

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

## William J. Roberts (1868-....)

From: "History of Pierce County, Washington"<sup>1</sup> 1927.

*One of the most distinguished civil engineers of the state of Washington is William J. Roberts, of Tacoma, whose achievements have gained him well merited distinction in his profession. He has been a resident of this state since boyhood and secured his elementary education in the public schools. He was graduated from the University of Oregon, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, in 1886, and subsequently his alma mater honored him with his Master's degree. He took the civil engineering course in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science in civil engineering in 1891.*



**Figure 1. William J. Roberts.** (Photo from Historical Sketch of the State University of Washington.)



**Figure 2. William J. Roberts.** (Photo from History of Pierce County.)

*Mr. Roberts first engaged in civil engineering in Portland, but later went to the Hood River valley, where he became engaged in hydraulic and municipal engineering. In 1892 he laid out the first irrigation works in that valley, and on the completion of his work in that locality he became city engineer of Colfax, Washington. He was then appointed associate professor of civil engineering at the Washington State Agricultural College, at Pullman, which position he filled ably and satisfactorily for thirteen years. During this period he had over two thousand, six hundred students in his classes, who are now scattered all over the world. Since leaving the college, Mr. Roberts has been engaged in the private practice of his profession. In January, 1914, he came to Tacoma as chief engineer of the Inter County River Improvement, in which capacity he had charge of the expenditure two million dollars in the improvement of the Puyallup River over a period of*

*nine years. He has since laid out the plans for the development of the port of Kelso Longview, and has made many reports on large projects. He is widely recognized as an able and conscientious engineer and his work has been highly creditable to him.*

*Mr. Roberts' home is on Steilacoom Lake. The family includes six children, the three oldest of whom are graduates of the University of Washington. Mr. Roberts is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Waterworks Association. He is a republican in his political views and served as state highway commissioner of Washington in 1911-12-13. During the World War he was chief engineer in charge of the construction of the water and sewer systems of Camp Lewis. Unassuming in manner, yet kindly and affable in his social relations, Mr. Roberts has made a host of warm personal friends since coming to Tacoma and is held in high esteem by all who have come in contact with him.*

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<sup>i</sup> Bonney, "**History of Pierce County, Washington.**" Illustrated, Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, Chicago, 1927