

**UNITED STATES COAST AND GEODETIC  
SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHY: PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFERENCE  
HELD AT WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY  
18 TO MARCH 7, 1892; APPENDIX NO. 16  
- REPORT FOR 1891 - PART II, PP. 565-746**

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**T. C. MENDENHALL**

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UNITED STATES  
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T. C. MENDENHALL  
SUPERINTENDENT

TOPOGRAPHY

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFERENCE

HELD AT

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WASHINGTON, D. C.,

JANUARY 18 TO MARCH 7, 1892.

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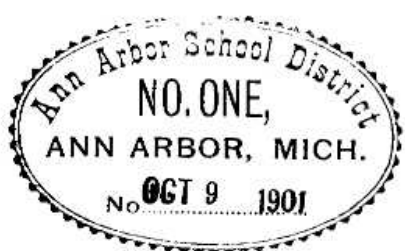
PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFERENCE HELD  
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 PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFERENCE.

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APPENDIX NO. 16—1891.

REPORT OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFERENCE, CONVENED AT WASHINGTON BY DIRECTION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT IN JANUARY, 1892.

The members of the Topographical Conference, convened under instructions of the Superintendent of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, present the following report of their proceedings and submit a series of appended papers embodying the facts and reasons which have governed them in forming opinions and coming to conclusions on the subjects referred to them.

The Conference met at the Office of the Survey in Washington, on January 18, 1892, and held daily sessions after that date up to March 7, during which time the subjects assigned to committee investigation and discussed in Conference have received consideration and have been acted upon with careful deliberation.

Before taking up special questions, however, it seems important to consider the subject of surveys in the abstract, and not to lose sight of the fact that the business of making and extending them over large areas of territory is not one in the general market of professional competition, and is work seldom undertaken except under National or State auspices. Even in the most general way it is an operation of much magnitude to go over the ground of a large territory. The question of opportunity becomes, therefore, an important factor in determining what shall be the scope and character of a survey. This is apart from the question of "Special Purpose," discussed more fully elsewhere in this report.

The term "cheap survey," unless specially defined, is a misleading one to the general public. There are, of course, in topographical surveys and their resulting maps, as in other works, degrees of value. The enterprises of the day call for reliable information on all practical subjects; and topographical surveys and maps that do not meet these public requirements fail in a respect which is becoming more and more important in the economy of modern improvements. A small percentage of increased expenditure of time and means, *while on the ground*, would secure such results as the true elevation of important lakes and