

# Early Public Lands Surveyors in the Northwest

ZENA FERRY MOODY

By William W. and Jeanne E. Glenn

*The survey of the public lands in Oregon and Washington was conducted from 1851 through 1909 by US. deputy surveyors on a contract basis. Today's surveyors who retrace and resurvey these lines surveyed under the contract system come to know those early surveyors primarily by their surveying records and marks left in the field.*

*I am one of those surveyors.*

*For the most part, little is known about the contract surveyor's origin, family and non-surveying interests.*

*My interest in the early surveyor began when I found my first "original" comer in 1950 while working under Thomas A. Tillman as a surveying aid for the Bureau of Land Management. My interest continued to grow when I became a cadastral surveyor performing dependent resurveys and directing afield party of my own. Later as chief branch of cadastral surveys, I met and talked with many surveyors who expressed an interest in knowing more about those hale and hardy individuals who left the footsteps we follow.*

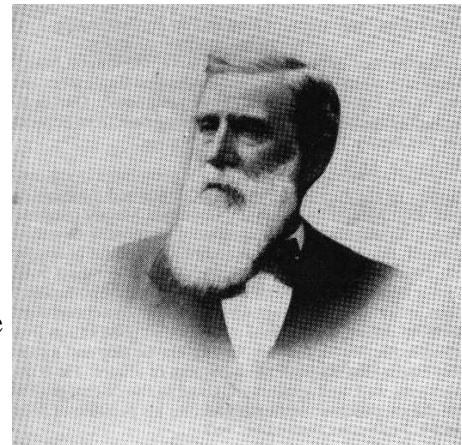
*Now that I am retired, I and my wife have begun to research the background of the contract surveyor We would like to share with you in the following article and others in subsequent issues of this magazine some of our discoveries about these surveyors' "other side".*

--William W. Glenn

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**ZENA FERRY MOODY**, as a U.S. deputy surveyor, was involved in public land surveying in the states of Oregon, Washington and California; he was a prominent businessman; and he served as the seventh governor of the State of Oregon.

Moody was born in Granby, Massachusetts, May 27, 1832. He died March 14, 1917. His lineage may be traced back to George Moody of Moulton, Suffolk County, England, whose son, Deacon John Moody, crossed the Atlantic to the New World in 1633, settling in Boston, Massachusetts. Gideon Moody, Zenas Moody's grandfather, served in the Revolutionary War.



Moody's parents were Major Thomas H. Moody and Hanna M. Ferry, an aunt of U.S. senator and vice president T. W. Ferry. Moody lived in Granby until 1848 when he moved to Chicopee, Massachusetts. After attending school, he became a clerk.

With a desire to see more of the country, Moody sailed from New York, March 13, 1851, on the steamer Empire City. Also on board was Samuel R. Thurston, the first delegate to Congress from the Oregon territory.

After crossing the Isthmus of Panama by mule, Moody boarded the steamer St. Louis for the trip to San Francisco. He traveled from there to Astoria aboard the Columbia. (The Columbia carried 253 steerage passengers and 550 first cabin passengers. Moody traveled in the steerage.)

Having no money left, Moody borrowed \$20 for the trip to Portland, traveling by foot for 14 miles.

He arrived in Oregon City (the principal town in Oregon) on April 21, 1851.

Six weeks later Moody's involvement with the public land survey system in Oregon began. He was hired by James E. Freeman who held Contract Number 1 for survey of the Willamette Meridian south from the Initial Point. Moore served on Freeman's party as a chairman.

In subsequent contracts held by Freeman in 1852 and 1853 for surveys of township and section lines, Moody worked as compassman.

On January 31, 1855, Moody signed contract number 51 and began surveying as a U.S. deputy surveyor. The area surveyed under this contract was not new to him since it is located near the Willamette Meridian in Marion and Linn counties. The contract called primarily for township lines in Range 1 East. Other work included subdivision and meander lines in Range 2 East along the bottom lands of the Santiam River.

Moody was also engaged in general merchandising in Brownsville, Oregon.

In 1856 he was appointed inspector of the U.S. surveys in California by Surveyor General Hays. After six months examining surveys at the headwaters of the Salinas, Moody returned to San Francisco, made his report, then traveled to Illinois by the Panama-New York route.

He resided in Jacksonville, Illinois, until 1862. He served one term as Morgan county surveyor.

In 1861 Moody was on his way to Washington, D.C., when Fort Sumter was fired upon. Being in Washington when the Seventh Massachusetts was attacked in the streets of Baltimore, he joined the company formed to protect the city until arrival of the regular troops.

The fascinating influences of the west coast brought Moody back to Oregon. This time locating in The Dalles, again engaging in general merchandising and surveying. He also served as a member on The Dalles city council.

Zena E Moody and Mary Stephenson were married November 19, 1863, in Brownsville, Oregon. Stephenson was born in Boone county, Indiana. When a small girl she became an orphan. With friends, she came to Linn county, Oregon, crossing the plains in 1852.

Zena and Mary Moody had five children. Malcolm A. served as a representative in Congress; Zena A., an engineer, lived in Ashland; William Hovey worked in business with his father in The Dalles; Ralph E., law graduate of Union College, Albany, New York, a Portland attorney, served as a representative in the Oregon State Legislature; Edna, wife of Eugene P. McCornack, Salem. (McCornack was a U.S. deputy surveyor in the late 1870s and early 1880s.)

1865 to 1867 Moody operated a transportation company in eastern Oregon, Washington and Idaho. In 1866 he organized the Oregon and Montana Transportation Company which built steam boats (including the Mary Moody) to navigate Lake Pend d'Oreil le and Clark's Fork of the Columbia. The company planned to provide transportation from Montana to the Pacific Coast. However, the expense of transporting goods by wagons from White Bluffs to the lake (150

miles) was great. The company could not compete with the Missouri River route and only operated one season.

1867 to 1869 Moody was in the mercantile business in Boise City, Idaho.

1869 to 1873 Moody was a Wells, Fargo & Company's express agent. After resigning from Wells, Fargo he secured a contract to carry mail between Portland and The Dalles, running a steam boat line between the two places.

During this period Moody also returned to public land surveying. He held at least three more contracts as a U.S. deputy surveyor. Two contracts in Oregon and one in Washington called for hundreds of miles of line to be surveyed. The two in Oregon, under contracts numbered 145 and 165, both occurring in 1871, involved survey of the Umatilla Indian Reservation located near Pendleton in Umatilla county. This open, rolling country proved easy to survey as his average of 9 miles a day indicates.

On this work Moody employed his son, Malcom A., as chairman. Also serving as chairman was E. K. Henderson, who by 1874 was a U.S. deputy surveyor.

In 1872, Moody was awarded contract number 144 in the Washington territory for surveying portions of the Fourth and Fifth Standard Parallels and subdivision lines of six townships. The townships, all in Whitman county, are located a few miles north and east of Colfax. Moody was compassman on this survey. The field work was completed in less than two months with the daily average progress being 13 miles surveyed.

In 1875 he withdrew from management of the transportation line to concentrate on his business at The Dalles, primarily grain merchant and warehouse interests. The 1887 Republican League Resister states "... he has now the largest wool warehouse on the Pacific Coast, and handles more wool direct from the producers than any other man in the world."

In 1872 Moody was elected state senator from Wasco county but did not take his seat.

In 1880 he was elected to the state legislature and was serving as speaker of the house when nominated for governor. The nomination was made April 21, 1882, exactly 31 years from the day he first arrived in Oregon City.

On June 5, 1882, Moody was elected by a majority of 1,453 votes over his competitor, Joseph Smith. His inaugural message as governor was delivered September 13, 1882.

Moody's principal concerns as governor were: legislative reapportionment, addition of attorney general to the state's official personnel, the dilatory attitude of the General Land Office in Washington to act on state selections of swamp lands and suggested way to break log jam, a separate institution to care for juvenile law breakers (in those days they were put in the penitentiary with hardened criminals), formation of a board of agriculture and a railroad commission, an authorized publication to answer questions of prospective homeowners, a registration law to "safeguard the ballot box", adequate regulation of corporation activities, and a fish commission "for the further care and development of what is one of the most important industries of the Northwest".

During his term as governor the tax rate was reduced from 5 ½ mills on the dollar to 1 19/20 mills; and without special tax the state expended more than one-quarter million dollars to purchase large tracts of land and do much building.

As governor, Moody was said to have "the longest beard -a regular paint brush affair...and the longest single term, also one of the smoothest, of any of our governors". During his term the legislature changed its meeting time from September to January, lengthening Moody's term.

An early publication listing people prominent in the area, History of the Pacific Northwest - Oregon and Washington, described Moody as follows: "Governor Moody combines with discrimination and firmness of purpose a courteous manner, that prompts him to accord a respectful bearing to all. Physically he is a splendid type. He is of compact build, with a handsome, ruddy face that indicates sound health, a keen, sparkling eye through which is displayed a cheerful and sociable nature, determined to extract all good things from life consistent with sobriety, and an elastic step and a rapid movement that bespeak the busy man of affairs. He is one who lives well, and appears well, and in the discharge of all his duties, public and private, redeems his promise of doing well."

It was believed he could have been reelected, but at the end of his 52 months he felt he had "had it" and wanted no more.

Moody continued to live in Salem but pursued his business interests as president of The Dalles Bank and head of extensive business interests in The Dalles and eastern Oregon.

He was a member of Columbia Lodge State Pioneer Association and the State Historical Society.

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