

## **Section 5**

**Biography of James D. Schuyler**



## > Biography - James D. Schuyler

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**Born - May 11, 1848**

**Died - September 13, 1912**

James Dix Schuyler was born May 11, 1848, in Ithaca, New York, the son of Philip C. and Lucy M. (Dix) Schuyler. He was educated at Friend's College, 1863-1868; after that he was self-taught. In July 1889 he was married to Mary Ingalls Tulliper.



Schuyler began his engineering career in 1869, locating and constructing the Kansas Pacific Railway in western Kansas and Colorado. In 1870, he was appointed Resident Engineer on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, from Colorado Springs to Denver, and made the first survey of Colorado Springs. He came to California in 1873, serving as Division Engineer of the North Pacific Coast Railroad from Ross Valley to San Rafael. In 1874, he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Stockton and Lone Railroad, and

on the financial collapse of that project, he worked temporarily as a writer for the Stockton Daily Independent. In 1877 he was made Chief Assistant State Engineer, under William Hammond Hall, and was placed in charge of the irrigation investigations being conducted by that department in the Central Valley of California.

In 1882, he was appointed Chief Engineer and General Superintendent of the Sinaloa and Durango Railroad in Mexico. He returned to California in 1884, and was engaged as a contractor in the construction of a section of the San Francisco sea-wall. In 1887-1888, he supervised the building of Sweetwater Dam in San Diego County, and in 1890-1891, he designed and supervised the building of Hemet Dam in Riverside County, California, then the highest masonry structure in the state.

During subsequent years, Schuyler devoted special attention to hydraulic engineering in general, designing and building water works in many cities and towns, including Denver, Portland, and numerous others. He was one of the Board of Consulting Engineers to pass on the feasibility of the Owens River water supply project for the city of Los Angeles. From 1903 to 1905, he was employed as the consulting engineer for the building of the great dam on the Snake River at the head of the Twin Falls Canal, at the time the largest irrigation system in America. He held a similar relation to the American Beet Sugar Company in California and Colorado during a period of nine years of irrigation and water supply development. In the course of his long practice he was called upon to

act in an advisory capacity for a very large number of irrigation projects and domestic water supply works throughout the western United States. During these years he became known also for his construction of dams by hydraulic fill - one of his first works of this type was the Lake Francis Dam, built for the Bay Counties Power Company in Yuba County, California.

In January 1909, President Roosevelt appointed Schuyler to accompany President-elect Taft to Panama as one of seven engineers to report on canal plans, the Gatun Dam, etc. The unanimous report of this board of engineers was in favor of carrying out the plan adopted by Congress for a lock-canal, but recommended a modification of the height and slopes of the Gatun Dam, lowering it by 20 feet.

Schuyler's activities as a consulting engineer extended across the ocean to Japan, and as far south as Brazil. He was consulting engineer to Waialua Plantation, Hawaii, on the construction of the highest dam on the islands, chiefly built by sluicing; to the Territorial Government of Hawaii on Nuuanu Dam, Honolulu; to the Monterrey Water-Works and Sewer Company, Ltd., of Mexico; to the Kobe Syndicate on an extensive power project in Japan, involving the construction of a very high dam; to the Mexican Light and Power Company, Ltd., on the building of four large dams for power development in Mexico; to the Vancouver Power Company, Ltd., on the building of a dam at Coquitlam Lake; to the Arrowhead Reservoir Company; and to the U.S. Indian Bureau on the building of Zuni Dam, New Mexico. He was also consulting engineer for the British Columbia Electric Railway Company on dam construction, the reclamation of swamp lands, etc.

Schuyler was the author of *Reservoirs for Irrigation, Water Power, and Domestic Water Supply* (John Wiley & Sons, 1901; 2nd edition, 1908), a work on dams, which for many years was a standard work on this subject. He was also the author of numerous contributions to engineering societies, two of which won the Thomas Fitch Rowland prize for the best paper of the year read before the American Society of Civil Engineers.

James Dix Schuyler died on September 13, 1912.

*Excerpted from the memoir of James Dix Schuyler prepared by Stephen E. Kieffer, C. E. Grunsky, and J. B. Lippincott, published in Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers, v. 76 (1913), p. 2243-2245.*