



The Wheeler Monument in Georgetown, Colorado. Standing (left to right): J.B. Guyton, Doyle Abrahamson, Warren Andrews, Greg Markle. Kneeling (left to right): Bob Gibbs, Gene Kooper, Donna Malleck, Mike Greer. Kneeling foreground: Dr. Bill Wilson.

Star Crossings & Stone Monuments



USGS Circular #1362.

I was very pleased to receive an autographed copy of the USGS Circular #1362 (“Star Crossings and Stone Monuments—Field Astronomy by the Wheeler Survey in 1870s Colorado,” by William E. Wilson, PhD). You may recall the story of the Wheeler Monument in Georgetown, featured on the cover of the August 2007 issue of *Side Shots*. The PLSC, along with Hixon Manufacturing, provided the funding for a bronze plaque and a steel shelter to minimize any further weathering

of the historic marker. The PLSC donation was prominently acknowledged in the circular.

The complete story of the six Wheeler monuments across Colorado has been meticulously researched and documented in this 38-page, color-illustrated book by Dr. Wilson. It is highly recommended reading for any surveyor interested in Colorado history.

The Wheeler Survey, funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was one of four competing government-sponsored

>> By J.B. Guyton, LS



The steel shelter over the Wheeler Monument designed to reduce further weathering, and the bronze plaque installed by Hixon Manufacturing and the Professional Land Surveyors of Colorado.

surveys mapping the West during the 1870s. The Wheeler Survey was the most ambitious of these; its plan was to systematically map the entire country west of the 100th meridian, which runs through western Kansas. Before Wheeler could complete his task, however, Congress disbanded all of the surveys in 1879 and in their place created the U.S. Geological Survey.

The report describes the activities of one of Wheeler's astronomers, Dr. F. Kampf, to determine the latitude and longitude at six locations in Colorado during 1873-74. The framework of the story is based principally on Kampf's journal, or "Recording Book," which the author discovered among a collection of original Wheeler field notebooks at the archives of the Norlin Library on the CU campus. Kampf installed blocks of sandstone monuments on which to place his transit to observe the stars and use those observations to determine the coordinates of each site.

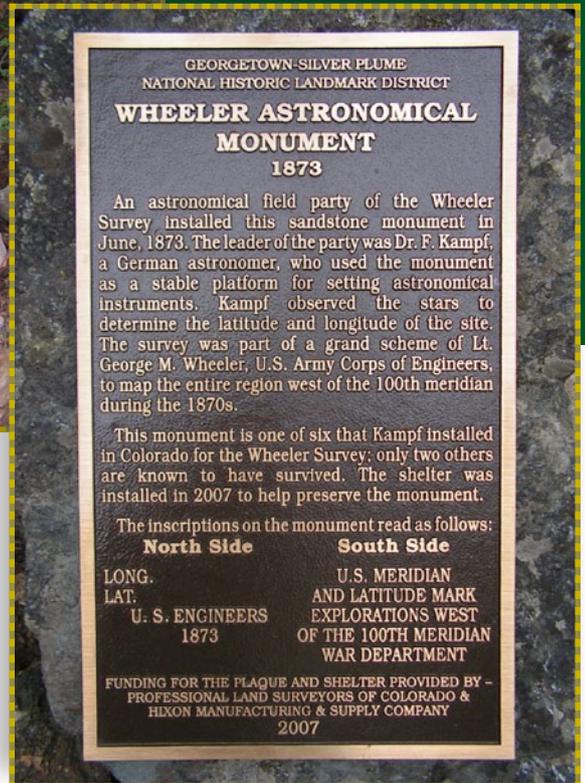
Wilson augments the story with information he obtained from more than 100 references that he cites. He visited each of the six sites to look for the stone monuments; in addition to the one at

Georgetown, he found only two others, at Trinidad and near Julesburg. The ones at Florence, Colorado Springs, and Brighton have apparently been either moved or destroyed.

Included in the report are various sidebars that highlight some interesting aspects of the story, including, among others, details on the methods Kampf used to determine latitude and longitude, a controversy in the press over the source and lithology of the stone monuments, Wilson's research to identify who Dr. Kampf was, and the story of the Mormon observatory at Salt Lake City.

Dr. Wilson, a USGS retiree, lives in Georgetown with his wife in a house that was built in 1870, three years before Dr. Kampf installed the Georgetown monument and made his observations. He has indicated that he would appreciate receiving comments, questions, and new information at wewilson@wispertel.net.

You may obtain copies of this publication (USGS Circular 1362) from any one of several sources: 1) Online at <http://store.usgs.gov>. You must log on (green



GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT
**WHEELER ASTRONOMICAL
MONUMENT**
1873

An astronomical field party of the Wheeler Survey installed this sandstone monument in June, 1873. The leader of the party was Dr. F. Kampf, a German astronomer, who used the monument as a stable platform for setting astronomical instruments. Kampf observed the stars to determine the latitude and longitude of the site. The survey was part of a grand scheme of Lt. George M. Wheeler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to map the entire region west of the 100th meridian during the 1870s.

This monument is one of six that Kampf installed in Colorado for the Wheeler Survey; only two others are known to have survived. The shelter was installed in 2007 to help preserve the monument.

The inscriptions on the monument read as follows:

	North Side	South Side
LONG.		U. S. MERIDIAN
LAT.		AND LATITUDE MARK
	U. S. ENGINEERS	EXPLORATIONS WEST
	1873	OF THE 100TH MERIDIAN
		WAR DEPARTMENT

FUNDING FOR THE PLAQUE AND SHELTER PROVIDED BY -
PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS OF COLORADO &
HIXON MANUFACTURING & SUPPLY COMPANY
2007

tab at the top). In the left column fill in the box labeled "Enter Search Term" with the product number, which for this publication is 244366, then follow instructions. You may order 1-5 free copies this way, but a \$5.00 handling charge is added for each shipment, regardless of the number of copies ordered. 2) Visit Building 810 (Map Sales) at the Denver Federal Center, Lakewood (use the visitor entrance off of Kipling Ave.). At the salesroom, ask for Circular 1362; no charge. 3) Purchase at the Georgetown Gateway Visitor Center or from Historic Georgetown, Inc. (\$3.95 plus tax; discount for members of HGI). 

J.B. Guyton is Chairman and CEO of Flatirons, Inc. and editor of *Side Shots*, journal of the Professional Land Surveyors of Colorado.