

Political Biography of GEORGE F. CHRISTENSEN

**Born: Feb. 26, 1876 in Minneapolis, Minnesota
(Compiled by George Christensen, son of
George F. Christensen - May of 1994)**

MOVED TO RITZVILLE, WASHINGTON IN 1898, AFTER RETURNING FROM THE GOLD RUSH IN ALASKA.

1900 - BECAME A PRECINCT COMMITTEEMAN FOR THE ADAMS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

1900-1908 ELECTED AND SERVED AS ADAMS COUNTY CLERK.

1904-1913 SERVED AS DEMOCRATIC STATE COMMITTEEMAN FROM ADAMS COUNTY.

1900-1928 SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE WASHINGTON STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE.

1918-1922 SERVED AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WASHINGTON STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE.

1922-1928 SERVED AS THE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE.

1923-1927 ELECTED AND SERVED AS STATE SENATOR IN THE WASHINGTON STATE SENATE.

1931-1933 ELECTED AND SERVED AS STATE SENATOR IN THE WASHINGTON STATE SENATE.

1908 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD IN DENVER COLORADO FOR THE NOMINATION OF BRYAN FOR PRESIDENT.

1912 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD BALTIMORE MARYLAND FOR THE NOMINATION OF WOODROW WILSON FOR PRESIDENT.

1916 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD ST.

LOUIS MISSOURI FOR THE NOMINATION OF WOODROW WILSON FOR PRESIDENT.

- 1920 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE NOMINATION OF COX FOR PRESIDENT AND FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT FOR VICE PRESIDENT.
- 1924 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD IN NEW YORK CITY FOR THE NOMINATION OF DAVIS FOR PRESIDENT.
- 1928 - ELECTED AS DELEGATE TO DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION HELD IN HOUSTON TEXAS FOR THE NOMINATION OF ALFRED E. SMITH FOR PRESIDENT.
- 1920 - WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE WASHINGTON STATE CAMPAIGN FOR COX FOR PRESIDENT AND FDR FOR VICE PRESIDENT. TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY WITH FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT DURING WESTERN CAMPAIGN.
- 1928 - CHRISTENSEN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO ALFRED SMITH FOR NOMINATION AS THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT. UPON THE NOMINATION OF SMITH FOR PRESIDENT, CHRISTENSEN HEADED THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST. HAD SMITH BEEN ELECTED, CHRISTENSEN WAS MENTIONED AS THE LIKELY NOMINEE FOR POSTMASTER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.
- 1928 - WAS THE WASHINGTON STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE'S CHOICE AS CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR IN ELECTION TO BE HELD IN 1932.
- 1929 - DISSAPOINTED BY THE SOUTH'S REJECTION OF SMITH, HE RESIGNED FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. HE FELT THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY SHOWED BIGOTRY IN THEIR REJECTION OF A CATHOLIC FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.
- 1932 - JOINED THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.
- 1934 - RAN AS A REPUBLICAN FOR STATE SENATOR AND WAS DEFEATED.
- 1936 - RAN AS A REPUBLICAN FOR LT. GOVERNOR AND WAS DEFEATED.
- 1940 - RAN AS A REPUBLICAN FOR LT. GOVERNOR AND WAS DEFEATED.
- 1943-1945 ELECTED AND SERVED IN THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE AS A REPUBLICAN.

1947-1949 ELECTED AND SERVED IN THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE AS A REPUBLICAN.

1944, 1948
and 1952 WAS ELECTED AND ATTENDED THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION AS AN ALTERNATE DELEGATE.

AT THE TIME GEORGE CHRISTENSEN WAS SERVING AS STATE SENATOR IN THE WASHINGTON STATE SENATE, HE WAS THE LONE DEMOCRAT. HOWEVER, AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF GOVERNOR HARTLEY AND HIS POLICIES, HE WORKED AND WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING MONEY APPROPRIATED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT HIGHWAY FROM WASHOUGAL TO WIND RIVER.

HE WAS A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF ALFRED E. SMITH DURING HIS DEMOCRATIC DAYS. SMITH WAS A ROMAN CATHOLIC. BECAUSE OF THE CATHOLICISM ISSUE, THE SOLID DEMOCRATIC SOUTH WENT AGAINST SMITH AND CAUSED HIS DEFEAT. DURING THE CAMPAIGN, THE LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE KLU KLUX KLAN, WHICH MET REGULARLY IN THE STEVENSON METHODIST CHURCH, SENT TELEPHONE THREATS TO CHRISTENSEN'S FAMILY.

IN 1920, HE WAS MENTIONED PROMINENTLY AS LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR. HE DID NOT CHOOSE TO RUN.

IN 1928, HE WAS THE CHOICE OF HIS PARTY REGULARS TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR IN 1932. HIS RESIGNATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN 1929 OPENED THE FIELD FOR OTHER CANDIDATES AND CLARENCE D. MARTIN BECAME THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE AND WAS ELECTED GOVERNOR IN 1932 AND AGAIN IN 1936.

BEYOND HIS DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTY CAREER, HE SERVED FOR MANY YEARS AS MAYOR OF STEVENSON AND AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF DISTRICT #3. HE ALSO SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE MID-COLUMBIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DURING THE 1930's.

IN 1932, CLARENCE MARTIN WAS IN A CLOSE RACE FOR THE NOMINATION OF GOVERNOR. YAKIMA COUNTY BECAME CRUCIAL TO THE NOMINATION. ALTHOUGH CHRISTENSEN NO LONGER WAS A MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND HAD JOINED THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, UPON MARTIN'S REQUEST, MET IN YAKIMA WITH MARTIN TO PERSUADE THE AREA'S KEY DEMOCRATS TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT MARTIN. MARTIN PROCEEDED TO CARRY YAKIMA COUNTY AND WIN THE NOMINATION.

WHILE SERVING AS STATE SENATOR DURING THE TWENTIES AND EARLY THIRTY'S, CHRISTENSEN WAS ABLE TO GET THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON STATE HIGHWAY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT LOCATED IN STEVENSON. THE LOCATION WAS AT THE WEST END OF VANCOUVER AVENEUE NOW OCCUPIED BY THE SKAMANIA COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT.

HISTORY OF BANK OF STEVENSON

By George Christensen - May 1994

1. ORGANIZED IN AUGUST OF 1907.
2. BEGAN OPERATIONS IN JANUARY 1908, WILLIAM P. CHRISTENSEN CASHIER, DOING BUSINESS IN RENTED QUARTERS.
3. BUILT FIRST BANK BUILDING IN 1908 AND BEGAN DOING BUSINESS AT THAT LOCATION IN 1909. IT WAS THE PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF THE BANK UNTIL 1956.
3. WILLIAM P. CHRISTENSEN, CASHIER OF BANK SUFFERED A STROKE IN 1912, AND DUE TO POOR HEALTH, GEORGE F. CHRISTENSEN JOINED THE BANK IN 1913 TO REPLACE HIM AS CP6VIER.
4. GEORGE CHRISTENSEN WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT IN 1920.
5. 1932 WAS THE YEAR OF MANY BANK FAILURES. THE BANK OF STEVENSON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GEORGE CHRISTENSEN AVOIDED EVER CLOSING ITS DOORS, EXCEPT DURING THE REQUIRED CLOSING BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THIS WAS POSSIBLE DUE TO A PLAN DEVELOPED TO OBTAIN THE APPROVAL OF THE MAJOR DEPOSITORS OF THE BANK TO TAKE OVER THE OWNERSHIP AND PAYOFF THE LOSSES AND CONTINUE IN BUSINESS. IT PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND THERE WAS NO LOSS TO ANY DEPOSITOR.
6. IN 1948, GEORGE CHRISTENSEN JR., JOINED THE BANK IN THE POSITION OF VICE PRESIDENT.
7. GEORGE JR. WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT IN 1952 IN WHICH CAPACITY HE CONTINUED UNTIL 1984.
8. AS TIME WENT ON AND BUSINESS INCREASED IT BECAME NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE MORE SPACE IN ORDER TO CONDUCT THE BUSINESS. IN 1956 A NEW BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED ON 2nd STREET. THE ORIGINAL BANK BUILDING WAS LOCATED ON FIRST STREET CLOSE TO THE OLD BUSINESS DISTRICT OF STEVENSON. THROUGH TIME THE TOWN HAD MOVED UP THE HILL AND THUS THE NEW BANK BUILDING MOVED ALONG WITH THE TOWN.
9. IN 1962, A BRANCH OFFICE WAS OPENED IN NORTH BONNEVILLE. BECAUSE OF SERVING THIS ADDITIONAL AREA THE NAME OF THE BANK OF

STEVENSON WAS CHANGED TO COLUMBIA GORGE BANK. LATER IN 1969 A BRANCH WAS OPENED IN BINGEN AND LATER ANOTHER BRANCH OFFICE WAS OPENED IN CARSON IN 1974.

10. ON APRIL 1, 1984 THE COLUMBIA GORGE BANK WAS ACQUIRED BY THE