

The office of Surveyor-General for the Territory of Nevada was created by the Organic Act. This Act, signed by President James Buchanan, became effective March 2, 1861 (U.S. Statutes at Large, 1863, v. 12, pp. 209-214). The Surveyor-General was appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the consent of the Senate. He was under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior in all matters; and his duties, powers, etc., were to be the same as the Surveyor-General of New Mexico.

John Wesley North was the only Surveyor General of Nevada Territory. He was born in New York in 1815, studied law and immigrated to Minnesota in 1849. North was a member of the Minnesota territorial legislature in 1851 and was a member of the 1857 Minnesota constitutional convention. President Lincoln appointed North as Surveyor General of the Territory of Nevada in 1861 but North only served until June 1862 when the position was abolished. North was then appointed associate justice of the Nevada Territorial Supreme Court, serving two years, 1862-1864; and was a member of the 1863 Nevada Constitutional Convention. North moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1865 and from there to California in 1870 where he acted as president of the Southern California Colony Association. During 1875-1879 he practiced law in Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Francisco, California. In 1881 he organized a colony at Oleander, California. North died in Fresno, California, in 1890.

The Surveyor General of Nevada Territory reported to the office of the federal Commissioner of Public lands, which was replaced by the General Land Office in 1864. The Nevada Territorial Surveyor General position was abolished in June 1862 and the Surveyor General of California

assumed jurisdiction over Nevada. In 1864 the surveying district for Nevada was attached to Colorado and in March 1865 it was reannexed to California. Most records of this office are in the National Archives Pacific Region branch in San Bruno, California, in Record Group 49, records of the Bureau of Land Management.

Photo Credit: Map from Surveyor General Records, Box TERR-0104, File 19, Nevada State Archives.

Records of the Surveyor General of Nevada Territory

Although there are relatively few of the territorial Surveyor General records in the Nevada State Archives they are of great importance. They include 1863 survey notes and maps of Butler Ives who was contracted by the governments of Nevada and California to survey and define the joint boundary between the two states; reports and correspondence documenting the boundary dissension between the citizens and governments of Roop and Plumas Counties; survey records from county surveyors, primarily Humboldt County; and survey maps of northwestern Nevada ranges 17-23 and townships 13-21. The survey maps were drawn beginning in 1861 and added onto through the early 1880s. The maps became part of the State Land Office records at statehood and were eventually superceded by newer maps.

Item: TERR-0104 1855-1864

Old #: KK Type: Surveys

Remarks: Surveys and notes, correspondence regarding boundary disputes between Roop and

Plumas Counties, Butler Ives survey notes for Nevada-California boundary.

Agency: Territory, Nevada Division: Surveyor General

Item: TERR-0125 1863

Old #: Type: Map

Remarks: Original survey map of the Nevada-California boundary from about Mono Lake north

to the California/Nevada/Oregon border, surveyed and drawn by Butler Ives.

Agency: Territory, Nevada Division: Surveyor General Item: NSLO-0122 to 0123; NSLO-0259 to 0264 1861-[1885]

Old #:

Type: Maps, Survey

Remarks: State Land Office survey maps of northwestern Nevada showing geographic features, structures, roads, and individual patent numbers. Individual sheets arranged by range (17-68)) and townships, showing modifications over time beginning in about 1861 and

continuing to the early 1880s.

Agency: Territory, Nevada; State of Nevada

Division: Surveyor General; later Nevada State Land Office

Records of the Nevada Territorial Surveyor General in the National Archives, San Bruno, California:

Record Group 49

Records of the Bureau of Land Management at NARA-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, Calif.

Many of the records created by the Surveyor General of Nevada Territory and by his successors during the period 1862-1864 are located in the National Archives, Pacific Sierra Region in San Bruno, California. A summary of the Nevada territorial records is listed below. For more information about Record Group 49, see: http://www.archives.gov/facilities/ca/san_fr ancisco.html

The summary below is based on NARA's descriptive finding aids.

Administrative History

The General Land Office (GLO) was established within the Department of the Treasury by an act of April 25, 1812, to administer all public land transactions except surveying and map work (which came under the supervision of the GLO in 1836). In 1849, the GLO was transferred to the Department of the Interior, then merged with the Grazing Service in 1946 to form the Bureau of Land Management. The Bureau classifies, manages, and disposes of public lands and their resources and administers federally owned mineral resources on non-federal land and on the Outer Continental Shelf.

-Records of the Land Office, Carson City, Nevada (including land offices at Aurora, Austin/Eureka, Belmont/Pioche, and Elko, which were absorbed by the Carson City Land Office), 1862-1934.

The records contain land and mining claims. They document transactions relating to the disposal or use of public domain lands and their resources, including some Indian reservations and national forests. The records consist of case files; letters; registers of applications, entries, patents, and receipts; selection lists; and township and mineral tract books. Many records of land offices abolished prior to 1955 may be found among the records of the California and Nevada state offices, which absorbed their jurisdictions and continued their record keeping. Nontextual records include separate series of township, mineral, Indian allotment, and other survey plats.

Records of the Surveyor General of Nevada, 1861-1920

The records concern survey work, including mineral and national forest surveys, and administrative mattes. They include Spanish private land claim papers and surveys and plats made by the U.S. Surveyor General (microfilm I17), as well as field notes, instructions, and letters. Nontextual records include maps interfiled with textual records.