

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

Charles Newton Byles (1844-1897)

From: "History of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington"ⁱ, 1889.

HON. CHARLES N. BYLES. - *This is one of the town builders of the west. Out of his farm on Mound Prairie he has made Montesano a place of twelve hundred people. His father was a Presbyterian minister of Madisonville, Kentucky. Charles was born in 1844. In 1853 the family crossed the plains, and upon reaching Wallula struck out northwestward to the Sound, crossing the mountains via. the Nachess Pass. Moving down on Mound Prairie, they located a place fourteen miles south of Olympia. Here on these healthful fields the boy grew up to manhood, and, becoming of age, took a course in the Portland Commercial College.*



Figure 1. Charles N. Byles.

This opened the way to an extensive contract of government surveying, lasting four years, which was performed with the assistance of a brother. With the avails of this work he bought the present site of Montesano, originally owned by a Mr. King. In 1883 he laid out the present city, and used all means to build up the town, making it remarkably prosperous and flourishing for a place in a region already well settled. In six years it has gained over one thousand inhabitants. In June, 1887, the bank was established, I.W. Case of Astoria being one of the incorporators, and Mr. Byles the manager. In the political field he has been a conspicuous Republican, serving as county auditor from 1872 to 1876 and from 1876 to 1884 as county treasurer. He was married in 1870 to Miss Elizabeth J. Medcalf at Montesano. His domestic life has been as happy as his public career has been successful; and his home has been blessed by six children; four of whom are living.

From: Obituary of Charles N. Byles, January 29, 1897 in the Montesano Vidette.

In every community there is nearly always to be found some man to whom, more than to any other, his fellow citizens look to and depend upon in the affairs of business which concern the interests of that community. In any proposition which is brought forward for the consideration of the people the question is sure to be asked, what does he think of it? And if

the question be answered by saying that the one spoken of favors the proposition, and is willing to do what he can to make it a success, you will find a majority of his townsmen favoring it also.

In Montesano, C. N. Byles occupied that position. No matter what proposition was brought before the people, it was to him that all turned as to one who could be depended upon to act for the best interests of the town, and if he endorsed and approved the measure it was considered that it would be a success. While a thoroughly conservative man on all questions, he was a liberal subscriber to any measure which would tend to the advancement of Montesano, whether in business, social or educational matters, it mattered not, he was the one who was always looked to as the main one to insure success.

Having practically founded the town of Montesano (he platted the three blocks which lie on the west side of Main street, in 1882), Mr. Byles was always particularly interested in seeing the town advance and prosper, and was never found wanting when called upon to aid in raising any of the numerous subsidies which Montesano has donated to the mills which have been located here; but on the contrary, was always one of the heaviest subscribers toward the measures.

He served the people of the city and county in many public capacities, as county auditor, county treasurer, mayor, councilman, school director, and school clerk, and in each and every office he gave the people honest, able, conscientious and efficient service, and it speaks volumes for his character to be able to say, and say truly, that in one of the several offices he filled were his services anything but satisfactory to those he served.

Of the highest integrity, so thoroughly conscientious in all his dealings, that "as honest as Charles Byles" was the highest certificate you could give a person; with a word of encouragement for those who needed it (and who does not at times?); a hand always open to aid those who needed it; with a fund of sympathy which caused him to grieve with those bereft; with a fortune which enabled him to follow the dictates of his promptings and give largely to all public enterprises; arid withal, the fact that he was a thoroughly consistent and honest Christian, such a man could not be taken from any community without leaving a deep feeling of regret and grief over his departure, and especially is this the case here where the great services of Mr. Byles to the people are known and recognized by everyone; where his uprightness of character was such as to form an example to the younger generations, and an admonition to those older.

To very few men are given the qualities of character which enable them to occupy for years as prominent a position as did Mr. Byles, and yet retain the respect and esteem of all in the marked degree in which he did. Montesano indeed loses greatly by the death of C. N. Byles, and The Vidette has never been called upon to chronicle any misfortune to the town which will be more severely felt.

From: The Baker Family Tree on ancestry.com, compiled by Judy Root

Charles N. Byles

The following account of the death of Charles N. BYLES is taken from a Washington paper of date of January 29, 1897.

Mr. BYLES was formerly a citizen of Hopkins County and has many relatives living in the county at this time:

The city flag at half-mast early Tuesday morning announced to the citizens of Montesano that Charles N. BYLES, the founder of the town of Montesano, and her foremost citizen, had passed away. While the announcement had been expected for several weeks, the stern reality caused a no less feeling of profound sorrow at the untimely death of one who had done so much for the community and stood so high in the estimation of all.

Mr. BYLES had suffered from asthma and heart troubles for many years, and many times has been at death's door. Had he given up his interests in Montesano and gone to a different climate a few years ago, his useful life might have been prolonged for many years. But he considered this his post of duty and remained faithful to the end.

Mr. BYLES was seized with an attack of the grip early in the fall; he recovered sufficiently to go to the polls in November and cast his vote for the Republican candidates, as had always been his custom. The diseases which had long battled for his life took a fresh hold, and despite the best of care and most skillful medical aid that could be secured, the end came all too soon.

The funeral services were held at the Methodist church Thursday afternoon, and according to the request of Mr. BYLES, were conducted by his old-time pastor, Rev. W. I. COSPER, assisted by Revs. SMITH and STRYCKER. Despite the terribly disagreeable weather, the church was filled to overflowing. Many were present from other towns of the county to pay their last respects to their esteemed friend. (Source: Madisonville (Ky.) Hustler, Tue, July 20, 1897)

In the fall of 1869, he took up the profession of pedagogue, teaching in a little schoolhouse, which stood in the limits of the present site of Montesano, this was in April, 1870. On the 23d of the following June he was united in marriage to Elizabeth J. MEDCALF, a daughter of William and Martha (BINNS) MEDCALF, worthy pioneers of Washington.

After his marriage, Mr. BYLES resided on his farm until in July, 1871, when he secured a contract from the United States government as surveyor. His wife acted for him as postmaster, and during the winter seasons he was engaged in teaching. In the spring of 1872 he left his wife in charge of the post office and farm and went on an extended surveying expedition, returning in the autumn to resume teaching. He purchased an addition 160 acres adjoining his farm and carried on agricultural pursuits until 1882. He was appointed deputy county auditor in the fall of 1872, and had served in this capacity one year when he was elected county auditor; he held this office four years, and was treasurer of the county six

years, being elected three successive terms; a fourth time the office was tendered him, but he declined. In the affairs of the city he was no less prominent. For several terms, he occupied the responsible position of mayor of the city, and also served several years on the city council. He took an especial interest in school matters and was a member of the school board from the first organization of the district until his death. In the Methodist church in Montesano, he was truly one of the pillars, and was one of the stewards of that organization from its beginning until the present time. The success of these two institutions is very largely due to the faithful and efficient work of Mr. BYLES.

The first bank in Montesano was organized by Mr. BYLES on the first of June, 1887; it was a private institution under the name of C.N. BYLES & Co., with a paid up capital of \$10,000. In April, 1890, the Bank of Montesano grew out of the private bank, being organized with a capital of \$75,000. Mr. BYLES, who was one of the largest stockholders, was elected president, and except for a few months in 1894, retained that position until his death. The confidence which the public reposed in Mr. BYLES is largely due the fact that the bank came safely through the trying times of 1893. Mr. BYLES was also a stockholder in the Montesano Water company, and a large holder of real estate in Montesano and other parts of the county.

Mr. BYLES leaves a wife and four children—Francis W., assistant cashier in the Bank of Montesano, Annie R., Martha B., and Sarah Naoma. Other surviving relatives are an elder brother, David F., of Elma; two sisters, Mrs. M. Z. GOODELL, of Montesano, and Mrs. D. B. WARD, of Seattle. James BYLES, of Elma, was a cousin of the deceased.

<http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.byles/22.1/mb.ashx>



From: Genealogy of Annie Byles Baker, as added by [judybakerroot](#) to her site at [ancestry.com](#) on 22 Feb 2009

*Elma, Washington
October 1, 1946*

Rev. Charles Byles, my grandfather, was born in Warren County, Tennessee, August 1809, and when a small child went to live with his grandparents in North Carolina. When twenty years of age he moved to Christian County, Kentucky, and in 1831 was married to Sarah W. Usher. In 1835 they moved to Hopkins County, Kentucky and remained there until 1853 when with his brother, James, and family they started to the Northwest or Oregon Territory. This train was the first to come into Puget Sound Basin directly from the states. They crossed the Columbia River at Old Fort Walla Walla now Wallula, then on over the Naches Pass -- the first train to cross over that route. They arrived in Olympia November 21, 1853 and shortly afterward he took up a claim on Mound Prairie where he worked his

farm on week days and on Sundays preached. He would go for miles on foot or horseback but always preached every Sunday. He was a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. He was also a charter member of the A.F. & A.M. Grand Mound Lodge Number 3, having joined in the Madison Lodge in Madisonville, Kentucky in 1840. He died February 26, 1869 at his home on Grand Mound Prairie, leaving his wife, two sons, David F. Byles and my father, Charles N. Byles; two daughters, Mrs. M. Z. Goodell of Montesano and Mrs. D. B. Ward of Seattle. All are now dead.

Grandmother Byles, Sarah Usher, was born October 7, 1811 in Virginia and in 1812 her parents moved to Kentucky where she met Charles Byles. She died January 22, 1883. They are both buried in the old Cemetery on Mound Prairie.

William Medcalf, my grandfather, was born April 10, 1813 in Dublin, Ireland. He was of Scotch-Irish parentage. When five years old his parents came to Canada. His early life was spent as a sailor on the Great Lakes. April 5, 1842 he was married to Martha Ann Binns at St. Thomas, Canada, and in 1845 he moved to Iowa, and in 1852 came across the plains and settled near Chehalis in Lewis County. In 1854, led by an Indian guide, he made his way to what is now Montesano and took up a claim. The Indian War of 1855-56 kept the family from going down for another year. The settlers built a fort or stockade on Mound Prairie called Fort Henness and there the families stayed until the close of the war.

My mother and father were both there and have told many funny stories of the times they had.

In 1857 they left Grand Mound for their new home, going by canoes with Indians for guides down the Black River where Mr. I. L. Scammon had built a little house for his family who had not yet arrived. The claim Grandfather selected was west of Montesano and was known for years the Medcalf farm -- now it is in small tracts of homes. They lived there nine months without seeing another white woman or child. Their nearest neighbor was Dr. Roundtree, who lived near Black River and the nearest post office was Grand Mound. The mail was brought to settlers by the Indians who charged fifty cents for each letter or parcel. In seven years a post office was established and was called Scammon's office. Several families had come in the mean time -- Joseph Mace, I. L. Scammons, W. K. Melville, A.F. Smith, A.M. Chalmers, W.C. Carter, and Sam Williams. Church was always held in his home -- the first by Rev. Lippincott and Rev. Charles Byles. He died November 10, 1893. He had two sons, John T. and Edward J. Medcalf and three daughters, Elizabeth J. Byles, Annie M. Smith and Sarah M. Arland, all of Montesano.

My grandmother, Martha Ann Binns Medcalf was born February 23, 1814 near Manchester, England and came to Canada in 1831, where she was married. She died in Montesano October 2, 1880. She and grandfather were one of the first members of the M.E. Church in the Chehalis Valley organized August 19, 1860.

My father, Charles N. Byles, was born in Madisonville, Kentucky, March 20, 1844, and crossed the plains with his family in 1853. He went to school in Thurston County, then to the territorial University at Seattle and to the Portland Business College -- graduated in 1869. He was Deputy U.S. Surveyor and worked with his brother, David, surveying in the summer months and teaching school in the winter. In 1869 he bought the present site of Montesano from a Mr. King and taught school there in the spring of 1870 and on June 23, 1870 he was married to Elizabeth Jane Medcalf. He bought an additional 160 acres and farmed until 1882 when he plotted the three blocks which lie on the west side of Main Street. In 1872 he was appointed deputy auditor and after serving one year was elected auditor and served four years. He served six years as county treasurer and declined the fourth term. He was treasurer when the county seat was moved from lower Montesano to Montesano and carried the county money -- all in gold and silver -- in a pair of new leather boots. Needless to say, the boots were ruined as there were several thousand dollars. He tied the boots together and carried them across his shoulder. When he got home he had asthma and was never free from it -- said it broke his wind.

In 1886 he organized the Banking House of C.N. Byles and Company and in 1890 it grew into the present Bank of Montesano of which he was President until he died. He was Mayor of Montesano for several terms and was called "Father of our City Schools" having been a member of the Board of Directors ever since their organization. He was a member of the M.E. Church and was Sunday School Superintendent for twelve years and class teacher for twenty-five years. He died January 26, 1897, leaving his wife and four children, Frank W. Byles, Annie Baker, Martha Rosmond and Naomi Hall.

Elizabeth Jane Medcalf Byles, my mother, was born January 22, 1845 at Toronto, Canada and came to Iowa in September 1845 and crossed the plains with her parents in 1852. In 1859 the family moved to Westport so the children, John Edward and Eliza, as mother was called, could attend the three months of school. It was the first school in the county and was taught by Samuel C. Jones. When school was out they moved back to Montesano. Then in the spring of 1861 they moved to Cosmopolis to attend the three months of school taught by James A. Karr, pioneer of Hoquiam. The next year school was in South Montesano. Later she attended school at Grand Mound and then at Olympia. She was post mistress at Montesano when she was married and carried all the office [sic?] from her parents home to her new home about a mile, in her apron. Mail came first once a month, then twice a month and then as the settlement grew it came once a week. She was a great reader and kept the office so she could have all the papers and the few magazines to read.

Father and mother started housekeeping in a little two room log house where Whiteside's Undertaking Parlors are now, and in 1872 they built a house made of lumber which now stands across from the Presbyterian Church. It was moved when the streets of Montesano were graded. In 1891 father built the big house right on the same spot the log house was. The lumber for the first board house was cut on Cedar Creek at the Armstrong

Mill about where the new highway crosses the creek. It was rafted down the creek to the river and on down. She was always a devout Christian, joining the Methodist Church when a young woman. When Martha was married she broke up housekeeping and made her home with her, where she died May 1, 1922.

From: The Baker Family Tree on ancestry.com

Byles Family Pioneers of Montesano: Jameson Recalls Early Days Here

Added by [judybakerroot](#) on 8 Feb 2008

This article ran with a family photo in the Montesano Vidette, Thursday, Jan_____. Typed directly from a clipping of the newspaper found among James Ernest Baker's family memorabilia. Photo of Charles Byles family that was with clipping recorded among Charles N. Byles (and family members) listing pages. (Also on GLO Surveyors Photos)

By Earle Jameson

Of the early day settlers in Montesano there was no more prominent than that of a bearded Kentuckian named Charles Newton Byles and his wife, Eliza Medcalf, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Medcalf who had come to the then Washington territory about the time that gold was discovered on Sutter's creek in California. The pioneers of Montesano were English, Scotch, Irish and early-American descent. Isaiah Scammon came from Maine, the



Figure 2 Charles N. Biles, his wife Elizabeth, Son Frank, and daughters from left to right, Anna, Naomi, and Martha. (Photo from The Baker Family Tree, ancestry.com, c. 1886.)

Medcalfs, Arlands and hills from England, the Byles and Goodell families from Kentucky, the Luarks from Virginia and Indiana, the Maces from Quaker stock of Pennsylvania and the Gleasons direct as immigrants from their native Ireland.

C. N. Byles had engaged in the mercantile business in eastern Kentucky [Judy Baker Root's Note: This is incorrect because C. N. was only 9 when he made the wagon trip westward; perhaps Jameson is speaking of Rev. Charles Byles, C.N.'s father here]; in Montesano he was to become a builder, financier and banker. His first banking venture was as a partner of John T.

and J. Edward Medcalf, his brothers-in-law, and their bank was the ancient Montesano State bank at Main street and Pioneer avenue which is now the Montesano Branch of the National Bank of Commerce.

Son of Minister

The C. N. Byles family were members of the Methodist Episcopal church south. Byles himself was the son of a Methodist minister, the Rev. Charles Byles, who preached at Grand Mound, Peterson's Point and at Montesano in the late fifties. One of the treasured possessions of the C. N. Byles family is the first melodeon brought to the then Chehalis County.

At a recent gathering of pioneers at the home of Fred Rosmond near Oakville, many of the old timers saw this melodeon in the Rosmond living room. One of those visitors said recently that a familiar sight in the early days was the transportation of the melodeon by wheelbarrow to various points in Montesano where church services were being held.

C. N. Byles platted most of the territory which is now Montesano lying north of the Chehalis river and the plats were issued in the names of Byles and Thomas and Joseph B. Dabney. In "The Story of Montesano" written for the Golden Anniversary edition of The Vidette for publication October 12, 1933, Mrs. Flora E. Wartman-Arland gave the wording of the deed which conveyed to C. N. Byles (and his heirs and assigns forever) and a facsimile of the signatures which The Vidette reprinted at that time. The original owners of the land in question therefore the signers of the deed were James H. King, Simon Feeler, Margaret King and Sarah M. Feeler. The deed was "signed, sealed and delivered" to Mr. Byles in the presence of A.J. Campbell and James Monroe Luark. The date of the transaction was April 9, 1870.

Could Show Temper

While C.N. Byles is described by pioneers who knew him well as a deeply religious man of mild manners, he nevertheless could show temper on occasion. Gordon L. Simmons of Montesano tells the following: "At one time in the early eighties the Montesano town council had passed an ordinance restricting the hauling of wood and other supplies, a business in which I had invested. Two or three other Montesanans who had teams suddenly found themselves in court for a minor violation of the ordinance and Mr. Byles appeared in the justice court of Justice of the Peace Griswold to interpret the intent of the town council. As a matter of fact I think Mr. Byles was at that time the mayor of the town. The charge against the draymen was technical in character, a bit silly in fact, and Mr. Byles told Griswold so in crisp and brisk language in which he pulled no punches. As a result of his intervention the justice of the peace hastily dismissed the case, "with apologies."

There are few of the early day settlers who will forget C. N. Byles during the hard times of 1894 and 1895, often referred to as the Grover Cleveland panic, when everybody was going broke, the banks were calling their loans and dollars were as scarce as hens'

teeth. The Montesano State bank under Byles and the Medcalf brothers was a small institution as compared with modern banks and had low capitalization and meagre financial reserves. As a result Mr. Byles at that time was forced to mortgage his palatial new home at First and Broad streets up to the hilt.

Home Still Stands

It is related by those who can remember that far back that Mr. Franklin L. Carr came to the aid of Byles with a substantial loan in order to tide him over that long-ago depression. Incidentally the old Byles home is still standing, brick chimneys and all, although the lower floors are now used by the Whiteside Company as funeral parlors.

From: "An Illustrated History of the State of Washington"ⁱⁱ, 1893.

C. N. Byles, president of the Bank of Montesano, is a native of the State of Kentucky. He was born at Madisonville, Hopkins County, March 20, 1844, a son of Charles and Sarah (Wright) Byles, natives of North Carolina and Virginia, respectively. When his parents emigrated to the West, leaving their home in Kentucky in the early spring, they took a boat at Henderson, on the Ohio River, went down to the Mississippi, up that stream to the Missouri, and thence up that river. Arriving at Independence, Kansas, they met their son, David, who had preceded them to this place. They remained at Independence until the spring of 1853, when they started to the Pacific coast; their train was the first to go directly to Washington by way of the Natchess Pass, and they were compelled to fell trees, build the road in many places, and ford many dangerous streams; they arrived at Olympia in the autumn. Charles Byles [Sr.] located on a farm on Grand Mound Prairie, fourteen miles south of Olympia, and resided there many years; he served the public in many official positions, and was a man of the strictest integrity.

C. N. Byles, the son, passed his youth on his father's frontier farm, and had only limited opportunities for gaining an education. He was energetic and ambitious, and at the age of seventeen years he began to make his way in the world. He began his career by going to Idaho, where he spent one summer in mining for gold; he then returned to his home and assisted on the farm until he had attained his majority. He then went to Tumwater and secure employment in the tan-yard belonging to his uncle; two years later he joined a surveying party that run [sic] the first preliminary line for the Northern Pacific Railroad from western to eastern Washington; after his return from this expedition he took a position at Port Gamble in one of the large mills as a scaler and tally man, continuing there until 1868. Realizing the need of a more thorough education, Mr. Byles resigned his position and went to Portland, Oregon, where he entered Portland Business College, at which he

graduated in 1869. It was not long after this event that he secured a position as Deputy United States Surveyor, and during his term of office he assisted his brother David in surveying three townships in what is now known as Pacific County.

In the fall of 1869 he took up the profession of pedagogue; teaching in a little schoolhouse which stood in the limits of the present site of Montesano. When the school was finished he took the salary he received and the money he had earned at surveying and invested in 160 acres of land, including the present site of Montesano; this was in April 1870. On the 23d of the following June he was united in marriage to Elizabeth J. Medcalf, a daughter of William and Martha (Binns) Medcalf, worthy pioneers of Washington.

Mrs. Byles was born January 22, 1845. After his marriage our subject resided on his farm until in July 1871, when he secured a contract from the United States Government as surveyor. His wife acted for him as Postmaster, and during the winter seasons he was engaged in teaching. In the spring of 1872 he left his wife in charge of the post office and farm, and went on an extended surveying expedition, returning in the autumn to resume teaching. He purchased an additional 160 acres adjoining his farm and carried on agricultural pursuits until 1882; he was appointed Deputy County Auditor in the fall of 1872, and had served in this capacity one year when he was elected County Auditor; he held this office for four years, and was Treasurer of the county for six years, being elected three successive terms; a fourth time the office was tendered to him, but he declined.

The first bank in Montesano was organized by Mr. Byles, on the first of June 1887; it was a private institution known as C. H. [sic] Byles & Company's Bank, with a paid up capital of \$10,000; in April 1890, the Bank of Montesano grew out of the private bank, being organized with a capital of \$75,000; Mr. Byles was elected president and is one of the largest stockholders; he also holds a considerable amount of stock in the Montesano Water Company; and has large real estate interests in neighboring towns. He attributes much of his success in life to the able assistance his wife has rendered him, preparing field notes in surveying, making his post office reports, and performing every service required in the most satisfactory manner.

Mr. and Mrs. Byles are parents of a family of four children: Frances W., Annie R., Martha B., and Sarah N [Naomi].

ⁱ Evans, Elwood, **"History of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon and Washington"**: Portland, OR.: North Pacific History Co. ; San Francisco : Press of H. S. Crocker & Co., 1889.

ⁱⁱ Hines, H. K. (Harvey Kimbal), 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.

