

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

David F. Byles (1832-1897)

From: “Biography of David Byles’ son, Lee N. Byles, from “Washington West of the Cascades, 1917””ⁱ

Lee N. Byles of Bellingham, has for almost three decades been actively identified with the logging business in Whatcom and Skagit counties. He was born in Lima, Chehalis County, Washington, March 12, 1864, and is a son of David F. and Mary J. Byles. The former was born in Madisonville, Kentucky, in March, 1832, and was there

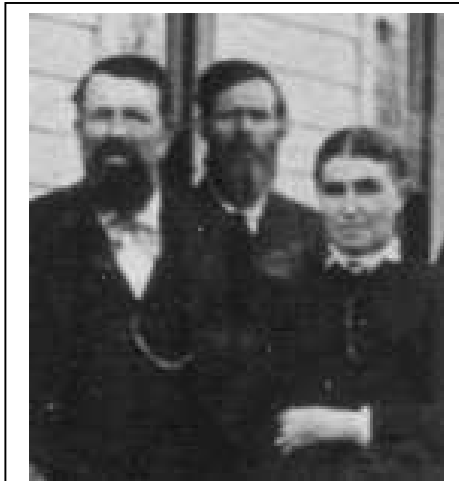


Figure 1. David F. Byles, Charles N. Byles and Mary "Mollie" Byles.

educated but in 1853 crossed the plains with ox team and wagon to Tacoma. He soon afterward settled on a farm at Grand Mound near Olympia, Washington, where he engaged in surveying until 1860. He then removed to Cosmopolis on Grays Harbor, Washington, and there engaged in farming until 1863, when he took up his abode at Elma, Washington, where he secured a homestead. His attention was then given to general agricultural pursuits until 1895, when, having acquired a substantial competence, he retired from active business life and spent his remaining days in the enjoyment of a well earned rest, passing away in June, 1897.

His wife was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, in August, 1832. Under the caption of "Living Pioneers of Washington" Edmond S. Meany, professor of history in the University of Washington, in the Post-Intelligencer spoke of Mrs. Byles as follows: "Mrs. Byles is called 'grandma' by a large number of native sons and daughters of Washington, whose parents were also born in the northwest. She is also known affectionately as 'Aunt Molly' by a much larger host of kinsfolk and acquaintances. She came to Washington territory in the very year of its separation from Oregon, and she has lived here continuously for the sixty-two years since. Her father, Robert T. Hill, was born in Tennessee and moved to Kentucky when only twelve years of age. On attaining manhood he became a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. Her mother, Lauretta Meelin, was born in South Carolina, her family moving to Kentucky when she was two years old. When these two were married they made their

home near Madison, Hopkins County, Kentucky, and it was there that their daughter Mary was born on August 11, 1833. As a girl in Kentucky she attended the rural schools, but had no other educational advantages. She says: 'In 1853 I crossed the plains with Rev. Charles Byles and family. I came for health, a home and a husband and got them all.' She was married on July 21, 1854, to David F. Byles. Of the nine children four survive, as follows: Luther, of Elma; Lee of Bellingham; Charles of Hamilton; and Thad, who lives near Edmonds, all in the state of Washington.

Mrs. Byles was a member of that famous company that in 1853 was the first to cross the Cascades by way of Naches pass. She says that trip over the mountains was 'not a panic by any means.' David F. Byles was a surveyor and farmer. They lived in Thurston County for several years, part of the time in Olympia, where Mr. Byles was employed in the land office. They next moved to Cosmopolis, Chehalis (now Grays Harbor) County. In 1861 they took up a homestead and later a preemption claim near where Elma, Grays Harbor County, now stands. Reclaiming wild land into a farm at a time when Indians were still numerous gave rise to experiences similar to those encountered by many of the real first settlers. Her present home is with her son, Lee Byles, 331 South Forest Street, Bellingham, Washington. She has always been a devout Christian, and she now says without complaint or regret: 'My work is almost done! "

Lee N. Byles attended the public schools of this state and the University of Washington until 1882, after which he became a student in 'Willamette University at Portland, Oregon, devoting a year to the study of law there. He then went to Grays Harbor, where he engaged in the logging business until 1888, after which he removed to Whatcom, now Bellingham, where he has since been engaged in the logging business, his operations being in Whatcom and Skagit counties. He is an active factor in that field of labor and his efforts have been attended with a substantial measure of prosperity, for he displays sound business judgment and unfaltering industry and determination.

In Bellingham, in October, 1893, occurred the marriage of Mr. Byles and Miss Mabel Hancock and they have become the parents of two children. Helen, who is a graduate of the Bellingham public school and the high school, the University of Washington and the State Normal school, is now a teacher at the Lowell Grammar School of Bellingham, of which her sister Mildred is now a pupil.

Fraternally Mr. Bytes is connected with the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks and the Knights of Pythias. His entire life has been passed in Washington and as a representative of one of the well known pioneer families and as an enterprising business man he well deserves mention among the makers of western Washington.

ⁱ 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.