



Rushing, Rhonda L.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS:

*A Glimpse Into the
Legacy of Surveying*

Berntsen International (192 pp.)

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A thoughtfully written, handsomely illustrated history of surveying.

Why should civilians care about where townships, counties, states and nations place their boundaries? As Rushing, president of surveying-supply house Berntsen International, suggests, boundary disputes can cost money, sometimes in the form of double taxation. So it was with the neighboring towns of Hampton and Salisbury (now Seabrook), N.H., which both levied taxes on homes running alongside the Hampton River. Only a thorough survey and indestructible boundary marker could solve this dispute. Other surveying solutions add context to a locale as well as provide a durable mark, like the rock-solid monument that replaced one worn away by tourists at the famed boundary of the Four Corners states: Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. Rushing also adds historical context to the craft. While modern-day presidents tend to be lawyers, many past presidents were surveyors. Jefferson laid out parts of Washington, D.C., while Washington surveyed the Virginia frontier and Lincoln “performed about 33 land surveys, and laid out three roads and five towns.” Rushing also documents unusual situations confronting surveyors today, including marking a coral reef damaged in a shipping accident, placing relatively elements-proof boundary plaques atop Mauna Kea and Mount McKinley and establishing accurate geospatial measurements of Iraq and Afghanistan, which lack a “critical component of national infrastructure.”

A fine read for budding geographers, developers, urban planners and other devotees of the surveyor’s art.

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