

"Chaining Oregon" is the first comprehensive history of the early surveyors of the Pacific Northwest and the work they performed for the US General Land Office between 1851 and 1855.

When Surveyor General John B. Preston and his cadre of engineers, including William Ives, Butler Ives, James Freeman, and George Hyde, arrived in the Oregon Territory in 1851, there was little precedent for the legal systematic description of private landholding.

When the last of these surveyors left in 1855, the western interior valleys of the territory from Puget Sound to the Oregon-California border lay measured in the precise pattern of townships and sections that characterized the US Rectangular System. Thousands of miles away from home, facing trials as severe as any they had seen in the past, these men were determined to honestly survey the land and to accomplish the directives given to them by the General Land Office. These men were directed to not only survey the land but to note in detail all of the Native American towns, wigwams, ancient works of art, natural "curiosities," fossils, mounds, and any other items, animals or plant life of note that they came into contact with. It was because of this directive that these men were among the first to document part of the region's natural and cultural history and some of these documentations are included in this book.

These surveyors were not lured to the Oregon Territory by a longing for gold or for a lust for adventure. They were trained as engineers and scientists and were gifted with an artist's power of observation. These men were there to do a job. Unfortunately the work and experiences of these hard-working men have remained largely out of view until now.

Using the surveyors' personal diaries, letters, and field notes, along with historic maps and photographs, Ms. Atwood brings the surveyors, their work, and their legacy out of the shadows and into the deserved light of scholarship. This book is filled with personal detail interwoven with historical context that is appealing to not only surveyors and historians but to the general public as well.