

*It takes more than a good resume to get a government contract.*

## **Charles McKay Anderson (1858-....)**

**From: "An Illustrated History of the State of Washington,"<sup>i</sup> 1893.**

**C**HARLES M. ANDERSON, one of the active young business men of Seattle, was born in Lexington, Illinois, January 3, 1868, the eldest son of Prof. Alexander J. and Maria L. (Phelps) Anderson. The education of our subject, with the exception of two years, was pursued in institutions of learning under the direct management of his father, and, being a boy of more than natural brightness, his progress was very rapid. His studies were completed at the Pacific University, at Forest Grove, Washington. During his summer vacations, and when opportunity offered, he took up the practical duties of civil engineering.

Completing his studies in 1874, Mr. Anderson followed clerking in Portland and steamboating on the Willamette and Columbia rivers until January 1, 1878. He then came to Seattle, as instructor in mathematics at the University of Washington, and also to establish and build a commercial department at the University. After three and a half years in this occupation, he opened an office in Seattle, engaged in surveying in a general line of city and county work, and was also Deputy United States Mineral Surveyor. Mr. Anderson has ever since continued in this line of work, with the exception of two winters spent in Walla Walla, while relieving his brothers in their work. One of those seasons was passed in the bank, and the other infilling the chair of mathematics in Whitman College. Our subject served one term as Surveyor of King County, and has established for himself the reputation of careful and accurate workmanship, and, although now not as active in the line of engineering as formerly, is frequently called upon where the work requires close calculation.

Of late years he has been more particularly engaged in the buying, selling and handling of real estate, mining interests and loan investment business. In military matters Mr. Anderson has been especially active. His military education was received in Portland, from General Howard's staff officers. After coming to this city he worked up a battalion at the University, of which he was elected commander. He was one of the organizers of the Seattle Rifles, and took an active part in the Chinese riots of 1886. During the period of martial law, he was stationed at the front door of the courthouse, and controlled all exits and entries. He was appointed Assistant Adjutant General, with rank of Major, on the staff of General O'Brien, and became organizing officer of eastern Washington, organizing the Second Regiment, N. G. W. He was elected Colonel, and became the first commanding Colonel of Washington, his commission preceding that of the Colonel of the First Regiment. Mr. Anderson resigned from this office when he returned to Seattle.

He was married in this city, September 19, 1889, to Miss Laura B. McPherson, a native of Canada. They have one child, Mary Isabella.

**From: "Washington West of the Cascades, Volume 3."<sup>ii</sup> 1917**

*Charles M. Anderson has left the impress of his individuality upon the history of business and railway development in Seattle and the northwest. Imbued at the outset of his career with firm purpose and laudable ambition, he has so directed his efforts as to take advantage of all the opportunities which have come to him, and while promoting individual success, he has contributed to Public prosperity by reason of the nature of his activities. He may be termed a captain of industry, for he represents that class who are capable of marshaling the forces of trade and commerce and directing them for the benefit of the majority.*

*Mr. Anderson was born at Lexington, Illinois, January 3, 1858, a son of professor Alexander Tay Anderson, notable as one of the prominent educators of the northwest, who was born November 6, 1832, while his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Anderson, both natives of Scotland, were temporarily residing at Grey Abbey, near Belfast, Ireland, where the father was executing a building contract. When a youth of seventeen years the father had come to America and after acquiring citizenship had returned to Scotland, where his marriage occurred. Five years later he once more made his way to the United States and established his home in New York, on the banks of the St. Lawrence. While engaged in the work of felling a tree he was accidentally killed, and later his widow removed with her little children to Lockport, Illinois. Alexander Jay was but six months old when his parents sailed for the new world.*

*Because of the father's early death and the straitened circumstances of the mother, he had but limited opportunities in his youth. He was ambitious, however, to secure a good education and used every opportunity to further his knowledge. He could not attend school regularly, for from an early age he had to depend upon his own resources for a livelihood and at times he would be forced to put aside his text-books in order to work in the store, the printing office or in the schoolroom as teacher. At all times, however, he held to his purpose of acquiring education and in 1856 was graduated from Knox College at Galesburg, Illinois. Already his business training had brought to him valuable experience and it was characteristic of him that he learned from each experience the life lesson which it contained. He entered upon the work of teaching at Lisbon, Illinois, afterward assisted in the publication of an educational work in Chicago and later was a teacher in Lexington, Illinois. His ability in that field was pronounced and he displayed special aptitude in building up institutions which seemed to have almost reached the point of disintegration. Several times he took hold of schools which were in a most run-down condition and his executive control as well as his ability to impart instruction turned the tide and made the school a success. When in 1861 he took charge of the Fowler Institute at Newark, Illinois, it had but six pupils, but after six years under his direction the school enrolled three hundred pupils.*

*Professor Anderson heard the call of the west and he felt it his duty to aid in the educational development of the new country. To do this required considerable personal sacrifice, for he had to abandon a position paying eighteen hundred dollars a*

*year, with a promised increase of two hundred dollars annually if he would remain, and accept a salary in the west of but twelve hundred dollars. In 1869, upon the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad, he carried out his intention and as principal took charge of Tualatin Academy, an endowed Congregational institution at Forest Grove, Oregon, and the preparatory department of the Pacific University. He spent a year there as professor of mathematics and four years as principal, and the usual result of upbuilding the institution followed his efforts.*

*He then removed to Portland, Oregon, where for two years he was principal of the Central school and for one year principal of the high school. At the end of that time he received a call from the university of the territory of Washington, which had been struggling for an existence through a number of years. After several failures, attempts were made to conduct it as a private school, but its doors had been closed for some time when Professor Anderson took charge in 1871. At first he and his wife were the only teachers but subsequently they called their son, Charles M. Anderson, to their aid and after strenuous efforts the legislature was prevailed upon to give assistance to the work of resuscitating this institution. An annual appropriation of two thousand dollars, extending for two years, was granted with a promise that by the 1st of March there should be in attendance thirty free scholars to be appointed by members of the legislature. This involved hardships in the attempt to revive the institution but Professor Anderson met the conditions. After two years the legislature made no further appropriation, but a public-spirited citizen, Henry Villard, came to the rescue and gave individually the sum previously donated by the legislature. Professor Anderson was working untiringly and succeeded in raising the work of the school to the regular collegiate standard. The old saying that nothing succeeds like success was then demonstrated, for the legislature came to the front with assistance and the school numbered among its pupils those from all sections of the state and from Oregon as well. Normal and business classes were graduated in 1880 and college classes in 1881 and 1882. At the end of the school year of 1882 Professor Anderson resigned, having in the meantime built up the institution until there was an enrollment of more than three hundred pupils.*

*He was then called to Whitman Seminary in 1882 and had the name changed to Whitman College. The freshman class of that year constituted the first graduating class of 1886. Such was the success of his labors that in the second year a large building was erected and the charter was amended, whereby the scope, facilities and opportunities of the school were greatly increased. The attendance grew rapidly and there was large demand made for the graduates of the school. For nine years Professor Anderson controlled the activities and directed the policy of Whitman College and then retired after thirty-five years of most active and strenuous connection with educational work. Who can estimate the value of his service in the up-building and revival of new and old institutions sending their graduates out into every walk of life, well trained and with high ideals? Professor Anderson has indeed left the impress of his individuality for good upon the history of the state.*

*In the fall of 1850, Professor Anderson wedded Miss Louisa M. Phelps, who was born on the shores of Lake Chautauqua, New York, and is a representative of an old Massachusetts family of English lineage. They became the parents of six children.*

*The eldest, Charles M. Anderson, early turned to the field of activity which he has made his life work. He was but twelve years of age when he began studying engineering and a year later he became connected with a railroad company, working through the summer months when not in school. In January, 1878, he took up the profession of teaching as assistant to his father in Seattle, devoting the succeeding three and one-half years to that work. He then went to Walla Walla to become the successor of his brother as assistant teacher in Whitman College but after a year he returned to Seattle, where he had previously opened an office for the transaction of business connected with engineering. One of his first important contracts was in connection with the first plant of the city water-works, known as the Yesler system, and later he installed the McNaught and Jones systems. He served also as county engineer and extended the streetcar line from Columbia to Renton. He laid out at least one-fourth of Seattle, made the first mineral survey in Washington and subdivided many sections of King County, particularly in the vicinity of Seattle. The Moore Investment Company made him its engineer and among the works of his hand is the topographical map of Capitol Hill. In 1884 he organized the Anderson Engineering Company, which was incorporated eight years later. He has done considerable work for the state on the tide flat lands and served as land surveyor under contract with the national government. He has done expert work in Alaska for various companies and his engineering skill was employed in determining the route of the Alaska Central Railroad Company, of which he was appointed chief engineer upon its organization in 1902.*

*On the 19th of September, 1889, was celebrated the marriage of Mr. Anderson and Miss Laura McPherson, a daughter of William A. McPherson, a merchant of Seattle. Their children are Mary, Isabella, Lizzie Ferry, Laura Marjorie and Chester McPherson.*

*Mr. Anderson votes with the Republican party and is much interested in its success and the adoption of its principles, although he never seeks nor desires office. To promote its interests, however, he has frequently been a delegate to county and state conventions. He is well known in connection with the military history of Washington, having organized a battalion among the university students soon after his arrival in Seattle. He also aided in organizing the Seattle Rifles, a company which served at the time of the Chinese riots. He was on the military board when the National Guard of Washington was organized and became colonel of the Second Regiment of the State Guard. He organized a regiment of eight companies in eastern Washington and became colonel of that command. Four of these companies afterward served in the Philippines. Coming to the northwest in the period of early manhood, Charles M. Anderson has made his life work of great benefit to his adopted state. He has held to high professional ideals which have found exemplification in his career as the years have gone by, and he stands today as one of the leading civil and consulting engineers of the northwest.*

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<sup>i</sup> Hines, H. K. (Harvey Kimball), 1828-1902, "**An Illustrated History of the State of Washington**": containing a history of the State of Washington from the earliest period of its discovery to the present time, together with glimpses of its auspicious future, illustrations and full page portraits of some of its eminent men and biographical mention of many of its pioneers and prominent citizens of today: Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co. 1893.

<sup>ii</sup> Hunt, Herbert. "**Washington, West of the Cascades**"; historical and descriptive; the pioneers; by Herbert Hunt and Floyd C. Kaylor: Chicago, Seattle, The S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1917.