

Edwin Ralph Sievers' Autobiographical Outline

I was born in New York City on March 16, 1901. My father was in business jobbing order books and similar material such as is used by large stores and other businesses of various types.

When I was less than one year old our family moved to Berlin, Germany where my father's two brothers were in control of some African diamond mines located in German colonies in Africa. My father joined them in this venture, but it was not successful and by 1906 we returned to New York City where my father was again in business.

After several years we moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. In about 1911 we moved to St. Louis, Mo. where I completed grade school (Eugene Field) and I attended Soldan High School for about 1 year.

In 1917 at the outbreak of World War I attempted to enlist in the US Army (Calvary). I was at Jefferson Barracks and my father had me released because of underage. I then tried the Air Corps, but again my father had me released for underage. Next I joined the US Navy and was sent to Great Lakes Naval Training Station. My father gave up trying to abort my enlisting.

I served at Chatham Naval Air Station in Massachusetts, on Deer Island Naval Prison in the guard unit in Boston Harbor, on the USS Cannandaigua (mine layer and later transport ship), and with a Marine hospital unit. In 1919 I was discharged from the Navy.

In early 1920 my friend Deyo Morgan^{Hebron} and I came to Montana looking for work. We traveled by train to Hebron, Mt. because we had only enough money to buy tickets to go that far. En route we stopped in Missoula and ate supper (veal with sage dressing) at a Chinese Cafe on Front Street and stayed there as long as we could to stay warm. Then we tried to sleep in the baseball park across the street from the NPRR station, but it was too cold. So we went to another cafe and drank coffee the rest of the night.

We went to Clark Fork, Idaho where we were employed by Ranger Middleton on a forest fire. (More about that later.) The ranger employed us the rest of the season, building trails, etc.

The next year I was given a seasonal job out of Meadow Creek R S. Kaniksu N F. Ranger Ludington. (Goat Mountain Look Out & patrol.)

In about 1925 I was again given a seasonal job as Look Out & Smoke Chaser at Nine Mile divide out of Superior Ranger Station Lolo N F. Ranger Cherry.

In the fall of 1922 I had decided to return to school. I took and passed the entrance examinations at U of Missouri School of Mines at Rolla, Mo. Summer F S work helped pay my college expenses.

After graduation from Missouri School of Mines in June 1927 with a BS degree in Mining Engineering I was employed by Colorado Fuel & Iron Co, Pueblo, Colorado as a mine engineer; ^{in the Coal Mining Co. of the State of Colorado} Ceró de Pasco Mining Co. in Peru, South America, as a mining engineer; ^{in the State of Illinois} Illinois State Highway Department as an instrument man doing road surveys; Missouri Pacific RR as surveyor, U S Engineers as a surveyor and engineer locating and mapping dam and reservoir sites. The projects were on the Arkansas River & tributaries and Fort Peck Dam Site.

I also worked as an engineer surveyor in Yellowstone N P during the summer of 1933 before I transferred to the US Engineers to make the Ft. Peck Dam Surveys.

In about December 1933 I was offered an appointment by Region 3 of USFS as Surveyor. I accepted it and my career with the USFS is described on the following pages.

My work in USFS late in 1933 to June 1961 and previous temporary assignments were between 1920 and 1925:

My first USFS job was on a forest fire near Clarks Fork, Idaho for Ranger Middleton. That, I believe, was in 1920. Fire fighters were paid in cash at that time. When I collected my pay, I was overpaid \$10.00 by the assistant supervisor, Mr. ^{Jim} Ryan. After checking the money, I returned the overpayment. This resulted in a job offer, piling brush in Krauters Camp on Priest River, Idaho.

The next year, 1921 I was given a seasonal job out of Meadow Creek R S Kaniksu N F. Ranger Ludington. Look out & smoke chaser at Goat Mtn.

About 1925 I was given a seasonal job by staff man Sutton out of Lolo N F office in Missoula. I was assigned to Superior Ranger District (Ranger Cherry) and worked at Wine Mile divide as Look out & smoke chaser.

In 1933 I qualified in the Civil Service Exam for Surveyor and was offered employment in Region 3 of USFS at Albuquerque, NM. I reported to Stanley Wilson, Chief of Operation for Region 3. I was assigned to Engineering. Curry A Long, Regional Engineer, and was given the position of Chief of Surveys & Maps.

We made topographic maps of the Sandia Area, Cibola N F, Sacramento Mts. Area, Lincoln N F, Mt. Graham Area, Crook N F, also we made maps of other smaller areas and did triangulation, land surveys, and other engineering jobs.

I started using CCC enrollees & WPA people on surveys and we overcame the various restrictions to using these people.

When Attorney Ed French who was in charge of the solicitors office in Region 3 learned that I was a mining engineer with some experience I was assigned the additional duties of mineral examiner for Region 3. This made for a pretty heavy job load: Two full time jobs.

Following are some of the more interesting mining cases and events:

Powers Mine. Gallura Mtns Area, Crook N F.

This was a hard rock gold mine. It was supposed to be very rich, but did not show large values. The property was located by the Powers family. (Reportedly very rough people.) The 2 Powers boys and their father and another man, who was an exconvict, lived in the cabin. The boys were notified to report for the draft exam for WWI. They ignored the notice, so the sheriff with 2 deputies rode to the cabin to arrest them. The Sheriff & posse arrived at the Powers' cabin very early in the morning about daybreak. A pet mule, alarmed by the early morning riders, ran to the cabin. Old Man Powers came to the door to see what caused the mule's alarm. One of the lawmen ordered him to raise his hands and someone shot him in the chest as he did so. The other 3 men in the cabin started shooting & when the smoke cleared the 3 lawmen were dead. A forest guard who lived nearby was aroused by the shootings and he dragged the wounded Old Man Powers to the mine tunnel where he died a little later. The 2 Powers boys & the other man took off for the Mexican border, but didn't quite make it. They were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. They died several years ago in the Arizona penitentiary. The last I knew, the forest guard, eyewitness was still employed by the USFS in 1946.

Don Tedford Mining Claims. Cibola N F. Sandia Park Campground. Mr. Tedford located a mining claim for flourspar in Sandia Recreational Area a highly developed recreational site near Albuquerque, NM. We proved in Federal court that the flourspar was of low grade and could not be mined at a profit. Mr. Tedford was a mining engineer and this turned out to be a very ugly case. The government did prevail in the courts.

Attack by Wild Dogs. N. of Silver City, NM. Gila NF. Unwanted dogs from the Silver City area had been abandoned in this area for many years. They ran and hunted in packs. As the ranger and I examined some mining claims along a creek, the dogs spied us and came for us growling, and snarling & snapping. We were unarmed, but did have geology picks and other sampling equipment. We stood back to back swinging at the dogs with what we had for what seemed like hours. Finally one of the dogs started chasing a jack rabbit and the others followed. It was a frightening experience.

Shumaker Claims. Lincoln N F.

This claim involved a claimant who allegedly started several forest fires. The forest officers planned to arrest Mr. Shumaker and since he threatened violence the sheriff and a posse were to make the arrest. Fred Arthur, the Forest Supervisor; Bob White, Administrative Assistant (who had been a ranger and knew Mr. Shumaker), and several other forest officers were in the posse. As they approached the Shumaker claims in automobiles by road, Mr. Shumaker was at his mailbox carrying a rifle. Bob White pointed him out and said, "There is the old man." Mr. Shumaker aimed the rifle and shot Mr. White in the head. A barrage of shooting followed and Shumaker was killed. It was a sad affair making a worthless mining claim in use as a residence.

I examined many other claims in Region 3, some of which were valid. Claims examined included: United Verde extension at Jerome, Prescott NF, Trench Mine at Harshaw, AZ., Coronado NF near the Mexican border. Old Glory Mine, Coronado NF near Nogales Az, Etc. The incidents above illustrate what is involved in some of these mineral examinations.

I was an officer in the US Army Reserve when WWII commenced for US Army. The army people realized that the west coast was inadequately mapped and Japan probably had better maps than we did. Mapping agencies of USA were given assignments of certain areas to map. FS was given two California areas to map to high standards. Area 1 was the country between Santa Barbara to N. of Taft & just west of Bakersfield. Area 2 consisted of Redwoods from Eureka, Ca. to the Oregon state boundary all along the Pacific Ocean.

The Japanese did make several threats at the area: one a submarine shelling north of Santa Barbara and several incendiary balloons that landed in Oregon. Several ships were torpedoed and a part of one floated into Crescent City harbor.

The Redwoods area was very difficult to map. I was given charge of the topographic branch of the war mapping project and later the triangulation branch. The army deferred my call up to active duty. When the project was nearly completed and was running well, I requested reinstatement to active duty status in the army.

I was ordered to report to Officers Training School in Miami Beach, Fl. as a Captain in the Air Force Intelligence. Later I was assigned to Air Force Intelligence School, Harrisburg, Pa., 449th Bomb Group 717th Squadron S-2, and then to 1st Photo Charting Group at Bolling Field, then to Petersen Field, Colorado.

After my military duty was finished I returned to USFS, R3 Albuquerque, in my old job of Chief of Survey and Maps and Mineral Examiner.

In 1947 I was offered a transfer to Region 1 USFS, Missoula, MT. Since the double job in Region 3 was extremely difficult to handle I accepted transfer to Region 1 to replace Jim Yule, Chief of Surveys and Maps, who was retiring.

Soon after assuming the job in Missoula it was requested that I return to Region 3 to testify in some of our mining cases in Federal Court in N M.

At that time Region 1 also needed a mineral examiner. As soon as the Division of Lands was informed of the work I had done in Region 3, I again had a double job, this time in Region 1. When the 1956 Mining Laws were enacted Region 1 had need for a full time branch chief of the minerals branch and I held that position until I retired in June 1961.

Some of the more interesting claim cases in which I took part were:

Mouat Mining Claims. Custer N F vicinity of Nye, MT. These claims had some rare minerals including nickel which might be needed for World War II effort. The government leased the claims from the Mouats and retained the Anaconda Co. to do a large amount of development work on them. Much money was spent in developing, but there was never any production. When the gov't later decided they did not need these claims the gates that had been installed remained locked. I understood the Mouats had been notified the claims were not to be used. The Mouats requested a large sum of money for rent for the time during which the gates were locked. We decided to examine the claims and found many were not valid. Mr. Mouat and his nephew, attorney Bill Mouat accompanied us on some of the claims examinations.

Counts Mining Claims Mill Creek Placers. Gallatin NF. Vicinity of Pray, MT. Kester and Garland Counts. These people had located a large number of placer claims near the north boundary of Yellowstone NP. they had done considerable work in the area, but not much mining work. We found the claims not valid.

Mullen Mining Claims.

Mr. Mullen said his discovery work on a group of Placer Claims had been covered with soil and rock by the FS during road construction. He requested damages. He allegedly made several threats so when the examination was made mineral examiners Bob Manchester, Tom Schessler and attorney Morris Hankins accompanied me. When we arrived on the claim Mr. Mullen met us carrying a rifle and six shooter and knife on his belt. He did not cause any trouble except to tell us what he thought of us and the USFS. He fumed to his car and said he was going to town to phone his attorney. We then took samples and found claim not valid.

Limestone Claims Vicinity of White Bird Nez Perce, Id. The claims for limestone covered 2 square miles of White Pines Timber appraised by forester of considerable stumpage value: over \$1,000,000. The claimants who were loggers said they intended to sell the limestone for cement for the Hell Canyon Dam which was at that time under consideration. The limestone we found was not of good quality for cement. Claims considered not valid.

Flourspar Claims near Salmon River, Bitterroot NF Ernie Ekelsdorfer promoter. These people wanted to build a road through the wilderness area to their flourspar claims north of the Salmon River. Mr. Ekelsdorfer and I left Missoula very early one morning in his car to meet the claimant at Shupe, Id. The claim owner and rafter said he was one of the early rafters to float the Salmon River. The ride from Missoula to Shupe, Idaho was a wild one over very winding mountain reads. the claim owner had the 3 man rubber raft ready and we floated from Shupe to Riggins, Idaho in 3 days and examined the claims enroute. A rough ride! The rafter had a bottle of whiskey in his pocket and every time he had to go over a rapid he took a big drink. He kept well oiled during the trip. I decided to return to Missoula by bus and train rather than by auto transportation that Mr. Ekelsdorfer had available. I decided owing to transportation problems and the quality of the flourspar the mining venture was not feasible at that time.

When I worked in the Forest Service in the 1920's and 1930's most of the rangers were individuals who had been loggers, cowboys, and mountain people. Usually the more technical positions were filled by people who had some college training. The ranger examination consisted of practical questions such as , "You have a pack horse or mule to use on a ranger district and only two horse shoes. Which feet of the animal would you put them on?"

"A tree is 20 feet in height and a branch is 10 feet above the ground. In several years the tree had grown to the height of 30 feet. How high above the ground will the branch be when the tree is 30 feet tall?"

When I retired in 1961 most of the rangers were college trained.

In the 1930's there were a few Mexican American rangers and a few technician employees of various racial backgrounds. When I retired there seemed to be many more employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. In general in earlier times women were largely restricted to office duties. Now the field seems to be wide open to anyone who is qualified.

Edwin R. Sievers - Autobiography

1901 - Born March 16, 1901 - NYC, NY

1902 - Moved to Berlin, Germany. Father in business with his brothers, Eugene & Detma, developing diamond properties in Africa

1906 - Moved to New York City, NY. School PS 10.

1909 - Moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. Home 2627 Park Ave., Walnut Hill. Father agent for American Sales Book Co

1911 - Moved to St. Louis, MO. Father in business jobbing sales books.

1912 - Visited Berlin Germany with father; Near disaster: We had reservations on HMS. Titanic - Maiden voyage. Cancelled reservations due to Grandmother's serious illness. Returned to U.S. on HMS Lusitania.

1914 - Worked on Kitchen Ranch near Ben Allen, KS (vicinity of Russel Springs, KS). Interested in ranching & planning to pursue ranching career.)

1917 - World War I ("The Big War") -Enlisted in Cavalry - Jefferson Barracks, MO; then in Air Corps - Scott Field, IL. Father got me out of both due to underage. Then enlisted in U.S. Navy: served on USS Cannandaigua, 6th Reg. Marines detached service.

1919 - USS Cannandiagua a Mine layer in North Sea.

1920 - Near drowning & rescue on Merimack River near St. Louis.

1923 - Entered Missouri U. School of Mines, Rolla, MO via entrance exam.

1926 - Married Dorothy Brooks. Sept. 3. at Rolla, MO.

1927 - Graduated MO. School of Mines. BS in Mining Engineering.

1927,8 - Colorado Fuel & Iron Co., Pueblo, CO. Mining Eng.:testing dept. & explore for lax silica & limestone.

1929 - Ill. State Hwy. Dept. E. St. Louis. Road location surveys.

1929 - Missouri Pacific RR Fall City, Neb. Realigning curves, surveys. Loss of motor speeder. Jumped off car before it collided with train. Cerro de Pasco, Peru, SA. Mine Eng. at Casapalca Mine, Andes Mts.

Woodard, OK - U.S. Engineers. Locating dam sites, etc. on Ark. River & tributaries. Dottie born May 11. U.S. Eng.

Moved to Raton, NM. US Engineers.

1930-33 - Great Depression. During this time I worked as County Eng. for Beaver & Cimarron Cos., OK; & designed dams & mapped Philmont Ranch property in NM. Also surveyed for Ed Springer Ranch in NM.

1930 - Yellowstone N P road location surveys, etc.

1932-3 - US Engineers - Fort Peck Dam surveys & hydraulic tests.

1933-47 - US Forest Service - Chief Surveys & Maps and Mineral Branch - R3, NM & AZ. (Albuquerque).

Confrontation of Mining Claims: Lincoln N F. Mr. Shumaker accused of setting fires on mining claims shot to death Bob White, USFS Admin. Asst., & Mr. Shumaker was shot by posse & died.

1935 - Baumkirchner - Fed. Court Stock promotion. Huachuca Mts. held several hundred mining claims on Coronada NF. Lengthy, ugly case.

1938 - Edwina born - Jan. 26 in Albuquerque.

1940 - Wild dog attack. Forest ranger & I, examining some claims N. of Silver City, attacked by pack of hungry wild dogs. Tedford Fed. court case. Cibola NF. Florspar claim in picnic area. Ugly case.

1941 - Bruce born - May 26 in Albuquerque.

1942 - WWII. 44⁹th Bomb Group training.

1944-5 - 1st Photo Charting Gp.

1947 - USFS - Chief Mineral Branch. NM & AZ.

1947-56 - USFS - Chief Maps & Surveys & Minerals - R1, MT & ID. (Missoula)

1949 - Mann Gulch Fire. Day after the fire Dan Me Vay & I identified key points of fire area. 13 Smokejumpers died.

1952 - Musselman - Georgetown Lake, Deerlodge NF: Ranger timber cut 1 or 2 trees over on Musselman's lot. M. claimed large loss in value due to loss of scenic value.

1956 - USFS reorganized depts. & I headed Minerals Branch.

1957 - Mullin met us with rifle in hand - Clearwater NF.

1959 - Hebgen Earthquake. Day after Manchester, Hughes, Hankins & I were on site to identify damage on aerial photos.

1961 - Retired USFS in June 1.

1965 - Yellowtail Dam site examine mining claims for US Bureau of Reclamation. Abandoned by leased helicopter, pilot had difficulties & left us in reservoir area where he was to pick us up later in day. He didn't return. Blizzard & cold. A Recl. service eng. was with me.

Fortunately we found some hunters & got them to notify an extra helicopter to pick us up. 4 days before help came.