

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

## Walter Marsh Bosworth (1861-1943)

**From: RPLS.com, at POB Website, posted by Peter Lazio.**

*Being a land surveyor and bibliophile, I have a small collection of out of print and vintage surveying and civil engineering reference books in my library. On August 24, 2004, I purchased a copy of The Railroad Spiral Sixth Edition by William H. Searles, C.E. from Powell's Bookstore of Portland Oregon ([www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com)). When the book arrived three days later, it was one of the nicest old books in my collection. Prominent upon opening the book is the inscription of the original owner Walter M. Bosworth. With my curiosity piqued, I posted the following message on the Point of Beginning message board:*

**Walter M. Bosworth Tacoma Wash**

*Posted By Peter Lazio on 8/27/2004 at 7:07 PM*

I just received a book I purchased from a used book dealer. The book, entitled The Railroad Spiral -Searles, has a neatly lettered inscription on the inside cover: Walter M. Bosworth Tacoma, Wash. May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1899

At the back of the book is an old blue print (white lettering on dark blue paper) with a hand written *Table of Spirals* by W.M. Bosworth and H.F. Gronen.

The book is leather bound and has a musty leather smell. The binding is tight and the pages still have their gold gilding. There is an extra leather tab on the back cover for covering the pages when the book is closed. The book feels really nice in my hand.

Does anyone know of Mr. Bosworth and his legacy? Peter Lazio

*With no replies to my inquiry, I placed the book on my bookshelf, and assumed Mr. Bosworth would remain anonymous.*

*The following day, a pseudonymous poster posing as Walter M. Bosworth posted:*

**Missing book**

*Posted By Walter M. Bosworth on 8/28/2004 at 9:16 PM*

I have evidently mislaid my copy of Mr. Searles' work, The Railroad Spiral. This is a bit of a hardship as I have some railroad work to lay out next Monday. If anyone knows where I might find a replacement, I'd

be greatly obliged for that information.

The particular edition I am after will be easily recognized as it is leather bound and will have a musty leather smell. The binding should be tight and the pages ought to still have their gold gilding. There may or may not be an extra leather tab on the back cover for covering the pages when the book is closed, but the book should fit into the hand quite well.

Walter M. Bosworth Tacoma WA

*This post elicited much more of a response than my original inquiry, but did nothing to identify the genuine Walter M. Bosworth of Tacoma Washington. The book remained on my shelf with its former owner still anonymous. That is until October 6, 2005. On that day, upon returning from my daughter's investiture ceremony at college there was a message on my answering machine from Cathy Marucha of New Freedom Pennsylvania, the great granddaughter of Walter M. Bosworth.*

*Cathy's sister, who is "into the whole genealogy thing," happened upon the August 2004 posting on RPLS.com while doing on-line research. Her sister sent Cathy a copy of my original RPLS.com post. Cathy, who also read the comic post of the ersatz Walter Bosworth, assured me this was not a joke, that Walter M. Bosworth is indeed her great grandfather. In a series of email and one letter, Cathy filled in the missing detail of Mr. Bosworth's career, which I have supplemented with a little web research.*

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*Walter Marsh Bosworth Sr. was born on October 30, 1861 to George Bosworth and Sophia Marsh in Grinnell, Iowa. Walter Bosworth's lineage in America goes back to Pricilla Mullins and John Alden, who came to America on the Mayflower. Walter's great-great-grandfather was William Champlin, a Revolutionary War soldier.*

*Walter M. Bosworth spent several years as a civil engineer working as a civil engineer working on the Canadian Pacific Railroad and later on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. In 1885, he chose to train as an electrical engineer and trained for four years.*

*Upon completing his education, in 1889, Walter Bosworth associated with D.B. Ogden, forming the firm of Ogden & Bosworth, Civil and Electrical Engineers and*



**Figure 2. Walter Marsh Bosworth.**  
(Photo from RPLS.com)

*Landscape Architects of Tacoma Washington. According to the database compiled by Jerry Olson of Olson Engineering in Vancouver Washington, the firm of Ogden and Bosworth filed plats in Pierce, Thurston and Whatcom Counties in Washington State from 1889 to 1893. Some of those maps are in the collection of the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies at Western Washington University.*

*In 1895, Walter Bosworth and Guy Evans of Tacoma spent a month exploring and mapping Mt. Rainier in Washington. They circumnavigated the mountain and reached the summit. Later in his career, Walter Bosworth returned to Mt Rainier to map roads around Mt. Rainier. Walter Bosworth's survey of the south-side road is noted in the in Superintendent's Annual Report in House, 63rd Cong., 3d session., House Doc. No. 1475, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior," 1914, p.784.*



**Figure 1. Walter Marsh Bosworth in 1911 at age 50.** (Photo from RPLS.com)

*Subsequent to his explorations of Mount Rainier, Walter Bosworth became the Chief Engineer of the Tacoma Interurban Railway. It was in that capacity that in 1906 Walter Bosworth became involved in a flood control project to divert the White River from the Green River in Auburn Washington. This project prevented the flooding that until then occurred in Kent Washington.*

*Walter Bosworth returned to private practice and is listed in Jerry Olson's database in 1912 as filing plats in Thurston County, Washington. During this period of private practice Walter Bosworth was the noted as the surveyor for the local county ditch in the January 12, 1917 issue of the Eatonville Dispatch. In 1921 Walter Bosworth appears in the Tacoma city directory along with his wife Charlotte as an engineer.*

*Walter Bosworth continued as an engineer in Tacoma and is listed in the Olson database as the Tacoma City Engineer in 1924.*

*Walter Marsh Bosworth married Charlotte Sohm, they had 3 sons, George, Douglas and Walter Marsh Junior (Catherine's grandfather). Walter M. Bosworth died in 1943 or 1944.*



*Thanks to the POB message board, the book that entered my collection as an artifact sitting on a bookshelf has been transformed into an heirloom. One hundred six years after Walter M. Bosworth inscribed his field reference, it has returned to his great granddaughter. RPLS.com not only acts as a conduit to connect surveyors from all over the world but also serves as a channel to link generations.*