

*It takes more than a good resume to get a government contract.*

## **Byron C. Riblet (1865-1952)**

**From:** [www.aspenglow.org/ski-history/](http://www.aspenglow.org/ski-history/)

*Byron C. Riblet came to Spokane as a railroad surveyor, then in 1897 worked for the Washington Water Power Co. as a civil engineer surveying and installing street car tracks in Spokane. As his engineering reputation spread, he landed a job in the British Columbia interior designing an aerial tramway. This began a career that ended only with his death in 1952. Riblet Tramway Co. constructed the "Magic Mile" chairlift at Timberline Lodge in 1938 [probably the second chairlift in America after the one installed at Sun Valley in 1936]. Early Riblet lifts were installed at Donner Summit, CA (1939), Mt Hood Ski Bowl (1948), Ski Acres (1949) and Hoodoo Bowl (1950). During the 1950s, Riblet installed chairlifts at Mt Baker, White Pass, Stevens Pass and Mt Spokane. Riblet chairlifts have been installed at other ski areas throughout the country.*

**From: "History of Spokane and Spokane County, Washington, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time"<sup>i</sup>, 1912.**

*BYRON C. RIBLET.*

*Byron C. Riblet is president of the Riblet Tramway Company, with offices in the Empire State building in Spokane, and in this connection is at the head of one of the most important industrial and engineering enterprises of the northwest. In this connection he has built up a business of extensive proportions and the system of tramways which he has inaugurated is now in use throughout the world. Mr. Riblet was born at Osage, Iowa, February 20, 1865, a son of William Jackson and Annie B. (Sutherland) Riblet. The father always followed agricultural pursuits to the time of his death, which occurred in April, 1903. There were three children in the family, the two brothers of our subject being: Walter S., who is American consul at Nelson, British Columbia; and Royal N., of this city.*

*Byron C. Riblet attended the public schools of his native town, there pursuing his education until he was prepared to enter the University of Minnesota, in September, 1883. In that institution he pursued a special course in civil engineering, which he completed in April, 1885, and from May until July of that year he was rodman for the Minneapolis & Pacific Railroad Company. From July, 1885, until February, 1886, he was engineer in charge of track laying and bridges for the Spokane & Palouse Railroad Company, and in March, 1886, he became leveler for the Northern Pacific Railroad*

*Company, in which connection he remained until February, 1887. In March of the same year he became engineer in charge of construction on a division of the Southern Pacific Railway Company, remaining in office until January, 1888. From February until December, 1888, he was associated with George P. Janes, of Spokane, Washington, in general engineering work. He was afterward with the Washington & Idaho Railway as locating engineer from Old Mission to Wallace, Idaho, was engineer in charge of construction on a division until February, 1889, and from March, 1889, until April, 1892, conducted a general engineering business with office in Spokane, designing and constructing the Ross Park Electric Railway, Ross Park Hydro-Electric Station and the Walla Walla Electric light hydraulic station and transmission line. He was next engaged as chief engineer of the Washington Water Power Company, including the designing and construction of forty miles of electric railway and equipment.*

*From February, 1893, until January, 1895, he was constructing hydraulic engineer at Spokane, designing and constructing the dam in Spokane river, and the pumping plant and distributing system. From February, 1895, until February, 1896, he was chief engineer with the Kittitas Irrigation Company, designing and constructing sixty miles of canal. At a later date he became chief engineer for the Noble Five Mining Company at Sandon, British Columbia, installing the water power plant and aerial tramway. This took him until April, 1897.*

*The succeeding year and a half were devoted to engineering for various mining companies in British Columbia and between September, 1898, and February, 1899, he designed and constructed the aerial tramway for the Last Chance Mining Company. From that date until March, 1903, he was engaged in designing and constructing about thirty aerial tramways, one sixteen miles long, in Wyoming; Peru, British Columbia; Alaska; and the northwest; and he designed and constructed the hydro-electric plant for the Grandy Mining Company at Grand Forks, British Columbia. From March, 1908, until April, 1908, he was chief engineer for the A. Leschen & Sons Rope Company, of St. Louis, Missouri, and had charge of the designing and construction of more than one hundred tramways. He is indeed widely known in his profession and the Riblet tramway is today used throughout the world in mining. It is an overhead cable, carrying buckets, in some cases for miles. It constitutes a notable construction feat in' engineering and places Mr. Riblet in a prominent and honorable position in engineering circles throughout the country.*

*On the 14th of February, 1893, Mr. Riblet was married to Miss Hallie Jane Chapman, a daughter of W. W. and Anna (Rodgers) Chapman, of Portland, Oregon, who were among the pioneer settlers of that state. Her grandfather, W. W. Chapman, started for Oregon at a very early day and served as a colonel in the Cayuse Indian war of 1818. He is also known as the organizer of the Portland Oregonian and was a very prominent newspaper man and influential in other connections. Mr. and Mrs. Riblet have two*

*children, Josephine and Virginia. Mr. Riblet is a member of All Saints cathedral and his social connections are with the Spokane Club and the Spokane Country Club. In professional lines he is connected with the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Engineers Club of New York. The family home is situated on the Little Spokane River, just outside the city limits and is an artistic and attractive residence, erected by Mr. Riblet.*

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<sup>i</sup> Durham, Nelson Wayne. **“History of the City of Spokane and Spokane Country, Washington”**. From its earliest settlement to the present time. Spokane, Chicago, S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1912.