

Seattle's Forty-Year Colored Population

Looking backward over a period of forty years seems but a brief span in one's life, but, looking ahead a like number of years, is a long, long road to Tipperary, and not many of those to whom reference will be hereinafter made in this connection, have little or any hope of either living here or anywhere else for a like span of years. Forty years ago and the population of Seattle was so numerically small that a week's sojourn in the city, by a stranger, would be sufficiently long to form the personal acquaintance of the entire colony, though some eight hundred or more coal miners worked at Franklin and Newcastle, both in the same county as is Seattle. Those who have lived here for the past forty years have truly watched Seattle grow, she now registering a population of a half million in comparison to forty thousand at that time. The evolution from a jungle forest to a magnificent metropolitan municipality, with its teeming thousands, has not only been wonderfully marvelous, but brilliantly spectacular, and even those who actually witnessed the transfiguration do not fully realize how it all happened, but it all has happened, and Seattle today stands out in bold relief, both in greatness and in grandness, and it may be of more than a passing interest to those, who scan the pages of this Year Book, to recount the names of some of the men and women, who, for the past forty years, have watched Seattle grow, and who, in a feeble way, have kept in calling distance of the grand procession.

William H. Dixon, grand son of a pioneer family, has not only been here for all these years, but even longer, being a native son. He now lives on a part of the six-acre tract purchased by his grand-parents before he was born. He partakes much of the Seattle Spirit and is an outstanding figure in the community. He is a government post office employee with business connections in addition to his daily labors. His wife (Miss Johnson) has likewise lived in the city the allotted forty years.

Mrs. Carrie (Dixon) Black, like her brother, W. H. Dixon, is of the pioneer Grose family, who cast their lot in Seattle, when it was but a village in the wilderness. She is but a few days beyond the forty-year line and her life has been one long Seattle dream. Like her brother, she lives on a part of the old grandparent homestead tract. She is engaged in business and partakes greatly of the push and pluck of her ancestors.

James G. Gayles shows none the worse for his forty-year wear in the Queen City of the Northwest, he and his wife having come thither about the time of the "big fire." During all these years he has been engaged in the barber business and has served many of the leading business men of the city, both in a secular and religious way. His shop at present is located in the business center of the city, and he continues to enjoy a lucrative trade. He has splendid home surroundings as well as environments and is one of the few men of the city, who not only makes good, but keeps it better. He was born in Louisiana.

John T. Gayton, Sr., a Mississippian by birth, but came to Seattle long enough ago to become a full fledged member of this self constituted club. His early calling for a livelihood threw him into daily contact with the leading white spirits of this city, who soon took the Mississippi out of him and transformed

him into a real thorough going Westerner. Some twenty-five years ago he was appointed a bailiff in the Federal Court of this district, which position he has ever since retained, and so closely connected has he been with the various federal judges that, he is now referred to as, the right bower of His Honor. He has reared a brilliant family, each of whom is making a mark in the community looking to the betterment of mankind. He has husbanded his earnings, which will enable him to live in peace and happiness, when he retires from the court on a government pension. His wife is hardly eligible for this age limit organization, but very near it.

John F. Cragwell, who in early Seattle days enjoyed the distinction of being the most handsome tonsorial artist in the city, irrespective of race, color or creed and still looks well. He almost from the time he started into business enjoyed the friendship of the leading business men as well as the Republican politicians, which, for a time, made him the foremost man of the Queen City. Though less politically active now than in former years, yet he still has many strong friends among the local men, who do things, and a recommendation from Cragwell means much to the holder of such. He is the proprietor of a well equipped shop in the heart of the city and does a more or less lucrative business. He owns much realty and will have considerable to leave to his children when the final call comes to him. He is a Virginian by birth.

John L. Gibson, a plain podder, always moving along in the even tenor of his way, making little, but saving all, is a member of the honor roll of the forty-year club and a most worthy one at that. Whatever he has earned he has either saved in cash or invested in real estate, and once his, forever his. Though not always so counted, yet he is one of the best financially fixed men in the city. With no enemies and many friends he is an ideal citizen and especially to those who know him best. He is an employee of the City of Seattle and almost at the age to inherit a life pension. He is a North Carolinian by birth.

I. I. Walker must have early become obsessed of General Wanderlust for, when only in his middle teens, he left his native heaths in South Carolina and went to North Carolina, where he remained long enough to take a finishing course in a local university. Again the bug got busy and, for a time, it held him in Seattle, but he early joined the gold rush to Alaska, where he remained nine years, but the cat came back. Still restless he moved across Lake Washington, where he seems to have lost his arch enemy, and for the past decade he, all by his lonely, sits and sits and dreams and dreams of the past. For years he lead in all Seattle social activities and his good work is still remembered by the old timers and heard about by the newcomers. He is the owner of a twenty-acre ranch and on it he enjoys the evening shadows of a once active life.

Old timers, who will read this review will scowl about it not including the names of many, who have been overlooked, but the writer, like some of the others herein mentioned, has been on earth so long that his memory is not as keen as it was a hundred years ago and the overlooked ones, let us hope, will charge it to dotage rather than to delevtry.