

Recommended Reading

This work is primarily a surveyor research resource, to understand the Deputy Surveyors they are retracing. However, some people not in the profession might find parts of this book interesting and informative, and here we will attempt to aim the reader to those sections.

First, scroll through the Table of Contents to get a general idea of what is included. (Any Volume v-vi)

Second, Read the “Preface” and “Brief History of the Surveyor General’s Office” to lay a platform for understanding what is behind the stories and biographies. Most people are unaware of the politics and corruption that plagued the General Land Office for decades, and how that played out in the survey of the public lands. The discussion begins with the founding of the Colonies and continues from a surveying perspective through the Revolution and Western expansion, finally ending at Oregon and Washington. (Volume 1, 1-28)

The Donation Land Claim Act, Homesteads, Mineral Surveys, Indian Allotments, Railroad Grants, Townsites, Crime Syndicate, and Examinations are all discussed.

Third, go to Demographics to get a flavor of the lifespan, politics, education, cause of death, and generic rating of the surveyors. (Volume 6, p. 686)

Fourth and finally, start to read the individual biographies of the surveyors, initially based on the following recommended list. There are heroes and scoundrels, professionals and blunderers, and others ranging from Governors to fictitious individuals and criminals.

As you read each biography, it may be helpful to open two windows, with the biography in one window and the photo table from volumes 3 and 4 in another window. Many individuals have several photos of themselves, their family, graves, named features, and homes listed in the photo table.

Fifth, after reading several biographies, browse through the various appendices to get a sense of the research data presented. If inspired, visit a gravesite and send the author a photo and Gps location. Double click on the GLO Places.kmz file to open Google Earth and explore the Waymarks.

Recommended Biographies

Name	From	To	Character	Subjects
Archer, Finch Robert	1905	1913	Warden, McNeil Island	Indian Allotments
Ashley, John Kossuth	1858	1891	Benson Syndicate Surveyor, fraud	Benson Syndicate, gross error
Ballard, Charles Henry	1886	1934	U of W Grad	Mineral Surveyor, miner, Ruby and Hart Pass
Barber, Amherst W.	1885	1910	Whistle blower, examiner	Benson Syndicate, Examiner, Alaska
Beatty, James L.	1894	1894	civil engineer	died on survey
Benson, John A.	1873	1910	Benson Syndicate	fraud, politics, reform
Betts, Floyd D.	1906	1940	Dean of Alaska Surveyors	Denali
Bonneville, Benjamin L. E.	1854	1854	Army General	Fort Vancouver survey
Breckinridge, Joseph C.	1886	1889	Democrat Surveyor General	Political ancestry
Briggs, Edson D.	1873	1902	prolific surveyor	Nez Perce allotments
Brock, Columbus M.	1884	1891	incompetent criminal	land fraud
Brophy, John C.	1893	1895	Examiner	lost in woods
Brown, Freeman W.	1853	1894	poor surveyor	used compassman
Brown, Robert E. L.	1889	1890	"Barbarian Brown"	Transvaal, heliograph, cannon
Brown, Webster E	1893	1910		Alaska Explorer, tragic death
Byars, William H.	1871	1910	prolific, not so good	pony express, Surveyor General
Byles, Charles H.	1869	1875	smart, ambitious	father of Montesano
Campbell, William B.	1853	1860	founder of Wasco surveying Campbell Clan	Wasco County pioneer
Carlton, William H.	1855	1861	honorable	Cascades RR surveys, San Francisco
Cartee, La Fayette	1853	1880	honorable, college grad	political payback, S. G. of Idaho
Cavanaugh, Irena	1889	1891	daughter of S. G.	buried at West Point

Chapman, Arthur I.	1860	1892	tough, friend of Chief Joseph, went with him to Washington, D. C.	financed Contract he had to resurvey
Chapman, Huston I.	1870	1870	brother of Arthur	assassinated in front of Billy the Kid in New Mexico Range War
Chenoweth, Justin	1855	1872	slightly crazy, intelligent	namesake of Chenoweth at The Dalles
Clarke, David D.	1872	1875	dedicated professional	detailed accounting of his surveys from diaries.
Clarke, Harry A.	1884	1891	dishonest attorney for Benson Syndicate	began crime career in Colorado, bribed Washington Legislator
de Lacey, Walter W.	1855	1859	engineer/explorer of trails roads and RRs	Mullen Road, Yellowstone Park, Montana Initial Point.
Eastwick, Philip G.	1876	1876	professional engineer	railroads, Corps of Engineers, died in Panama
Elwell, William E.	1893	1893	poor surveyor	examinations without finding any problems, rejected surveys, left town.
Evans, Elwood	1861	1862	complete politician	mayor of Olympia, wrote several history books
Farnsworth, Levi	1855	1872	poor surveyor, politician	used compassmen, up to 1000 feet of error
Fortman, William J. H.	1895	1904	finished Naval Academy	Port Townsend, married Indian, Republic
Frost, Thomas A.	1855	1855	young engineer	died of typhoid before correcting Contract 3
Galbraith, Isaac M.	1884	1897	poor surveyor	up from the ranks, many times a compassman
Gardiner, George W.	1883	1883	the father, Benson Surveyor	land fraud
Gardiner, George J.	1890	1910	the son, possible Benson Surveyor	land fraud, Okanogan Surveyor
Gardner, George C.	1854	1854	son of S. G.	Mexico Boundary, Indian common law wife, Canadian Boundary
Garfielde, Selucius	1866	1867	scoundrel, Congressman	Surveyor General
Gile, Henry S.	1858	1885	good businessman	Chinook, Ilwaco, oysters

Haas, Nathan	1910	1910	Mineral Surveyor	tragic death
Henry, Anson G.	1858	1865	ultimate political, poor surveyor	personal friend of Lincoln, Surveyor General, tragic death
Henry, Francis	1862	1865	political, son in law of S. G.	poet, song writer, miner, sometimes surveyor, wrote state song, "Acres of Clams"
Holcomb, Charles H.	1883	1883	Benson employee	licensed surveyor in CA, working for the City of S. F.
Homan, Charles A.	1893	1900	honorable Army surveyor	surety that took over Contract after surveyor left
Hull, James K.	1883	1883	Benson Surveyor	fictional surveyor, but surveyed by a real compassman
Hunt, Clair A.	1899	1921	Surveyor General	Allotting Agent on Colville, Indian photos and artifacts
Hunt, Dominick	1856	1856	surveyed Whidbey Island	killed on survey by Indians
Hunt, Joseph	1852	1854	Michigan Surveyor	killed on way to Contract when steamer blew up
Iverson, Oliver B.	1878	1903	used many undisclosed compassmen	founded Stanwood, poor surveyor by choice, excellent writer in newspapers
Ives, Butler	1851	1854	Michigan surveyor, good surveyor	arrived in 1851, many Contracts, CA/NV Border, Central Pacific RR to SF, tragic death
Ives, William	1851	1852	good surveyor, Michigan surveyor	first survey in WA, home in 1852
Jameson, William	1872	1878	poor surveyor, land fraud	many surveys with gross distortion
Kinnaird, David W.	1899	1899	Examiner of Surveys, charged with taking bribes	86 examinations
Lisher, Manford G.	1893	1896	local surveyor, problems with special examiners	Contract rejected over minor issues that Lisher had appealed

Major, Daniel G.	1863	1863	Masters in Astronomy from Georgetown	OR/WA Border, work refused by others for low pay
Mann, James L.	1883	1884	Benson Surveyor, truly fictitious	1883 survey deemed fraudulent after the fact. No resurvey because Mann had been paid. 1884 Contract rejected.
Martin, Henry B.	1887	1888	first Special Examiner	examined 29 Contracts in the NW, including Benson Contracts
Mayre, William B.	1892	1892	poor surveyor, abandoned survey to surety, land fraud	jumped bail, Multnomah county Surveyor
Maxon, Hamilton J. G.	1860	1861	Maxon Massacre, insubordination in Indian War, political payoff	imprisoned Supreme Court Justice
McAndrew, Alexander	1870	1883	poor surveyor	many times compassman, good resurvey of Vancouver
McCoy, John L.	1883	1883	Benson Surveyor, real person	big ranch in Wyoming
McCoy, Marion P.	1903	1903	examiner of surveys that went to jail for embezzlement	college grad, 200 townships in OK, examiner in WA & OR
McMicken, William C.	1873	1898	WA Surveyor General, honorable	survived Benson Syndicate era unscathed
McQuinn, John A.	1883	1897	Benson Surveyor, real surveyor	Warm Springs, Alaska, Mult. Co. Surveyor
Meeker, Ezra M.	1866	1868	good surveyor, defender of Leschi	Hop King of the World form Puyallup, Oregon Trail travels, Alaska marketing at Dawson
Moody, Zenas F.	1872	1872	Governor of OR, early surveyor in OR	began in 1851, business in the Dalles in 1871, many Contracts
Murphy, Matthew O.	1855	1858	good surveyor, refused bribe	many Contracts, children all went to college
Navarre, Ignatius A.	1874	1910	lawyer, long time surveyor, used acknowledged compassmen	lived at Chelan a long time

Nelson, Clarence L.	1907	1908	not married, career USGS surveyor	WA/ID Border, SF earthquake, Alaska
Newsom, John W.	1857	1858	good surveyor	father was a friend of Lincoln
Nicholson, Lawson L.	1909	1909	good surveyor	private practice at Tacoma 58 years
Noel, Jacob E.	1890	1891	Naval Academy, court martialed	City Engineer of Tacoma
Nourse, Mathew F.	1907	1914	good surveyor	Indian allotments at Yakima
Ober, Ralph H.	1893	1899	good engineer	graduate of MIT, ASCE, got involved with Galbraith, Aurora Bridge
O'Neel, Albert C.	1895	1896	good surveyor	self taught civil engineer, bridge engineer, engineer for million dollar bridge on Copper River
Ort, Oliver O.	1892	1897	Lafayette graduate, long career	first City Engineer of Centralia, engineer for RR from Napavine to Onalaska, last township rejected
Patterson, Andrew W.	1853	1861	doctor, author, good surveyor	responsible for U of O at Eugene
Pearson, George L.	1874	1874	suicide	Chief Clerk
Pengra, Bynon J.	1861	1865	partisan Surveyor General	received wagon road land grant over Pengra Pass
Phoenix, Charles E.	1906	1906	mining engineer	RR up the Skagit, Claims at Boston Glacier
Plachy, Wencel H.	1883	1884	Benson Surveyor	only partially surveyed townships, elaborate tombstone for wife at Seattle
Plummer, Fred G.	1897	1897	Professor	USGS most of his career, Theosophical Society
Pomeroy, Halsey B.	1895	1895	Rennselaer graduate	tied of typhoid before finishing Contract, partner quit and died of TB soon thereafter
Pulsifer, Clinton F.	1890	1891	poor surveyor	learned surveying as compassman for awful surveyor

Reeves, Rollin J.	1872	1874	U of Michigan graduate	partner of the Speaker of the House, first survey of WA/ID Border, well done, developer of Wilbur
Reynolds, Alexander M.	1907	1907	better author than surveyor	struggled with all his surveys
Riblet, Byron C.	1890	1890	Mineral Surveyor	founder of Riblet Tramway Co., disliked so much that no one claimed his ashes in Spokane
Richardson, Edwin C.	1860	1891	poor but prolific surveyor	34 Contracts with none but the last examined
Sawyer, Charles W.	1884	1884	Benson Surveyor	indicted, but his surveying career went on as CA PLS 120
Scholfield, Socrates	1859	1859	well educated, author	Founded Reedsport, explored Umpqua River
Sheets, James T.	1859	1891	nephew of James Tilton	long career in GLO and RRs, never married, died of TB without finishing last Contract
Shoecraft, Ross P.	1873	1878	poor surveyor	imprisoned for adultery by vengeful wife
Smith, Alleck C.	1858	1861	lawyer, son in law of Anson G. Henry	Supreme Court Justice of Idaho, thanks to Henry, died young of TB
Smith, Isaac W.	1855	1892	good surveyor and engineer, ASCE	never married, astronomer, designed Willamette locks, many RRs and Bull Run Water System, Colonel for South
Smith, Norman R.	1883	1883	son of Victor Smith	played with Todd Lincoln, promoted Port Angeles, platted Nome and surveyed Transalaska RR
Snow, Joseph M.	1872	1900	varied career	long career, but removed as Highway Commissioner for embezzlement
Spearin, Wyndham T.	1892	1893	dishonest	sailed for Peru with a lady and with money owed to crew, died in shipwreck off Mexico

Stretch, Richard H.	1891	1892	outstanding surveyor and engineer	insect collector from Panama to Washington, mineral surveyor, SF City Engineer, many times author
Strong, William C.	1856	1860	WA/OR Supreme Court Judge	Claim at Cathlamet, Indian War, Battleground namesake
Tennant, John A.	1860	1873	Methodist minister, lawyer	Lake Tennant, Whatcom, Orcas Island, Indian wife
Thayer, David C.	1884	1884	Benson Surveyor,	"largely fictitious and fraudulent", fictitious surveyor, 3300 feet off, surveys still the official record
Thompson, David P.	1860	1861	good surveyor, Governor of Idaho	many Contracts in Oregon and Idaho, lawyer
Tilton, James	1854	1854	Major in Mexican War, first WA Surveyor General	Adj. General in Indian War, jailed Supreme Court Justice, NPRR Kalama - Tacoma
Truax, Sewell	1873	1893	Norwich University	early compassman, Indian Wars, Army at Fort Walla Walla and Lapwai, wagon roads
John Trutch	1853	1858	excellent surveyor and engineer	educated in England, Battleground surveys, Canadian Pacific Surveys
Van Vleet, Lewis	1855	1885	good surveyor	long career even as a Dem, Parkersville
Van Winkle, Franklin J.	1901	1903	examiner, indicted	later fraud against women
Ward, Gilbert M. C.	1881	1893	Benson Surveyor	long history of poor surveys, compassmen, timber fraud
Webster, Robert A.	1892	1894	local surveyor	examined, corrected, examined incorrectly
White, Charles A.	1859	1877	good surveyor	friend of Isaac Smith, hired David Clarke, White Pass, victim of Theosophical Society

Whitham, Robert F.	1889	1910	good surveyor, U of Illinois grad.	wagon to Olympia, partner of sister-in-law, the first woman architect grad of U of Illinois, subject of book, Alaska
Whitworth, George F.	1858	1873	Hanover grad., minister	namesake Whitworth College, head of U of W
Yeomans, Francis C.	1892	1892	WA legislator	Examiner, moved to CA after probable inheritance