



Walter Curran Mendenhall

1871–1957

Walter C. Mendenhall joined the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in 1894 and worked in Alaska between 1898 and 1903. During that time, he led reconnaissance expeditions to map the geology and mineral resources in the Wrangell Mountains, and between Fort Hamlin and Kotzebue. He published early reports documenting the geology and mineral resources of the Wrangell Mountains, the central Alaska Range, the Kotzebue area, and the Seward Peninsula. His reports were the first to document the geology, geography, and mineral resources of these regions. After leaving Alaska in 1903, his work on hydrology helped establish it as a field of scientific endeavor. He became the USGS Chief Geologist in 1922 and served until 1930 when he was appointed USGS Director, serving until 1943.

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