CADASTRAL SURVEY IN WYOMING

Pay Was Small But— It Was a Good Life

W. R. Bandy spent almost 50 years as an employee of the U.S. Department of the Interior, making public land surveys in the western states. Upon his retirement he was engineering staff officer for Area 3, Bureau of Land Management. He has a life membership as a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

★ ★ ★

By W. R. BANDY

I was in high spirits on that June morning in 1905, as I left my farm home in southwest Missouri to board the train headed for Wyoming. A job on the government survey awaited me there.

My older brother, Elmer, who had joined the survey outfit the year before had told me glowing stories of his work—living in tents, camping out in uninhabited areas, seeing new country almost every day, game and other wild animals running about. Prospect of such a life appealed to me.

Boarding the train, with my basket of fried chicken sandwiches, and with some extra money pinned inside my shirt, I left home on my first long journey. As the Burlington train whistled its way across the plains of Kansas, Nebraska and a corner of Wyoming the houses and fences kept getting farther and farther apart. On the second morning I arrived at Toluca Junction, a red section house in sagebrush prairie 35 miles east of Billings. Toluca, on the Crow Indian Reservation, is where I changed trains to the Cody branch line, running through the Indian Reservation to Garland, Wyo., my destination.

Plains Country

Getting off the train at Toluca, not a house could be seen as I gazed at the low, sagebrush hills. This, and two families of Indians in native costumes sitting flat on the ground in the station yard, made me realize I had arrived in the plains country.

Talking in a low mumble, the Indians glanced furtively at another boy and me as we strolled timidly by. A squaw led her brood to the station water pump and proceeded to wash their faces, using her bare hands. Then, not having anyone to pour water on her hands, she washed her own face by filling her mouth with water and spewing it on her hands.

Later, we all climbed aboard a mixed train, made up of boxcars, a combination express and passenger coach, where we common passengers rode. Bringing up the rear was a Pullman sleeping car, which had been switched to this train at Toluca.

Pulling our train was a small, squat, engine with a large flaring smokestack, puffing clouds of coalblack smoke.

Indians were permitted to ride free on trains crossing their reservation. This morning they appeared to be taking full advantage of the privilege, whole families piling on and off at every stop.

Pryor Gap

We soon entered Pryor Gap, where I received my first close view of the mountains.

This famous defile, according to legend, served as a natural passage way for ancient tribes, who traveled north and south between mountain valleys to the south and the grassy buffalo country to the north.

Strengthening the theory that this was an ancient passageway is the presence of a line of prehistoric stone mounds at regular intervals throughout the length of the gap. The great age of the monuments, which were about 10 feet in diameter and 3 feet high, was indicated by the stunted, gnarled, cedars now growing on them.

Seeing so many new and interesting sights on this last leg of my journey had whetted my curiosity to see, as quickly as possible, the place where I was to work the next few months. About three in the afternoon the engineer blew his whistle signaling the approach to Garland. Rushing to the window as the train rounded a long curve, I got a glimpse of the main business section, which consisted of a half-dozen white frame store buildings on the west side of the main street. On the east side of the main street were a livery stable, feed yards, and some warehouses. The newness of the town, which was only three years old, impressed me.

Upon leaving the train I noticed, just south of the railroad siding, a high railroad trestle and coal chute for use in refueling train engines. Mr. Norton, the station agent, informed me that just south of this trestle was the Brunt Survey camp where I was headed.

Taking my baggage I walked under the trestle to the largest one of a group of tents, where I found Miss Rhoda Huber, the camp cook, busy in the cook tent. Rhoda, a friendly girl in her twenties, extended a hearty welcome, saying they were expecting me.

Canvas Kitchen

Miss Huber informed me that the men, who were all in the field, would return to camp in time for supper, an event that I was looking forward to with pleasure.

Fragrant smells floating up from the roasting beef in the oven and the freshly baked "light" bread on the table had already convinced me that I liked my new temporary home.

This canvas kitchen, a most important adjunct to any survey camp, was provided with a homemade cupboard, or messbox, set on boxes in the back of the tent, and a sheetiron cook stove in front, the lid forming the cook's work table.

Lights for the camp were furnished by tallow candles placed where they would do the most good, many of them being stuck on the tops of catsup bottles. Drinking water, not only for this camp, but also for the whole town of Garland, was brought in tank cars by the railroad company.

Purpose of this cadastral survey, which these surveyors were making, was to divide this unoccupied public domain land into townships and sections. This was the first step necessary in the task of bringing irrigation water to this land and making it available to prospective farmers.

The camp came alive when the field men, about 20 in all, walked into camp. The meal, which seemed one of the best and most satisfying ones I had ever eaten, was served "roundup" style, as were all camp meals. After supper my brother told me I should sleep in one of the bunk tents pitched nearby.

I rolled out my bedroll on the bare ground, as did everyone else in camp, then bedded down for my first night in camp, serenaded by coyotes barking, yapping and howling in every direction.

In those days each employe had his own bedding, towels, toilet paper and such other toilet articles as required. The personal baggage was limited to such articles as could be carried in a bag or seamless sack called a "warbag."

My main objection to a warbag was that everything I wanted to get out of it was always in the bottom. If I needed a clean pair of socks, I would

(Continued on Page 9, Col. 3.)

BREAKFAST IN THE BIG HORNS — Mrs. W. R. Bandy bends over a cook stove as she prepares breakfast at a surveyors' camp in Wyoming's Big Horn Mountain range. Others from left are Bandy; Karl Suhr, George Horner and Howard Pitt. W. R. Bandy photos.

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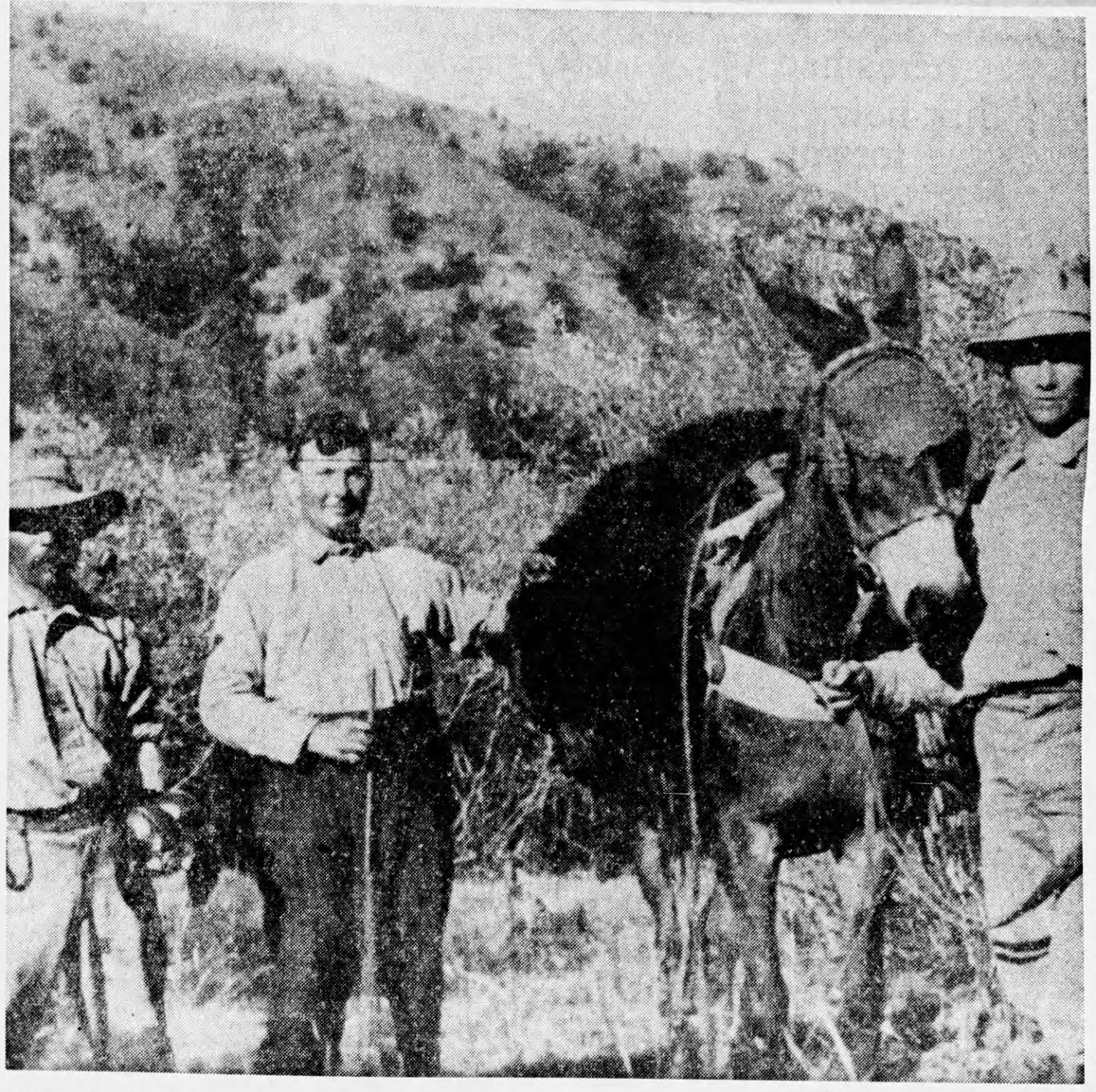
CHECKING INSTRUMENTS—Government survey group tests instruments before starting the day's work. From left are Karl Suhr, the late John A. Keefe of Billings, W. R. Bandy and Ralph Fowler.



MEAT FOR SUPPER — Survey groups of the early 1900s literally lived off the land. Steaks from this bruin were on the menu one night at a camp near Meeteetse, Wyo. Bringing in the bear were Karl Suhr, W. R. Bandy and an unidentified chainman.

Have You Heard About—

Luncheon-Program For Symphony's Women's Committee?
Page 4

What Your Friends Are Doing? See the Brevities
Page 5

The Children's Hour?
Page 10

John L. Clarke in his studio.

Speaks in Wood

By HELEN CLARK

One of Montana's most celebrated artists in wood is Blackfeet Indian John L. Clarke of East Glacier, better known among his Indian people as Cu-Ta-Pu-Ie. It means "The Man Who Talks Not." This name was given John by the Blackfeet when, as a child, he was stricken with scarlet fever that left him deaf.

Hearing not, he could not speak. So he is also a mute, although sounds of pleasure do emerge from his throat.

He is a reader of lips. By sign language he is able to communicate with his fellowmen. For those unable to understand his signs, he writes in English. His penmanship is a work of art.

Carved Panels

Cu-Ta-Pu-Ie is celebrated for his wood carving. The Montana State Historical Society had him carve some panels for the Montana Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building in Helena.

One of these panels measures 13 feet by 4 feet.

Collectors of John's work exist throughout the nation, but perhaps Dr. Gordon Dutt of Great Falls has one of the finest collections. Dr. Dutt plans to bequeath his collection to the Montana State Historical Society so that Montana may have intact samples of John's greatest work.

For many years, hotels in Glacier National Park stocked John's hand-carved bears, goats, elk, deer, panther and other examples of wildlife. Now that years are creeping up on John, his output is not the volume it once was. But—it still retains excellence. Although, now with age, he sometimes resorts to aid from electrical machinery. He did not do this in younger days, when the blade and he were close associates.

Tragic Death

John's people were true pioneers in this country. His mother was a full-blood Blackfeet Indian, his father a half-breed. John's dad operated one of the early toll roads in western Montana. He met a tragic end, killed at the hands of renegade Indians. His death was witnessed by his wife, who was powerless to defend him.

Indians have been among the many subjects that John has carved. His finest works portray them in action, mounted on ponies, bows drawn and arrow laced, as they charge into a herd of buffalo.

He has expertly carved Indians on the move with their horses, travois and dogs. He also enjoys carving pack trains and wilderness drama—a cougar about to spring from a rocky ledge onto a unsuspecting doe or fawn, a bear caught in a trap.

He also enjoys portraying wilderness comedy—an intoxicated bear, accidentally stumbled onto a mountain still, or an infuriated one, victim of a disturbed colony of bees.

Extensive Schooling

John's schooling as a youth was extensive. He attended the State School for the Blind and Deaf at Boulder. He also went to schools in Devil's Lake, N.D., and Milwaukee, Wis.

In his work, John prefers to carve in cottonwood, since it is a soft wood. Yet, some of his finest masterpieces have been done in hard woods. He has done many pieces in maple, such as a mother bear spanking one of her cubs.

John's wife is dead, but his

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 6.)

"A la King"

When a dish on a menu is labeled "a la king," the main ingredient (poultry, meat, or fish) is served in a cream sauce containing green pepper, pimiento and mushrooms.

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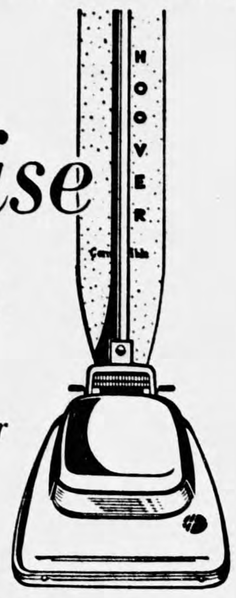

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Small Pay But— A Good Life

(Continued From Page 1.)

ram my arm down in the bag, feeling around for the socks, but encountering instead, such items as gloves, underwear, shirt or perhaps a piece of mosquito netting. After yanking up a few of the unwanted items by mistake, I would give up, emptying the whole lot out on my bed. I threatened to make another opening in the bottom of the bag to save time. As a forerunner of today's fancy toilet case, I preempted a used two-pound Union Leader tobacco tin, in which was kept my Arbuckle Brand razor, shaving stick (soap), shaving brush, hand mirror, needles and thread and a teaspoon of flaxseed my thoughtful mother had given me for use in case I got a grain of sand or some chaff in my eye!

My camp bedroll, which was about standard equipment for the age, included a sugan, double wool blanket, a light cotton blanket and a small pillow, all surrounded by a tarp as a protection from dust, rain or snow.

Samuel W. Brunt, better known as the Colonel, and his son, Arthur, headed up the surveying organization I had joined. The colonel, a land surveyor of long experience, was an elderly man with gray whiskers and a twinkle in his eyes. Being blessed with a jovial disposition, he was the life of the outfit in camp or on the trail. By showing a friendly interest in each of his employes, and inquiring into their general welfare, he kept the morale of the party high.

Prairiedog Towns

This prospective farm land we were surveying was a level, dry, desert, stretching for miles to the west and north from Garland. Not a tree, fence, or anything broke the monotony of the shimmering landscape, except the ribbon-like railroad track pointing straight west.

There was nothing on the powdery soil but saltsage, greasewood, cactus, anthills, prairiedog towns and buffalo skulls.

To break me in on the first day the colonel assigned me to serve as cornerman on the survey crew in charge of Wilford Utterbach. We started with breakfast at six in the morning. Each man prepared his own lunch, which he wrapped in a red handkerchief and tied to his belt. He also carried a quart canteen filled with drinking water.

Walking, I soon discovered, was an important part of a surveyor's job. After walking two or three miles to the starting corner, they continued to walk as they surveyed five or six miles of section lines, stopping to dig holes for marked corner stones every half mile. Then we walked back to camp.

Finding suitable corner stones at each corner point, chiseling on the appropriate marks and setting them in the ground was my job. There were also corner accessories to build, consisting of mounds of stone or pits dug in the ground.

Going all day long in midsummer on one quart of drinking water was the most disagreeable feature of the work. Until a newcomer got used to conserving his water, he usually suffered from thirst in the afternoons.

Experienced hands would refrain from drinking until noon, thus saving a full canteen to sip on while eating lunch, and having a few swallows in the afternoon when their mouths got dry.

Stagnant Water

When extremely thirsty, I was not choosy about the kind of water I would drink. I have often greedily drunk from stagnant pools having a heavy green scum, dead bugs and grasshoppers floating on the surface.

I managed to make out pretty well by bellying down, carefully blowing back the scum, and quickly dunking my face in the murky water well below the scum and drinking my fill, straining the water through my teeth. No ill effects were suffered from drinking such water unless it had built up a heavy concentrate of alkali. Strong alkali water standing pools having muddy banks could be identified by being crystal clear. But we found that standing murky water was usually safe to drink.

The cadastral surveys around Garland, being completed June 30, 1905, I accompanied the Brunts to other similar work lying between Worland and Meeteetse, Wyo., not returning to Garland Flat until June 1, 1907. At that time I joined the engineering staff of the Bureau of Reclamation as a transitman, with headquarters at Camp Coulter, which is now Powell, Wyo.

Construction of the Garland Canal being in progress along the railroad, I set stakes for the carpenters building forms for the concrete drops along that canal. I also located and cross-sectioned portions of A, U, W and other laterals during the balance of the summer.

Now, from the viewpoint of the present, we can see great changes have taken place.

Within a Lifetime

It is difficult to realize that only a few years ago, within a man's lifetime, this whole area was a wild untamed desert. In those bygone days as I tramped wearily over this barren, uninhabited region, setting section corners, herds of wary antelope raced ahead of me, their white rumps bobbing as they kicked up the dust. Circling back, they would pause to gaze at me while the old bucks stomped and whistled their challenge.

Occasionally I could see a slinking coyote sneaking up a draw, glancing over his shoulder, seeking the safety of a distant hill, where he would turn and let out a high-pitched wail just to let me know that he considered me an intruder.

Or I might flush a black and white-faced badger, who would waddle off on his short bowlegs, stopping to turn and boldly stare me in the face, hissing his defiance, before backing into a prairiedog hole to peep out at me over the edge of the mound.

Sometimes I would encounter a treacherous rattlesnake, already coiled and facing me, blocking my path. Fortunately a rattler almost always gave a warning buzz before striking, giving one time to stop and prepare for battle.

Above all this could usually be seen a hungry golden eagle, circling high above the ground, leisurely scanning the prairie, ready to dive and grab some unsuspecting rabbit or other rodent he sees.

Now, in retrospection of my first days as a surveyor in 1905, I remember how glad I was, and also how fortunate, to obtain my first employment on a survey party.

Although it was in a minor position, the pay of $40.00 per month and board, loomed big enough to lead me into following a profession that has proven both healthful and interesting.

It is gratifying now to see an important development like the Shoshone Irrigation Project, and know that I had a small part in getting it under way.

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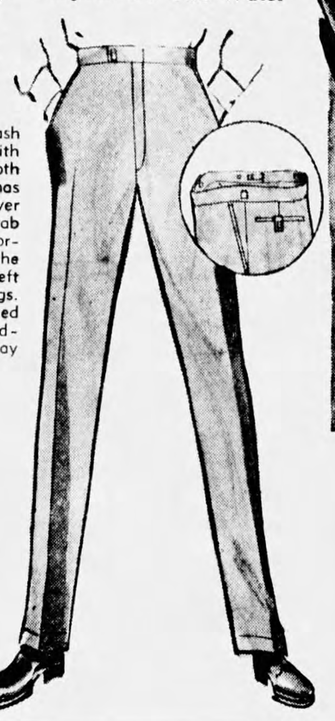

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