



c.1870

Willamette Heritage Center | Salem, Oregon
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La Fayette F. Grover (1823-1911)

La Fayette F. Grover was born in Bethel, Maine. He studied law in Philadelphia and became a lawyer in 1850. He moved west to California in 1851 and went on to Portland by steamer. He eventually settled in Salem, Oregon and became a law partner with Ben F. Harding. He became acquainted with Asahel Bush and managed the *Oregon Statesman* while Bush made a trip east in 1853.¹

Grover became very political and a member of the Salem Clique. He was a pro-slavery democrat.² Grover was appointed U.S District Attorney and Secretary of the Oregon Territory. In 1854 Grover was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to audit expenses and claims that resulted from the Rogue River Wars, 1855-1856. The U.S. Secretary of War appointed Grover to a board auditing Indian War expenses, in Oregon and Washington, in 1856. He was a member of the Oregon Constitutional Convention in 1857, and was elected the first congressman from Oregon in 1859. Grover presided over the 1866 Democratic Convention and in 1870 and 1877 he was elected the fourth governor of Oregon. He became a U.S. senator in 1883.

Grover was connected with the organization of the Willamette Woolen Manufacturing Company in Salem and eventually became one-third owner of all mills and water power in Salem. He also managed the Salem Flouring Mills.² After retiring from public life, Grover resumed work as an attorney and died in Portland, Oregon.³

Letters to Bush from 1855 to 1909

Grover wrote about his efforts to recruit men to fight in the Yakima War of 1855 in the Washington Territory. Grover believed that General Lane was not responsible for delaying Oregon's statehood, but that it was due to the lack of action of Southern Democrats. He promoted efforts to get federal funding for Oregon civic works and products to help settle Indian War debts. Grover also wrote about political strategies and personal business dealings.

¹ Malcolm Clark, Jr., *Eden Seekers: The Settlement of Oregon, 1818-1862* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 269.

² Philip Cogswell, Jr., *Capitol Names: Individuals Woven into Oregon's History* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1977), 86.

³ *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley, Oregon* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1903), 1046.

⁴ Wikipedia Contributors, "La Fayette Grover," Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia.

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