



Volume 14, Number 1

### 2009 Annual Membership Meeting

The Surveyors Historical Society (SHS) Annual Membership Meeting was held during the ACSM-Utah-Montana-Westfed conference in Salt Lake City, Utah on February 22, 2009 (Surveyor George Washington's 277<sup>th</sup> birthday). Although attendance for the convention, and our meeting, was low (probably because of the national economy) one hundred-eleven society members were represented either in person or by proxy. Don Teter (SHS member #831) and Marshall Robinson (#1160), both of West Virginia updated members about progress of Surveyors Rendezvous '09, see enclosed flyer and registration form. The educational themes of "Surveying the 1785 Dividing Line" (see page 1 of the brochure) and the "Surveying of the Civilian Conservation Corps" (circa 1930-40s) remain unchanged. Additional lodging details are being worked out; and our co-sponsor, the West Virginia Society of Professional Surveyors (SHS member #1139) has offered bed linens for those of us staying in the cabins.

While we were in Utah a couple of society members acting independently, explored the possibility of holding a Surveyors Rendezvous at Promontory Point with the educational sessions being centered on "railroad surveying" and/or the engineering surveys of the four proposed routes for the original transcontinental railroad. I was surprised to learn that the golden spike connecting the eastern and western portions of the Union Pacific Railroad was driven in a section of the track that actually ran almost due north/south. We have also been told that the Oregon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Mormon Trail (Cart Trail) were all surveyed at one time or another. Please contact headquarters if you have knowledge of those surveys.

# INSIGHTS

Member News of the  
SURVEYORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The potential to observe the "Transit-of-Venus" Phenomenon in 2012 from a site in California (or even Hawaii) was also mentioned for that year's meeting. If you can help with that project, please let us know. I am told that this astronomic event, that originally brought Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon together, will not occur again for two hundred plus years. A Rendezvous about "town planning" was also suggested to be held near Nauvoo, Illinois, an early town planned by the Mormons.

### Surveyors Rendezvous '10

The SHS Board of Directors did accept a proposal by Bart Crattie (SHS member #767 from Georgia) and Robert Cagle (#830 from Tennessee) to hold Surveyors Rendezvous '10 in the Chattanooga, Tennessee area. The two educational themes for that meeting will be "Civil War Surveying" and "Surveyors of the Tennessee Valley Authority". Current plans are that after the historical lectures about 1860 military surveying from both a "Yankee" and a "Confederate" mapper are presented; participants will be placed on two teams to prepare a map of a given area. The team whose map brings the biggest price at our annual auction will be declared the winner of the war. Although it probably would not be the first battle decided by who has the deepest pockets, it ought to be fun and educational.

The second day of sessions will be about the Surveying of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) (see "Backsights", Volume 26, Number 2). We may have as many as four presenters (one for each 10,000 square miles in the Tennessee River Watershed they mapped). We will be studying the period in surveying history when mapping switched from using

plane tables and stadia rods to aerial photography. Lectures about how the efforts of the TVA mappers aiding the War Department during WWII could fill several sessions; and I am told PBS is currently preparing a documentary on TVA mapping history.

The final aspect of the proposal for Surveyors Rendezvous '10 worth mentioning is the likelihood that the Delta Queen, a steamboat that has plied the American waterways from Sacramento to Pittsburgh, from Minneapolis to New Orleans, may be the venue for the classroom sessions and host hotel.

### **Election Results**

Chas. Langelan (SHS member #550 from Maryland) and Johnny Ingram (#857 from Texas) were elected directors of the Surveyors Historical Society for the three-year term from 2009 to 2012. We would also like to thank Richard Lowndes (#856 from Tennessee) and Rand LaForce (#924 from California) for being candidates. The terms of three Surveyor Historical Society Board of Directors members will expire this year. Don Teter, mentioned above, and Bill Weikel (# 828 from Montana) have been appointed to serve on the nominating committee. Contact them with your suggestions for candidates for these three positions – they need at least six nominees.

### **A New Book on the SHS List**

In 1962 Lloyd Ostendorf, noted Lincoln scholar and illustrator published a 160-page, 8½"x 11" hard-back, book entitled Abraham Lincoln, The Boy • The Man. It was written for adolescents and generally told brief stories about an event that was supposed to have affected Abraham Lincoln for each year of his life. In 1967 Adin Baber, and Illinois surveyor and descendent of the Hanks family, wrote A. Lincoln with Compass and Chain, another 160-page, 8½"x 11" hard-back that emphasized 1833-1835, the years Lincoln worked as a surveyor. Baber asked Ostendorf to help him illustrate his 1967 book because of Ostendorf's exceptional knowledge of Lincoln and artistic skill. Thus was created the ten drawing that the public has of Abraham Lincoln as a surveyor – there were no cameras or "camera-phones" in those days.

To celebrate Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday the Illinois Professional Land Surveyors Association has reprinted Ostendorf's book, and added to it the ten, full-page prints of Lincoln surveying from Baber's book. Truly a "Surveyor's Edition", this book is now available through the Surveyors Historical Society for \$30 plus \$5 shipping and handling.

### **\*\*A Sad Note\*\***

Lloyd Ostendorf was the "after-dinner" speaker for Surveyors Rendezvous 2000. He gave his usual presentation of sketching Lincoln with charcoal and aging him on the drawing as his talk progressed. Larry Doss (SHS member #953 of Tennessee) later purchased that sketch. Although Ostendorf had probably made a hundred or more such presentations, this may have been his last illustration – passing away only three months after addressing the Surveyors Historical Society.

### **Odds & Ends**

The SHS/BOD has instructed headquarters to prepare a 4"x 6" or a 3"x 5" card with the society's contact information including website. These will probably be included in your mailing of "Backsights" scheduled for next month. Chas. Langelan has also been authorized to prepare a business card size ad to be published gratis in state and national magazines.

### **Cooperation with Museum of Surveying**

About a week before this years annual membership meeting the SHS Board of Directors received an invitation from the National Museum of Surveying to store most of our collections in their Springfield, Illinois facility for \$1 per annum. This offer of temperature and moisture-controlled space seemed attractive to everyone. Duane Weiss, SHS member #653 from Illinois and past Chairman of the SHS/BOD was assigned to the job of working out the details of security, loan policies, tracking of inventory, record of instrument conditions, insurance, and the transfer of the material, etc. Contact Duane if you have some ideas or can help with his assignment.