**Colonel Prosser in the Pacific Northwest**

After fighting in the Civil War and serving as a U.S. Congressman in Tennessee’s Reconstruction government, Prosser surveyed land and homesteaded in the Pacific Northwest.

In the 1880s he married Flora Thornton when he was 46, she was 19. They homesteaded in a community that still bears its founder’s name, Prosser.

Prosser also served in the 1889 Washington State Constitutional Convention, as mayor of North Yakima, on a Harbor line commission, and as president of the Washington State Historical Society. He wrote a book on the history of the Puget Sound region as well.

**Early Lives, the Civil War And Reconstruction**

Both Prosser and Conover were born in the northeastern United States. Conover trained as a doctor and Prosser joined the gold rush fervor in California, where his political career was cut short by the war.

**Who were Carpetbaggers?**

Carpetbaggers were northern whites who had moved to the South after the Civil War and later attained office as Republicans in the Reconstruction governments there.

For decades historians decried the actions of all carpetbaggers. More recently, though, historians concur that most of these men in fact served freedmen and the South nobly. Conversely, early historians praised western pioneers unreservedly, saying that these settlers brought progress and civilization to untamed lands. “New Western” historians have reexamined this legacy more critically and with other cultures in mind. Both Conover and Prosser lived these events.

(I am most indebted to the staff at WSU MASC for the photos and items and to my advisor, Richard Hume.)

**Dr. Conover in the Pacific Northwest**

Conover brought medicine to Union soldiers as well as to the various states in which he practiced. After the war, he moved to Florida and was elected a the United States Senator.

He moved to Washington in 1889 to practice medicine at a quarantine station. In 1890 he and three others selected the site for the state’s land-grant college, Pullman Washington.

**Eggs and Cabbage?**

Conover was appointed the first president of the board of regents of the Washington Agricultural College and School of Science, today’s WSU. He reprimanded students who were so unhappy that the first president, George Lilley, had been fired, that they threw rotten cabbage and eggs at the second president and a regent.