1. GEODETIC TRIANGLES
2. STATIONS
3. SIGNALS & TOWERS
4. INSTRUMENTS
5. BASELINES
6. BOUNDARY LINES

WHY DOES VERPLANCK COLVIN'S WORK MATTER?

Chapter 589 of the Laws of 1895, Section 5
"All maps or field notes prepared and issued by the superintendent of the State Land Survey under his certificate, hand and official seal, shall be accepted in the courts of this State as prima facie evidence of the particular boundaries and locations shown —"

Chapter 661 of the Laws of 1900, Section 2
"All of Chapter 598 of the Laws of 1895 — except Section 5 thereof — are hereby repealed"
For his initial work in 1872 Colvin was given an appropriation of $1,000.
Stations (preliminary sketches)

Station details

Bolt 17 – Mt. Skylight
Coven "old style"
(Circle-One)
At most of the stations on peaks other holes were drilled to hold the feet of the theodolite tripod. The surveyor desiring to avail himself of our work, and proceed from these stations for local measurements, will find it to his advantage to set his tripod by these foot holes, his instrument being almost instantly centered. As mentioned in last...
Signals & Towers

Signals & Towers

Signals & Towers

Signals & Towers

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The observations of angles are made in sets of ten; composed of five direct and five reverse observations, the telescope being reversed.

The following list, will take you to a web page and tell you "Errors and Precision of Stars Assumptions in the Adirondacks;" page 198 of 534. For further information, contact the author, Professor of Geology and Astronomy at Columbia University, New York, NY.

The telescope used is a Carl Zeiss, made in Germany. The field of view is 5 degrees, and the magnification 60x. The instrument is mounted on a precision bearing, and is capable of precise movement. The observations are made in sets of ten, and are corrected for any errors in the field work.
The 9" double vernier Kern Suiss Aarau?

The original "Grand Theodolite" as manufactured by Oerthling of Berlin, outfitted with signaling heliotrope.
Typical Gurley instrument used on boundary line retracement by the NYS Survey
James M. Vianna, PLS

Crossing the Hudson River
Emma 1864

County line in North River as per Colvin

County Line signal station, North River 1896

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"The Mapping of New York State: A Study in the History of Cartography"
David Yehling Allen

"The best (and apparently only) formal evaluation of his work by professional surveyors is a report on state mapping activities made for the Assembly in 1885. This report, which was prepared by W.F. Knowlbridge of Columbia College and W.S. Chaplin of Union College—purporting to "have examined critically and in detail the methods employed in the Adirondack survey." Its authors remarked that: "These examinations were begun with strong prejudices, on our part, against what may be termed the scientific integrity of this survey—prejudices which were produced by an examination of Mr. Colvin's several annual reports." They concluded, however, that the triangulation and other technical work done by Colvin was of high caliber: "It is doubtful whether the survey is excelled in accuracy and detail by any survey of a similar character conducted under similar circumstances."

Colvin & Rake at the "Elms" circa 1918
[Image of James M. Vianna, PLS]
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