

THE HISTORY OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARALLEL SURVEY WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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The object of this paper is to tell the—one may almost say—romantic story of the survey in 1857-61 of the boundary between the United States and Canada along the forty-ninth parallel west of the summit of the Rocky Mountains and to relate how the final report, which had been lost until that time, was found in July, 1898.

In order to give adequate meaning to that discovery, it is necessary to review briefly the history of the boundary line. By the treaty of June 15, 1846, signed by James Buchanan and Richard Pakenham, between the United States and Great Britain, Article I, describing the boundary line, reads¹:

From the point on the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude where the boundary laid down in existing treaties and conventions between the United States and Great Britain terminates, the line of boundary between the territories of the United States and those of Her Britannic Majesty shall be continued westward along the said forty-ninth parallel of north latitude to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island, and thence southerly through the middle of said channel and Fuca's Straits, to the Pacific Ocean: *Provided, however*, That the navigation of the whole of said channel and straits south of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude remain free and open to both parties.

In the official correspondence of the time the section of the boundary between the summit of the Rocky Mountains and the Strait of Georgia is spoken of as the "land boundary" to distinguish it from its western continuation through the strait separating Vancouver Island from the mainland, which was designated the "water boundary." Throughout this article the land boundary, along the forty-ninth parallel, is alone considered.

It was not until ten years later, on August 11, 1856, that Congress authorized the appointment of a commission which, with a similar commission to be appointed by Great Britain, was to carry out the provisions of the above Article I. Archibald Campbell was appointed the United States commissioner and Col. J. S. Hawkins the British commissioner, and Major J. G. Parke and Capt. R. W. Haig were appointed the respective astronomers. Field operations were begun in 1857 and concluded in 1861. It is interesting to note the arrangement made August 13, 1858, by the joint commission²:

After discussing plans for determining and marking the line as far eastward [from the Strait of Georgia] as the Cascade Mountains, it was concluded to be inexpedient

¹ Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States and Other Powers, State Dept., Washington, 1899, p. 438; also *U. S. Geol. Survey Bull.*, 226, 1904, p. 19.

² Foreign Office Correspondence, Part III, p. 16, Office of the Chief Astronomer, Dept. of the Interior, Ottawa, 1899 (see also footnote 6).