



# Ella Wintler

## Quick Facts

**Birth:** August 10, 1885  
Vancouver, Washington

**Death:** April 17, 1975  
Vancouver, Washington

**Occupation:** Teacher

**Party Affiliation:** Republican

**Years served:** 1939-41, 1943-45,  
1947-49, 1951-64

**Office:** Representative

**District:** 17 (Clark County) 1939  
49 (Clark County) 1959

## Personal:

Ella Wintler grew up and lived, except for brief periods of her life, in Vancouver, Washington, the last of nine children in a pioneer family. Her father, John Jacob Wintler, was an immigrant from Switzerland and was employed as a harness maker. Her mother, Sarah Butler Wintler, is noted for having driven a span of mules from Carthage, Missouri to Vancouver in 1878.

She attended Central and Columbian schools and was one of twelve graduates of Vancouver High School in 1903. Wintler began her teaching career in Lake Shore School, a one-room school house teaching eight grades. She also taught at Charter Oak and Rock Creek schools. She went on to attend the University of Washington, graduating with A.B and A. M. degrees in 1910. She taught German in Mount Vernon until 1916, and then returned home to teach German, English and social studies in her former high school. She retired in 1950.

Wintler was first elected in 1938 and was known as a “staunch Republican.” Although a strong Party supporter, she reflected upon retirement that, “Most legislators vote party, but I didn’t. I voted the way I thought was best for the public.” She considered herself a moderate: “Our Clark County in the main is a moderate county. We have a PUD. As a citizen of Clark County, I’ve always voted to support the PUD. Now, over in eastern Washington, if you’re for anything but private power, you’re practically considered a radical—around Spokane, for instance. I remember a young man from Spokane—a young upstart—introduced a bill once that would have throttled PUDs. So I voted against it. I can remember him getting so mad when it was defeated! He came back by my desk and as he passed he said, “Thanks for your vote!”

Wintler began her service in the still turbulent years of the late Depression. The IWW, called the “I Won’t Works” by Miss Wintler were still active in the state and several legislators were reputed Communists. She was one of only 24 Republican members of the House in a sea of 75 Democrats. She recalled, “We Republicans were caucusing in one of the conference rooms, wondering what we were going to do. There was a knock on the door and one of the Communists came in and said they would help us elect anyone we wanted if we would join in with them. We turned him down flat!” Communist influence still held some sway in 1943 when she was given a surprise appointment to the Military Affairs Committee by Speaker Ed Reilly. “I told him I don’t know much about military affairs, but I do love a parade. But I didn’t think that should qualify me for that committee!” The Speaker replied that he had given her that assignment because he trusted her to vote against the Communists who were on the committee. She continued to serve on that committee for many years.

Wintler’s career as an elected official followed the vicissitudes of her Party. She noted, “I used to lose against Roosevelt and then win again in off years. I ran in ’48 against Truman and was defeated again. At that time we used to have a circle at the top

of the ballot to vote straight ticket. Many people, you know, feared that if they crossed to the other ticket, they'd lose their voting privilege." She lost her last race for office during the Democratic sweep against Barry Goldwater.

Still, she served ten sessions, of two years each. She was recognized for her long service by her fellow representatives in 1963 when she was elected Speaker Pro Tempore of House. Her only opportunity to preside came when the Speaker was late and she was called upon to call the session to order. She was given an inscribed gavel when she was elected, but she admitted that, "I didn't like to use the gavel." (Information summarized from Irene Spencer Holbrook, *The Careers of Ella Wintler* and Neil Modie, *Voters 'Retire' Ella in Johnson's Landslide But She'll Keep Active, Treasure Memories*)

#### **Education:**

- University of Washington, B.A. and M.A.

#### **Community Service:**

- Association for Retarded Children
- Fort Vancouver Historical Society
- Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
- PTA
- Salmon Creek Community Club

#### **Affiliations:**

- Delta Zeta Sorority
- Eastern Star, Matron of Martha Washington Chapter No. 42
- Republican Central Committee of Clark County
- White Shriner of Vancouver, Priestess of Bethany No. 5
- Vancouver Business and Professional Women's Club
- Washington Wild Life League

#### **Awards:**

- Recipient of first Vancouver Jaycee Good Government Award, 1952
- Award of Merit, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1954
- Woman of Achievement Award, Vancouver Business and Professional Women's Club, 1963
- There is a park in Vancouver, WA named after Ella Wintler

#### **Legislative & State Service:**

**Committees:** (1939) Appropriations; Education; Enrollment; State Charitable Institutions; State Library (1943) State Granted, School and Tide Lands, chair; Appropriations; Education; Medicine, Dentistry, Pure Food and Drugs; Military and Naval Affairs; State Charitable Institutions (1947) Forestry, State Lands and Buildings, chair; Appropriations; Education and Libraries; Memorials (1951) Appropriations; Education and Libraries; Elections; Engrossment and Enrollment (1953) License, chair; Appropriations; Education and Libraries; State Government (1955) Appropriations; Commerce, Professions and transportation; Education; Public Utilities; State Institutions and Buildings (1957) Education; Social Security and Public Assistance; State Institutions and Buildings; Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Appropriations (1959) Education; Licenses; Social Security and Public Assistance; State Institutions and Youth Control; Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Appropriations (1961) State Government, vice-chair; Education; State Institutions and Youth Control; State Resources, Forestry, and Lands; Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Appropriations (1963) Education and Libraries; Public Institutions; State Government, Military and Veterans Affairs, and Civil Defense; Ways and Means

#### **House Bills sponsored:**

##### **(1939 session)**

None sponsored

##### **(1943 session)**

28-Relating to sale of wine

Went to first reading

341-Relating to extra-hazardous employment

Signed by Governor Langlie

**(1947 session)**

52-Relating to rural library district budgets

Signed by Governor Wallgren

178-Relating to Bachelor Slough dam

Signed by Governor Wallgren

369-Relating to waste forest materials

Went to first reading

**(1951 session)**

333-Permitting the enlargement of union school districts

Went to third reading

514-Relating to permits for the operation of a for hire vehicle upon highways

Went to first reading

535-Relating to the publication of proposed city charters by freeholders

Went to third reading

**(1953 session)**

257-Defining causes for refusal to renew teachers' contracts

Went to first reading

410-Authorizing school directors to buy through governmental purchasing agency

Went to first reading

428-Relating to drivers' license fees

Went to third reading

**(1955 session)**

186-Providing that short firearm license fees shall be paid to the state treasurer through the director of licenses

Went to third reading

187-Permitting the state treasurer to appoint more than one deputy

Went to third reading

226-Requiring escheat collections be remitted to the state treasurer by the tax commission

Went to third reading

227-Providing that the director of licenses shall remit aircraft registrations fees and excise taxes to the state treasurer

Went to third reading

229-Requiring that the director of licenses deposit receipts from sale of motor vehicle licenses, excise taxes and operators' licenses with the state treasurer

Signed by Governor Langlie

314-Relating to the collection of certain state fees and remittances to the state treasurer

Went to third reading

415-Permitting cities and towns to acquire and operate cemeteries

Signed by Governor Langlie

438-Prohibiting waiver of the three-day marriage license waiting period wherein both parties are not twenty-one years of age

Went to first reading

463-Placing grocery store employees under the industrial insurance act

Went to third reading

470-Permitting the tax commission to reveal certain information regarding taxpayers to city governments

Went to third reading

**(1957 session)**

138-Extending employment security coverage to include commercial food processors

Signed by Governor Rosellini

227- Relating to port districts

Signed by Governor Rosellini

289-Relating to mentally ill children in juvenile correctional institutions

Went to third reading

292- Relating to supervision of Maple Lane School

Went to third reading

306-Providing for state competitive scholarships

Went to first reading

532-Authorizing establishment, licensing and regulating of boarding homes for aged

Went to first reading

**(1959 session)**

111-Allowing five or seven member trustee boards for inter-county rural library districts

Signed by Governor Rosellini

137-Relating to division of forest reserve moneys

Went to first reading

145-Crating Columbia river gorge commission

Signed by Governor Rosellini

198-Repealing trading stamp licenses law

Went to first reading

219-Amending the employment security act

Signed by Governor Rosellini

483-Extending highway No. 1S

Went to first reading

499-Naming Paradise Point state park

Went to second reading

**(1961 session)**

87-An Act relating to access to public and state forest lands; authorizing the acquisition of access; providing for means of facilitating acquisition and for disposal of access; authorizing use of access by specified persons subject to reasonable conditions; authorizing the department of natural resources to create, maintain and administer an access road revolving fund; providing for reimbursement of costs for acquisition of access; and declaring an emergency.

Signed by Governor Rosellini

94-Increasing amount of deposit or bond to assure compliance with forest practices

Signed by Governor Rosellini

96-Providing insurance for state employees while on certain aircraft flights

Went to third reading

102-Relaitng to price paid to commissioner of public lands by highway commission for highway materials

Signed by Governor Rosellini

268-Making an appropriation for study of highway along Columbia River

Went to first reading

270-Creating Washington state council on aging

Went to third reading

271-Relaing to county, city and regional planning

Signed by Governor Rosellini

403-Regulating operation of vehicles by minors

Went to first reading

533-Relating to investigating park sites within the Columbia River gorge

Went to third reading

610-Making appropriation for physical education facilities at state school for blind

Went to first reading

663-Authorizing county assessor and tax commission to conduct audits for valuation and establishing assessors' school

Went to first reading

664-Establishing procedures to pay tax commission for valuation assistance to counties

Went to first reading

665-Establishing a county assessment board and providing procedures for equalization

Went to first reading

666-Authorizing tax commission to charge for exceptional audits and examinations

Went to first reading

667-Authorizing school districts to purchase non-educational items through general administration department

Went to first reading

668-Requiring school buses to be purchased through general administration department

Went to first reading

669-Establishing a management analysis division in central budget agency

Went to first reading

670-Establishing a state and local fiscal planning board to study debt administration and fiscal policy

Went to first reading

**(1963 session)**

74-Abolishing the public assistance committee

Went to third reading

75-Extending vocational rehabilitation for the non-disabled to persons not on public assistance

Signed by Governor Rosellini

280-Authorizing special instruction in lieu of course in Washington history and government

Signed by Governor Rosellini

344-Revising route of secondary highway No. 1U

Went to first reading

406-Allowing wife to sue separately from husband in personal injury actions

Went to first reading

458-Relocating portion of secondary state highway No. 1T

Went to first reading

583-Removing women from specific jury exemptions

Went to first reading

606-Authorizing superintendent of public instruction to establish centers for blind and deaf

Went to first reading

**Extraordinary Session**

14-Allowing increased number of community colleges

Went to first reading

39-Regulating gas pump price posting

Went to first reading

59-Relating to use of federal forest revenues in joint school districts

Went to first reading

**House Joint Memorials sponsored:**

**(1959 session)**

6-Requesting that Portland-Vancouver interstate bridge be retained as a toll-free bridge

Passed

24-Petitioning Congress to establish county road No. 16 in Clark County as part of federal forest highway system

Went to third reading

**House Joint Resolutions sponsored:**

**(1939 session)**

6-Relating to the Columbia Gorge area

Went to first reading

**(1943 session)**

7-Relating to jurisdiction of rights-of-way within Vancouver Barracks, Washington

Signed by Governor Langlie

Passed

**(1951 session)**

19-Amending Constitution relating to cities of first class and providing for publication of proposed charters

Went to first reading

**(1961 session)**

32-Amending Constitution relating to state budgetary controls

Went to first reading

33-Amending Constitution to distinguish between valuation process and imposition of tax

Went to first reading

34-Amending Constitution to provide for annual sessions of legislature

Went to first reading

**(1963 session)**

21-Informing public by joint resolution of statutes dealing with wage discrimination due to sex and penalties thereof

Went to third reading

**Extraordinary Session**

4-Proposing constitutional amendment relating to apportionment and districting of legislative districts

Passed

9-Authorizing annual sessions of the legislature

Went to first reading

**House Concurrent Resolutions sponsored:  
(1961 session)**

10-Directing legislative council to study timber evaluation and taxation problems

Passed

**Leadership, Positions & Appointments:**

- Appointed to the State Expenditures Advisory Council by Governor Rosellini, 1959
- Speaker Pro Tempore, 1963-65
- Attended National Conference of State Legislative Leaders in Boston and participated on a panel titled "Improving the Public Image of the Legislator," 1963
- Vancouver Planning Commission, n.d.

**Sources:**

Articles:

- Beck, Bob, "Longtime Local GOP Leader Dies," *Columbian*, April 18, 1975
- Holbrook, Irene Spencer. "The Careers of Ella Wintler", *Clark County History*. Fort Vancouver Historical Society, Camas-Washougal Post-Record, Camas, 1973
- Modie, Neil, "Voters 'Retire' Ella in Johnson's Landslide But She'll Keep Active, Treasure Memories," *Columbian*, November 16, 1964
- "DAR Grants Ella Wintler High Honor," *Columbian*, February 3, 1954
- "Miss Wintler is Named to Council," *Columbian*, September 10, 1959
- "Meet the Candidates," *Columbian*, August 30, 1962

Book:

- *Ray Moore: An Oral History*, interviewed by Sharon Boswell, Washington State Oral History Program, Office of the Secretary of State, 1999