



**A CASEBOOK  
OF  
OREGON  
DONATION LAND CLAIMS**

**C. Albert White**

*Oregon City Claim  
As surveyed by  
Butler Ives  
October 1851*

*Ezra B.  
Notifica  
Claim  
Acres*

*Archibald McKinlay  
Notification No 720*

*William Holmes  
Notification 675*

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# Foreword from the Book

*Donation Land Claims* is the third book that C. Albert White has authored on an aspect of the U.S. Public Land Survey System (PLSS). His first book, *A History of the Rectangular Survey System*, was published in 1983 and has become the definitive documentation on the development of the PLSS. His second book, *Initial Points of the Rectangular Survey System*, was published in 1996. The idea for that book developed during the research and writing of the first book as Al wondered how each of the 37 initial points of the PLSS was established and their locations. So, as is indicative of Al's research and persistent, he proceeded to visit and photograph each of the points, and then wrote a book about them.

This book on Donation Land Claims (DLCs) is more localized in scope and pertains principally to Oregon and Washington, or the former Oregon Territory. Although DLCs are a minor part of the total number of surveys done in these two states, they present different survey problems due to their metes-and-bounds descriptions. In an attempt to assist others with the resurvey of DLCs, the County Surveyors in Western Oregon asked White to compile a document or guide lines on acceptable procedures to use when encountering DLCs. As is characteristic with Mr. White, the guide lines or pamphlet quickly escalated into a manuscript and a book.

There is a wealth of information that exists regarding DLCs and the settlement of the public domain of the Oregon Territory. However, there is little documentation concerning the procedures to use on the resurvey of DLCs. Compounding the situation is that the majority of the DLCs were originally located in the valleys west of the Cascade Range, and surveyors in other parts of the states may never encounter them in their work. White's book provides the procedures to use for resurveying DLCs and actual examples of DLC surveys.

Al White had a long and distinguished career as a Cadastral Surveyor with the Bureau of Land Management, and it is interesting that when he retired in 1983 he embarked on another career, authoring books on the subject which he practiced and was fascinated by. He started with the General Land Office in 1946 and worked in several western states on GLO and BLM crews. (Travel with him in any western state and he will soon be telling stories of past surveys in that particular part of the state.) After a stint in the U.S. Army and then with a private firm in Colorado Springs, White rejoined the BLM in Oregon in 1958. He spent 12 years supervising field crews and then spent the majority of the remaining years of his career instructing and writing for the cadastral training staff. It was during this period of time that I met Al while I was attending one of the cadastral training sessions at the University of Portland. Since that time we have been in the same office for several years, and I have come to respect his knowledge and the research tenacity exhibited by him when he's compiling a book or even a report on a survey problem. His admonishment to use common sense, good judgement and extensive research are guideposts for every surveyor to use and follow.

Mike Gardner  
Chief, Branch of Geographic Sciences  
Oregon State Office, BLM



PLSO and LLM Publications present  
**Al White's New Book**  
A CASEBOOK OF  
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