



MINNESOTA

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# SURVEYOR

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## Minnesota Surveyor Upcoming Content Deadlines

Issue	Due Date	Publication Date
Winter 2024-25	January 1, 2025	January 2025
Spring 2025	April 1, 2025	April 2025
Summer 2025	July 1, 2025	July 2025
Fall 2025	October 1, 2025	October 2025



# MSPS CHAPTER 7. EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

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*TIM HOLPERIN LS*

It is nice to finally have some cool weather, hopefully it's making your field work more enjoyable. We just had a great time at our Emerging Professionals cookout which was held Saturday, September 28th at Otsego County Park. We had about a dozen folks show up and shared a lot of good conversation and camaraderie. Once again we had a few new faces, which I view as a huge success!

As many of you may know, Chapter 7 has moved to a sponsorship structure in lieu of charging dues, in hopes that it will remove barriers to participation. You can check out the sponsorship levels listed in our section of the Chapters page at [mnsurveyor.com](https://mnsurveyor.com). If your company is willing to become a sponsor, please reach out. If you are an emerging professional, I ask that you encourage your company to support our chapter. We would like to thank our current sponsors, MSPS, Westwood Professional Services, and Myriad Lakes LLC for their generous support.

One of the benefits that we are hoping to offer to Emerging Professionals is a book loan program for those studying for their exams. Before the chapter obtains new copies of select books, we would like to ask MSPS members if they would be willing to donate unused copies they may have collecting dust. We will however only be accepting certain titles, so please reach out for more information.

Our next chapter meeting will be occurring in conjunction with the MSPS Annual Meeting which will be held in Bemidji this year. The meeting will occur during the time slotted for chapter meetings, so please see the program for the official schedule.

Anyone that is interested in joining the Emerging Professionals chapter can sign up for the email list by using the registration link on the MSPS website's Chapters page. As usual, I encourage anyone that is interested, has comments, feedback, requests, whatever it may be, to send an email to [msps.ysn@gmail.com](mailto:msps.ysn@gmail.com). I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting or event!



# MINNESOTA GEOSPATIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES HONORED WITH NATIONAL AWARD

## MINNESOTA GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION OFFICE (MnGEO)

Oct. 16, 2024 (Saint Paul, MN) [The Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council's](#) (GAC) Public Land Survey System (PLSS) Legislative Subcommittee and [PLSS Preservation Committees](#) received the prestigious [Catalyst Award](#) at the [National States Geographic Information Council's](#) (NSGIC) annual conference. This award honors their outstanding work in securing funding and creating Minnesota's statewide [PLSS Monument Grant Program](#).

Minnesota IT Services Deputy Commissioner, Jon Eichten, praised the achievement: "The Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council's PLSS Legislative Subcommittee and Preservation Committees have shown outstanding leadership in securing funding and helping create the statewide PLSS Monument Grant Program. Receiving the Catalyst Award from the National States Geographic Information Council is a well-deserved recognition of their innovative efforts."

In May 2024, the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) awarded \$9.1 million in grants to 34 counties across Minnesota. The grants are being used to restore, maintain, and update PLSS markers and records, ensuring the long-term integrity of essential geospatial data. The program strengthens GIS data accuracy, supports informed decision-making, and enhances the state's geospatial infrastructure.

Alison Slaats, Minnesota's Chief Geospatial Information Officer and MnGeo Director, added: "We are proud of the Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council's PLSS Subcommittees for receiving the Catalyst Award from NSGIC. This recognition highlights their dedication and collaboration in preserving critical geospatial infrastructure. The PLSS Monument Grant Program will greatly improve data accuracy and decision-making across Minnesota, and we're excited to see its lasting impact."





The PLSS Preservation Committee continues to advise the grant program implementation, ensuring effective use of funds. These committees remain dedicated to advancing their mission, with the PLSS Remonumentation Subcommittee currently working to secure permanent funding for the program.

This recognition by NSGIC underscores the tremendous collaboration between Minnesota's land surveying and GIS communities. The state looks forward to the continued progress and success of the PLSS Monument Grant Program, which will leave a lasting impact on Minnesota's geospatial landscape.

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# RIGHTING A WRONG: RESTORING LANDS TO THE LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE.<sup>1</sup>

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*KRISTEN PETERS, BLM EASTERN STATES DEPUTY STATE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNICATIONS*

Cass County, Minnesota, is known for its rich history, abundant natural beauty, and renowned fishing. It also is the location of an injustice that is finally being righted.

In the mid-1800s, the Ojibwe people ceded millions of acres to create what is now Minnesota for a permanent home on the Leech Lake Reservation, which was established through treaties and executive orders. However, subsequent policies and laws eroded and fragmented the reservation, resulting in less than five percent of the treaty-guaranteed lands remain in trust today.

Ancestral homelands of the [Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe](#) also were lost through erroneous “Secretarial Transfers,” in which the Department of the Interior approved the transfer of Indian allotted lands without the consent of the original allottee heirs to the USDA Forest Service. Notably, thousands of acres of allotted lands within the Leech Lake Reservation were transferred between 1948 and 1959 without the proper consent of the rightful landowners. The Tribe maintains that these transfers resulted in it not having a sufficient land base to meet the current needs of its membership.

Steadfast advocacy by the Tribe to address this injustice is finally resulting in its ancestral lands being restored for future generations of the Ojibwe people. On December 23, 2020, the [Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation Restoration Act \(Public Law 116-255\)](#) became the law of the land. With the law’s passage, approximately 11,760 acres within Cass County managed by the Chippewa National Forest would be returned to Tribal ownership.

## **A Monumental Task**

As the Nation’s public land surveyors, the Bureau of Land Management played a critical role in helping restore these lands to the Ojibwe people. Initially, surveyors from BLM Eastern States worked collaboratively with representatives from the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Forest Service and the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) to research, identify and select the lands to be returned to the Tribe.

Land records uncovered further injustices. A records search of all Chippewa National Forest land holdings within Cass County revealed that the erroneous transfers were more widespread than initially estimated.

“My colleagues at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and I took on the immense task of reviewing the Secretarial Transfers in the records of the BIA’s Land Title and Records Office,” said BLM Indian Lands Surveyor Kenneth Roy. “Through this comprehensive review, we determined that an additional 4,400 acres were wrongfully transferred from the Leech Lake Reservation to the Forest Service.



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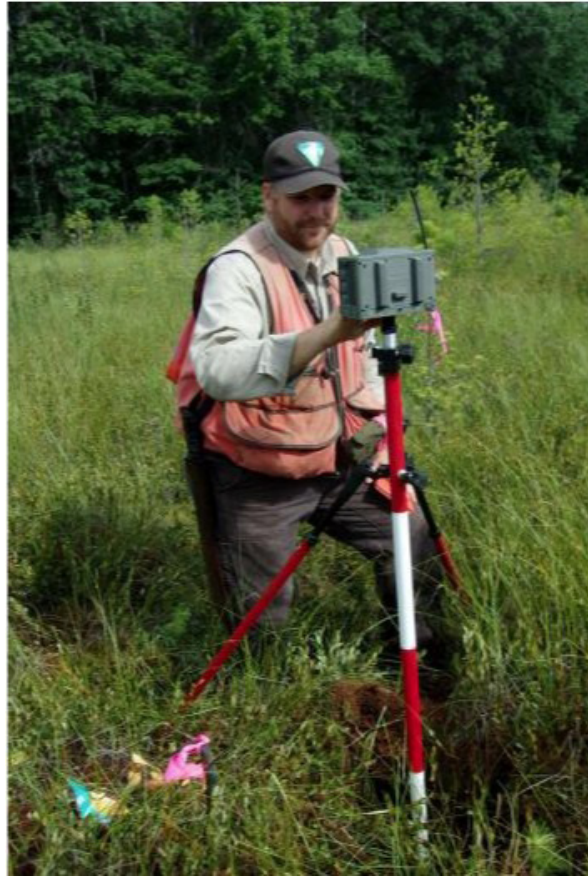
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# *RIGHTING A WRONG: RESTORING LANDS TO THE LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE*

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Cadastral surveyor Eric Wright works in Chippewa National Forest establishing the boundaries for the parcels identified for transfer to the Leech Lake Band of the Ojibwe. BLM photo.

Congress is now considering new legislation that will allow the Forest Service to return these additional lands to the Tribe.

The 2020 law allows for the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to select certain lands within Cass County for land consolidation. Ten parcels selected by the Tribe required federal surveys to partition out existing recreational lease areas of the Chippewa National Forest. BLM cadastral surveyors have been on the ground surveying these lands since 2022.

Over the last three summers, BLM cadastral surveyor Brock Frierhood joined Roy in establishing and marking the boundaries for the parcels identified for transfer. Staff from the Chippewa National Forest and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe assisted with the field work.

“You develop a certain rapport and relationship with others when spending that much time in the woods of northern Minnesota lugging equipment and things through woods, swamps, and hills and dealing with the abundant population of bugs,” noted Roy. “Working alongside our Tribal partners provided an opportunity for us as BLM cadastral surveyors to share our technical knowledge and methods while learning the cultural ways of the Ojibwe people.”

On June 20, 2024, the Forest Service announced the transfer of 11,778 national forest acres to the Leech Lake Band of the Ojibwe. With this transfer, the lands are now held in trust by the Bureau of





BLM cadastral survey team Jelani Jones, Brock Frierhood, and Travis Hand works alongside USDA Forest Service Surveyor Ted Sommer in Chippewa National Forest in establishing the boundaries for the parcels identified for transfer to the Leech Lake Band of the Ojibwe. BLM photo.

Indian Affairs for the Tribe, which will determine how these lands will be used to meet the needs of present and future generations.

On the last day of field work, members of the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management joined Roy and Frierhood in placing the final corner monument marking the exact location for the last tract surveyed by the BLM.

“Tribal members performed all the work marking the final boundary corner and dedicated the monument to the late Richard Robinson, director of the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management. He worked tirelessly to see these lands restored before his unfortunate passing recently,” stated Roy. “Personal items from Mr. Robinson were brought by his son to the dedication, and they will be documented in the official field notes of the survey. It was a symbolic event that I will never forget.”

The last day of field work coincided with the Tribe’s celebration of the return of its ancestral lands. The commemorative ceremony, held on July 17, brought together community members to showcase the transferred lands, explain how the lands were lost and the impact on the Ojibwe community, and hear remarks from dignitaries, including the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Council, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Homer Wilkes, Interior’s Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland, U.S. Senator Tina Smith, U.S. Congresswoman Betty McCollum, and Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. Speakers noted that restoring these lands to the Leech Lake Reservation will help the Tribe address critical housing needs, expand access to sacred wild rice beds, and improve the relationship between the Ojibwe community and the Federal Government.

## *RIGHTING A WRONG: RESTORING LANDS TO THE LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE*

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The final corner monument is dedicated to the late Richard Robinson, director of the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management. With BLM Indian Lands Surveyor Ken Roy looking on, the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management team adds Mr. Richardson's personal items to the monument for the last tract surveyed. BLM photo

Roy shared that the ceremony commemorated Robinson and his contributions to return these lands to the Ojibwe people. Dave Bismark, representing Leech Lake Division of Resource Management staff, reflected on Robinson's work and highlighted the previous day's placement of the last survey corner monument. Bismark and his colleagues at the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management spent countless hours assisting BLM surveyors with the field work. Bismark began his remarks noting, "It was the one of coolest things I have ever done."





Ojibwe Nation Drum Group performs during the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Land Restoration Celebration on July 17, 2024. USDA Forest Service photo by Marc J. Sanchez.

## The Work Continues

While the monuments have been set on the lands now returned to the Tribe, the BLM’s job is not done. BLM surveyors continue to prepare survey plats and field notes to document the correct acreage of the transfer. While not needed to legally return the lands to the Tribe, this extensive and important paperwork depicts the parcel boundaries and provides a detailed narrative description of the survey process. Once finalized, the plats and field notes will properly document the return of these lands to the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in official land records for perpetuity. The BLM anticipates filing the official plats for the 10 partitioned tracts next year.

## About the BLM’s Cadastral Survey Program

The [BLM’s Cadastral Survey Program](#) is one of the oldest and most fundamental functions of the U.S. Government. The program has deep roots that go back two centuries, from the nation’s first surveys of public land after the Revolutionary War to current efforts to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands. The Cadastral Survey Program is responsible for surveying all federal interest and Indian lands. The program’s work helps maintain legal structure for title ownership of land. The word “cadastral” is derived from cadastre, meaning a public record, survey, or map of the value, extent and ownership of land as a basis of taxation. These surveys provide public land managers and the public with information essential to correctly determining ownership rights and privileges and facilitating good land management decisions.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blm.gov/blog/2024-10-03/righting-wrong-restoring-lands-leech-lake-band-ojibwe>

# FOOTSTEPS ... INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL OF THE NORTHWEST (1796)

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*ROD SQUIRES, EMERITUS UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA*

One of the inevitabilities of research and writing is that some of the rich details of the past are necessarily condensed or abbreviated. Here's one example.

On May 18, 1796 Congress enacted "An Act providing for the sale of the lands of the United States, in the territory north-west of the river Ohio, and above the mouth of Kentucky river."<sup>1</sup> C. Albert White called the act "a milestone in the history of the public land surveys," for its profound and lasting effect on the public land surveying operations throughout the country, establishing a system of administering the public land surveying operations that would last throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Section 1 of the Act stated,

(A) surveyor general shall be appointed, whose duty it shall be to engage a sufficient number of skilful (sic) surveyors as his deputies; whom he shall cause, without delay, to survey and mark the unascertained outlines of the lands lying northwest of the river Ohio, and above the mouth of the river Kentucky, in which the title of the Indian tribes have been extinguished, and to divide the same in the manner hereinafter directed; he shall have authority to frame regulations and instructions for the government of his deputies; to administer the necessary oaths, upon their appointment; and to remove them for negligence or misconduct in office.<sup>3</sup>

On November 5, 1796 President George Washington appointed Rufus Putnam Surveyor-General.<sup>4</sup>

On January 25, 1797, Putnam, then in Marietta, wrote to Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury the following letter, having received no instructions on how to proceed in his duties.

Having been appointed Surveyor General by the President of the United States, on the fifth of November, I wrote the Secretary of State, requesting to be informed in several matters which I conceived material, relating to prosecuting the Surveys, in answer to which he informed me that, "conceiving the business to pertain properly to the Department of the Treasury he had sent my letter to you," I have waited more than a month expecting to be honoured (sic) with your commands, but receiving no information from you, & apprehending that my letter, above mentioned, may be misplaced or forgotten – I take the liberty to repeat to you the substance of that letter, as it respects the execution of the Surveys, (Vizt) – that I am ready to enter on the business as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made; But before I proceed to engage with any Deputy Surveyor I expect to be instructed in regard to the compensation to be allowed to assistant Surveyors, Chain Carriers & Axe Men agreeably to the 10th Section of the act intituled (sic) "An Act providing for the sale of Lands &C." I wish also to know when and in what manner they are to be paid; whether there is any appropriation of monies for defraying the expence (sic) & if there is, in what manner it is to be drawn out – also whether Government will make any



advances for the purpose of laying in provisions in the proper season of procuring them (to be furnished to the Surveyors who execute the work to be accounted for by them as part pay for their services). I wish also to know what number of Townships or Miles a Deputy Surveyor shall be obliged to run before he shall have a right to claim payment for his services. These circumstances I not only wish, but conceive it is necessary I should be ascertained of, that I may not be liable to enter into contracts, which it will not be in my power to perform. And as the Laws contemplate the Survey of all the vacant unappropriated Lands lying North West of the River Ohio, and above the mouth of the River Kentucky in which the title of the Indian Tribes have been extinguished, I beg leave to suggest, that in my opinion it will be proper to have the boundary lines between these lands & the present Indian claims ascertained as soon as may be, to prevent all danger of our encroaching on the Indian lands in running the several tracts into Townships & because any location near them before the boundary lines are surveyed would probably occasion jealousies in the minds of the Indians which might prove of very bad consequences. I also wish to know if it is the expectation of Government that the running these boundary lines is to be under my directions or whether a special Commission is to be issued to some person or persons, for that purpose. If it is to be under my superintendency, as the first section of the act providing for the sale of the lands &c &c. appears to express, I wish to know if any special provision is made for defraying the expence (sic) if not I pray whether such provision ought not to be made, because I conceive in order to give satisfaction, it will be proper to invite a number of Indian Chiefs to be present, & because that in my opinion these lines ought to be made very conspicuous by opening a Vestige of some feet in width which would be attended with considerable additional expence (sic) beyond the Survey of any other lines, & cannot be executed at the common allowance pr Mile. I also wish to be informed what part of the other survey, it is the wish of Government should be first attended to. I hope Sir, you will be so good as to resolve me in these several queries as soon as may be, as the Season is fast approaching when the Surveys ought to commence, and I must repeat the observation, that I cannot with propriety enter into any Contract for executing the business, until an appropriation of money is made by Government for paying the expence (sic) which I do not find to be the case, by any act of Congress that has come to my knowledge, and besides, unless that some special provision is made for the expence (sic) of ascertaining the boundary lines between the present Indian Claims & the lands in which the Indian title is extinguished I much doubt if any Surveyor can be found to undertake the business.<sup>5</sup>

Secretary Wolcott answered on March 14, 1797, stating,

Your Letter of January 25th was seasonably received, but as no measures could be taken by the Executive until an appropriation of money had been made, and as this measure was not adopted by Congress until the 3rd instant, it has been out of my power to answer your enquiries before this time.

1<sup>st</sup> The President of the United States directs, that it be submitted to your discretion to contract for the compensation to be allowed to the Assistant Surveyors, Chain Carriers & Axe men, on the best terms which may be practicable; provided that the whole expence (sic) of surveying & marking the lines do not exceed three dollars pr Mile for every Mile that shall be actually run & marked.

2<sup>nd</sup> The purchase of provisions on public account for the use of the Surveyors and their Assistants, does not appear to be expedient; as this Measure would tend to complicate the accounts of your

# FOOTSTEPS ... INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL OF THE NORTHWEST (1796)

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Department – reasonable advances of money will however be made directly to yourself from the Treasury, for which you will be held accountable. These monies may at your discretion be expended, in purchasing, provisions for the Surveyors to be accounted for by them in part payment for their services but no credits will be allowed to you, except for services performed according to the Law. When advances are made, it will therefore be proper & necessary that you should be satisfied with the security therefor and that the same will be duly accounted for.

3<sup>rd</sup> Your accounts are to be rendered to the Treasury for settlement, Quarter yearly, closed to the last days, of March, June, September & December. In these accounts all monies advanced from the Treasury to you, will be credited – the debits will consist of your Salary, & charges for services performed by the Surveyors & their Assistants pursuant to Contracts to be made with you. If monies are advanced on account, a list thereof is to be transmitted, and the amount thereof is to be stated as a component part of the balance to be accounted for by you in a subsequent settlement.

4<sup>th</sup> Copies of all contracts made by you with the Assistant Surveyors or other persons, are from time to time to be transmitted to this Department, as soon as the same are completed.

5<sup>th</sup> The unascertained outlines of the Lands lying North West of the River Ohio, & above the mouth of the River Kentucky, in which the titles of the Indian Tribes have been extinguished by the Treaty with General Wayne on the 3d of August 1795, are to be run under your direction. You will inform General Wilkinson when & where you are ready to commence running the line, who will have orders from the Secretary of War, to furnish an escort, & who will take measures for convening such number of Indians as shall be thought proper; the expences (sic) of the escort & Indians will be defrayed by the Department of War. Unless special inconveniences & extra expence (sic) render the measure inexpedient, you will in the first place ascertain and mark the North boundary of the Tract appropriated for satisfying Military Warrants, lying between the Scioto and the Tuscororas (sic) branch of the Muskingum River.

6<sup>th</sup> Your special attention to the completion of the surveys of the Lands appropriated for satisfying military Warrants by the Act of June 1<sup>st</sup> 1796, is requested.

7<sup>th</sup> You will be pleased to take measures for the survey of the three Tracts, of Shoenbrun, Gnadenhutten & Salem appropriated for the Society of the United Brethren by a Resolution of the late Congress, and an act of Congress of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1796. The Agents of the Society will proceed from Bethlehem in about three Weeks.

8<sup>th</sup> You will make arrangements for completing as soon as may be, the surveys of seven Ranges of Townships, below the Great Miami of the Ohio & above the mouth of the Kentucky River, also between the Scioto River & the lands purchased by the Ohio Company. Also between the Southern boundary of the Connecticut Claims & the seven Ranges of Townships, which were surveyed in pursuance of an Ordinance of Congress under the late confederation, passed on the 20th of May 1785. In commencing surveys within one or all of the several Tracts abovementioned, you will be governed by considerations having reference to oeconomy, (sic) the natural course of settlement the comparative fertility of the different Tracts, and the probability of speedy sales on account of the United States: Of the measures which you may adopt & your reasons, therefore you will be pleased to keep me duly advised.



9<sup>th</sup> Plats of each Township are to be neatly & accurately protracted according to Law on durable paper, by a scale of two inches to a mile which are to be recorded in books to be kept in your Office. Copies of the plats & field notes are to be transmitted to this Department. The field notes are to be made out on good paper of uniform size & with such margin as will admit of being bound in durable books to remain in the Treasury.

10<sup>th</sup> Yo[u] will observe that the Law requires that the Surveyor General, the Assistant Surveyors & Chain Carriers, should before entering on their several duties take an Oath or Affirmation faithfully to perform the same. Though not specially enjoined, it appears to be proper, that transcripts of the Oaths or Affirmations so taken, should be transmitted to this Department.

11<sup>th</sup> You are authorised (sic) to draw from time to time, such a sum not exceeding four thousand Dollars, as shall be necessary to enable you to execute the duties before mentioned, observing that your drafts are to be of the form, hereto annexed; Of all drafts you will advise me by the Post.

12<sup>th</sup> You will be pleased to correspond with this Department stating the progress of the business committed to your management, and any points upon which further instructions shall appear necessary.

I have given directions to have a standard Chain prepared, by which to regulate the Chains of the Surveyors, which will be transmitted as soon as possible. In the meantime however your arrangements need not be suspended. As it may be difficult for you to procure suitable Stationary, the Register will by my direction transmit a few blank books, suitable for the records of the field notes and a quantity of paper on which the plats of Townships are to be protracted.

The Act of Congress makes no provision for Clerkship in your Office, although it is certain that the service of a Clerk will be necessary. Though I have no authority to stipulate for the United States on this subject, yet I do not hesitate to advise you to keep your accounts & records in perfect order, in confidence that Congress will hereafter authorise any necessary and reasonable expence (sic).

The Secretary of War will direct that that the escort which may attend the running of the Indian boundary shall assist in marking the line in a proper manner. With this aid, I have no doubt, that an allowance of three dollars per Mile will be found sufficient.<sup>6</sup>

Enclosed with the letter were two items. One was the Form of a Bill that Putnam could send to Samuel Meridith, Treasurer of the United States, for payment. The second was a sketch of a Plat of a Township in Sections (see below)

# FOOTSTEPS ... INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL OF THE NORTHWEST (1796)

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Surveyor-General Putnam acknowledged receiving the Secretary's letter on April 1 stating "I have attended to their contents and shall endeavour (sic) to put the business of the surveys in proper train as soon as may be." As a P.S. he asked "I will thank you Sir, to forward me as soon as may be, a copy of General Wayne's Treaty, so far as respects the Duty of my Department."<sup>2</sup>

## Postscript

White condensed these letters into the following,

On January 25, 1797, Putnam wrote to Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, requesting instructions for conducting the surveys; he suggested a contract system with deputy surveyors but needed authority for contracting and how to conduct the financing. Wolcott replied on March 11, 1797, giving Putnam authority to obligate the government through contracts. Funds for payment of the deputies, for which he had to account, were allotted to Putnam, and copies of the contracts were to be sent to Wolcott.<sup>3</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [Stat. 464.](#)

<sup>2</sup> White, C. Albert. [A History of the Rectangular Survey System](#) (Washington D. C. Government Printing Office. 1983) p.29. "The public land surveys and the Land Act of May 18 1796" [Minnesota Surveyor vol. 9 No. 2](#) (Fall, 2002) 22-24, 26.

<sup>3</sup> [1 Stat. 464.](#)

<sup>4</sup> About Putnam White wrote "Though Putnam was not well educated, was deficient in mathematics, and was to allow poor surveys to be executed, he was probably the best man for the job. He knew the country, was highly respected in the territory, and could draw a large number of experienced surveyors in a short



time to execute the work.” [White endnote 2](#) p. 34. For more on the first surveyor-general, see [Rufus Putnam Biography](#).

<sup>5</sup> Carter Clarence (ed) [Territorial Papers of the United States vol. 2](#) The Territory Northwest of the River Ohio, 1787-1803 (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office. 1934) p. 588-589. In a footnote on p. 589 is the following “By the act of Mar. 3, 1797, making appropriations for the support of government for 1797, \$25,000 was provided to carry the surveys into effect (1 Stat. 500). A digital image of this letter can be found in vol. 1 “Letters sent by the General Land Office to Surveyors General, 1796-1901” [National Archives Microfilm M27, vol. 1](#) images 11-12 on the Family Search web site. You need an account to get access but the account is free. Search the catalog by “Author” using “United States Surveyor General.”

<sup>6</sup> [Territorial Papers of the United States vol. 2](#) p. 591- 594. A digital image of this letter can be found as images 12-14 “Letters sent by the General Land Office to Surveyors General, 1796-1901” [National Archives Microfilm M27, vol. 1](#), on the Family Search web site.

<sup>7</sup> [National Archives Microfilm M27, vol. 1](#) image 14

<sup>8</sup> [White endnote 2](#) p. 34

# THE ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE CORNERS ON TOWNSHIP EXTERIOR LINES

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## Introduction

A facet of research is that re-reading something with perhaps more care than a previous reading or with a different purpose in mind can reveal to “new” information – information that has always been there but you, the reader, has never paid attention to it.

When one of the authors of this article (Chris) told the other (Rod) that the 1846 instructions contained a change in the way the deputies would tie their section lines to the norther township exterior line, I looked, yet again, at C. Albert White’s book.<sup>1</sup>

## The 1846 Instructions

On pages 110 and 111 White stated that “the most significant item” contained in the letter from the Commissioner of the General Land Office to the Surveyor General of Wisconsin and Iowa, George Jones, dated August 31, 1846, was “the elimination of double corners around the exterior boundaries of the townships.” He also wrote, “Of course, this idea had already been in use to some extent prior to 1846, especially in Iowa,” but I do not know the source of his information. In addition White wrote that “Jones prepared his 1846 Instructions to the Deputy Surveyors following these annual instructions and incorporated the new requirement,” but Jones issued his instructions on May 28, 1846, three months before receiving the Commissioner’s letter.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1846 instructions, reprinted in White’s book, under the heading “Subdivision” subheading

“Method of subdividing; Random, Corrected and True lines, and Diagram,” Surveyor General Jones describes, in paragraphs 1-5, how the deputy was to run and mark the first tier of sections, the lines forming the west and north boundaries of sections 36, 25, 24, 13 and 12.<sup>3</sup> Then he was to run a random line between sections 1 and 2 from the corner of sections 1, 2, 11, 12, after which he was advised,

If this line should not intersect at the post established for corner to sections 1, 2, 35 and 36 upon the township line, you will note the distance that you fall east or west of the same, from which distance you will calculate a course that will run a true line south to the corner from which your random started.<sup>4</sup>

This, of course, eliminated double corners.

Previous instructions followed by the deputies in the Wisconsin and Iowa surveying district, which were, we believe, the general instructions issued by the Surveyor General of the Northwest in 1833, contain two relevant paragraphs under the heading “Of Subdividing Township into Sections,” clearly creating double corners.<sup>5</sup>



In closing out the section lines to the north boundary of the township, unless the section lines intersect that boundary at the section corners thereon established for the adjoining townships, you must set a post, and take bearing trees at each such intersection, and measure and note the distance to the posts previously set for the adjoining township, and on which side of such posts. But wherever the closing lines of the sections, intersect at the posts on the north boundary, such posts become common for the sections on both sides of the town boundary. Bearing trees are however to be taken, and the proper marks and numbers made, for and within the sections between which the closing lines are run. In establishing the corners on the north and west sides of the townships, where the section lines close thereon, the bearing trees, wherever it may be practicable, are to be taken on the south and east sides, respectively, of those boundaries.<sup>6</sup>

From the corner of sections 1, 2, 11, 12 he was to run a line between sections 1 and 2. The instructions then stated

On this line, the distance at which the north boundary is intersected, is to be carefully noted. If you should not intersect at the post established for corner to sections 35 and 36 in the adjoining township, you must carefully measure and note in your Field Book, the distance of the point of intersection from said post, shewing whether you fell east or west thereof: and at that point, you will set a post and establish a corner for sections 1 and 2.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

Re-reading a book or an article may be useful.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> White C. Albert “[A History of the Rectangular Survey System](#).” (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1983)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 339

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 343

<sup>4</sup> Id

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted in White p. 291-300

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 297

<sup>7</sup> Id

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