sold out. He had conducted a large and profitable business, and through the judicious investment of his profits he laid the foundation of his handsome fortune.*

*One of the most fortunate investments Captain Ballard made was in 1883, when he associated himself with Judge Thomas Burke and John Leary in the purchase of 700 acres of land bordering on Salmon Bay, upon which is now located that prosperous*



CAPTAIN WILLIAM R. BALLARD

**Figure 2 William Rankin Ballard**

*suburb of Seattle known as Ballard. In 1877 they organized the West Coast Improvement Company, Captain Ballard becoming vice president and manager, and they began clearing the above tract, and in 1880 placed it upon the market, with the town site platted and subdivided. Through the judicious subsidizing of manufactories and milling interests, they have established a prosperous manufacturing community of some 2,500 population. The work incident to the management of this company has largely occupied his time and attention up to the present, though he has been active in other directions.*

*He was one of the organizers of the Seattle National Bank, which began business in February, 1890, with a capital of \$250,000, of which he has*

*since been vice president and manager. This banking company has erected on the corner of South Second Street and Yesler Avenue a six-story stone and brick building, one of the finest bank buildings on the Pacific coast. He is also president of the Seattle Savings Bank and the First National Bank, of Waterville, and is one of the directors of the North End Bank, Seattle, and the Fairhaven National Bank. Captain Ballard is also vice president of the West Street and North End Electric Railway Company, and a large stockholder and director of the Terminal Railway and Elevator Company.*

*He was married in Seattle in 1882, to Miss Estella Thorndyke, of Maine. They had five children, one son, Stanly, being the survivor.*

*Captain Ballard affiliates with the F. & A. M. In business affairs of Seattle he occupies a position of prominence and responsibility. Being a man of excellent judgment, progressive in his ideas, and of great public spirit; he is justly conceded to be among the foremost of Seattle's most successful men.*

### **From "History of Seattle,"<sup>ii</sup> 1916.**

*Captain William Rankin Ballard, a resident of the Pacific northwest from the age of eleven, was long numbered among the prominent and honored citizens of Seattle, where he passed away in February, 1929, in the eighty-second year of his age. His personal characteristics were such as won him the respect and the love of all with whom he came in contact and no man was better known among the city's early settlers.*

*His birth occurred at Perrysburg, Ohio, on the 12th of August, 1847, his parents being Dr. Levi and Phoebe A. (McConnell) Ballard, the former born in Hillsboro county, New Hampshire, December 21, 1815. The Ballards are of English ancestry and the family was early established on American soil, representatives of the name being respected and influential residents of the Granite state for many years. In early manhood Dr. Levi Ballard went to New Jersey, where he began reading medicine, and later completed his preparation for the profession by graduation from the Cleveland Medical College of Cleveland, Ohio, with the class of 1844. The same year, in Richland County, Ohio, he wedded Miss Phoebe A. McConnell, and there they established their home, Dr. Ballard devoting his attention to medical practice. After a happy married life of about six years his wife passed away, leaving two sons, Irving and William Rankin. The former became an attorney of King county, Washington, and died in 1880. In 1852 Dr. Ballard made the overland trip to California, but after a few months spent on the Pacific coast he returned by way of the Isthmus route to the east. He again crossed the plains in 1854, but in that year Oregon was his destination. He became a factor in the pioneer life of the*

*state and served as surgeon of a regiment of volunteers during the Indian war. In 1857 he went to the east by way of the Isthmus of Panama and wedded Miss Mary E. Condit. He brought his wife and two sons, born of his first marriage, to Oregon in 1858 and engaged in the practice of medicine and surgery at Roseburg for seven years, removing in 1865 to a tract of eighty acres of land, on which is now located the town of Auburn, Washington, where he resided until his death. He had attained the venerable age of eighty-one years when he passed away on the 12th of January, 1897, leaving behind him an untarnished record for honor, integrity and usefulness. His religious faith was indicated by his membership in the Presbyterian Church, and in politics he was a staunch republican. A contemporary biographer said of him: "In pioneer times he experienced all of the hardships and made the sacrifices necessary in connection with professional work on the frontier. But in all of his practice he was actuated by a spirit of broad humanitarianism and many there were who had reason to bless his memory for his timely and able assistance."*

*William R. Ballard was a student in Umpqua Academy at Wilbur, Oregon, and afterward in the Washington State University, following which he taught country school for four years in King, Pierce and Thurston counties. Having given special study to civil engineering, he entered upon the practice of that profession, and as a deputy United States government surveyor he spent six years in laying out the Yakima Indian reservation into forty acres tracts. He began his maritime career in the summer of 1876, when he became a mate on the steamer Zephyr, which was owned by his brother, and sailed between Olympia and Seattle. In 1877 he became its captain and in 1881 purchased an interest in the vessel, his partners being George Harris and John Leary. After five years he purchased the interest of his associates and continued in command until 1887, when he sold his ship. Under Captain Ballard's management the vessel became very popular and made larger earnings than any other local steamer then plying on the Sound. It was while making the Sound trips that Captain Ballard became convinced that large investments in Seattle property would prove profitable, and in connection with Judge Thomas Burke and John Leary, he organized the West Coast Land Company and purchased, in 1883, seven hundred acres of land on Salmon Bay, which is now the Ballard district of Seattle, named in his honor. He subdivided the property and from time to time sold lots, realizing a handsome return on his investment, the property being purchased for a few dollars per acre, while today it is worth many millions. Captain Ballard managed and controlled the affairs of the company in handling the property and from his efforts resulted the notable and gratifying success which came to him and his associates.*

*Captain Ballard also figured prominently in financial circles and in other business connections in Seattle. He became one of the organizers of the Seattle National*

*Bank, in 1889, with a capital stock of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He was elected its vice president and his keen business judgment and enterprise proved important factors in the successful management of the institution. The company erected a six-story bank building, one of the finest of the kind in the northwest, and for three years Mr. Ballard remained as an officer of the bank. He was also one of the organizers of the Seattle Savings Bank and continued as its president until 1897. Moreover, he was president of the First National Bank of Waterville, Washington, and was one of the directors of the North End Bank of Seattle and the Fairhaven National Bank. In the organization of the, West Street and North End Electric Railway Company, he took a helpful part, purchasing much of the stock, and became vice president of the company. He likewise held considerable stock in the Terminal Railway & Elevator Company, of which he was a director, and his business activities were ever of a nature that contributed much to the city's improvement and upbuilding along material lines. For several years prior to his death he lived retired from active business but gave a great deal of his time to philanthropic work, in which he was very deeply interested. He aided in founding Whitworth College at Spokane, gave annual scholarship prizes and in fact was one of the most liberal donors to the institution. He served as president of the board of trustees of the Samuel and Jessie Kenney Presbyterian Home for the Aged, taking over its management following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Kenney and giving much time to the advancement of this worthy project.*

*On the 12th of November, 1882, Captain Ballard was united in marriage to Miss Estelle Thorndike, a native of Rockland, Maine, and a daughter of Captain Eben Thorndike, for thirty-two years a shipmaster of Thomaston, Maine. Captain and Mrs. Ballard became parents of five children, four of whom died in infancy. The surviving son, Stanley, was married in 1914 to Miss Ruth Mary Gilmore of Seattle and they have two sons, William Rankin and David Kirkman.*

*At the polls Captain Ballard supported the men and measures of the republican party, believing firmly in its principles as factors in good government. He was a valued member of the First Presbyterian church, of which he served as an elder for many years, and was a worthy exemplar of the teachings and purposes of the Masonic fraternity, having joined St. John's Lodge, F. & A. M., of Seattle in 1871. His name was likewise on the membership roll of the Arctic Club. It was written of him while he was still an active factor in the world's work: "His interests have never centered along a single line, but have reached out to those activities which have most to do with the material welfare of Seattle and with its intellectual, social and moral progress. His life is well balanced and his is a well-rounded character. To meet him one is at once impressed with his power and resourcefulness, and yet he never boasts of his own accomplishments and is inclined more to modesty than self-praise." His life was an upright and honorable one in every*

*relation and his memory remains as a blessed benediction to the many who knew and loved him.*



---

<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> Bagley, Clarence, "**History of Seattle from the earliest settlement to the present time.**" Chicago, the S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916.