

Basic Rectangular Surveys

The Public Land Survey System

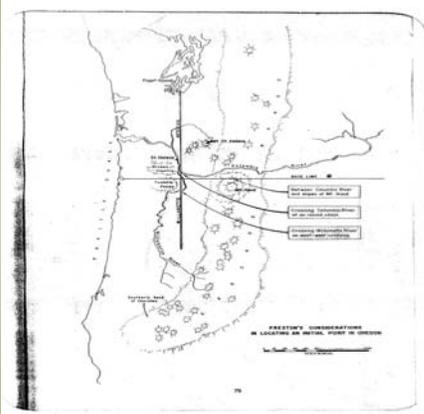
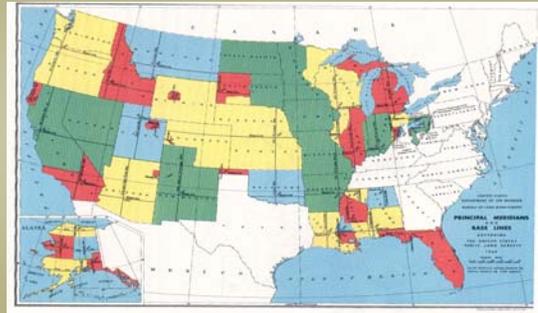
What Are We Going To Talk About?

- The rectangular survey system
- How it is designed
- How the surveys were supposed to be performed
- Some unique aspects of the system

What is the PLSS?

- The Public Land Survey System was established by the Land Ordinance of 1785
- Except for the original colonies, Texas, and Hawaii, all of the U.S. is under the PLSS.

PLSS Principal Meridians & Base Lines



Cadastral Survey

Creates

Original Survey

Retraces

Retracement Survey

Reestablishes

Dependent Resurvey

Independent Resurvey

Act of 1805

"Original Township, Section, Quarter-Section, and other monuments as physically evidenced must stand as the *true corners of the subdivisions which they were intended to represent.*"

Legal Significance of the Survey Plat

"... when lands are granted according to an official plat of survey, the plat itself, with all its notes, lines, descriptions and landmarks, becomes a part of the grant or deed . . ."

Keep in Mind

Monuments Control

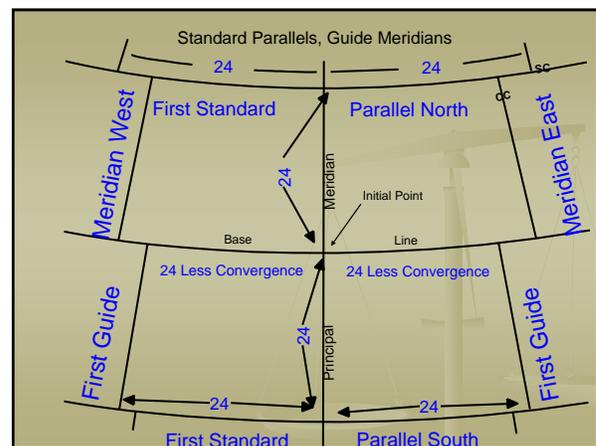
Plat Defines Title

Land Surveying Authority

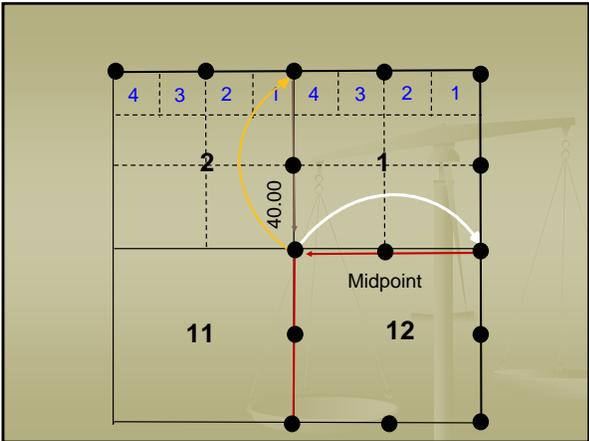
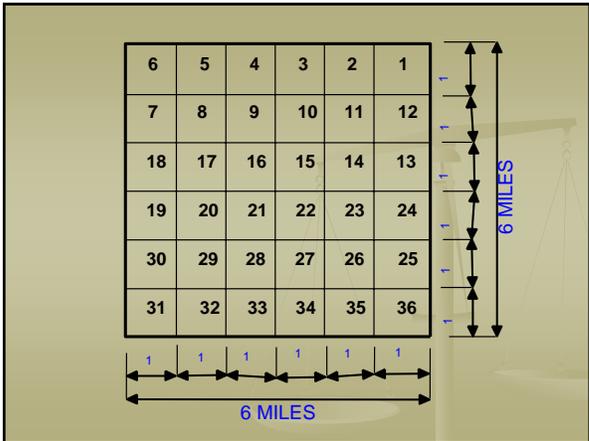
- Federal Authority
 - "The Secretary Of The Interior Or Such Officer As He May Designate Shall Perform All Executive Duties Pertaining To The Surveying...Of The Public Lands." (43 U.S.C. 2)
 - Records at BLM Offices

Land Surveying Authority

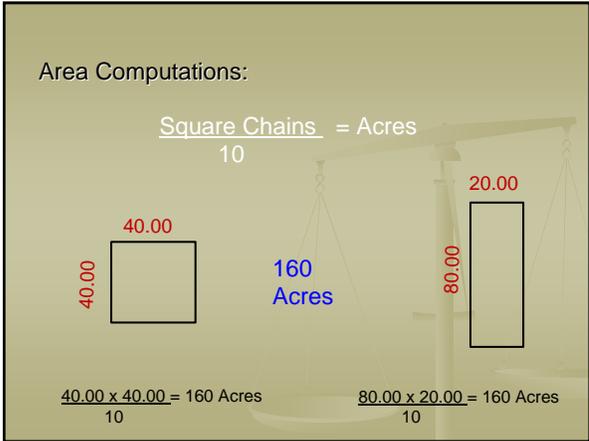
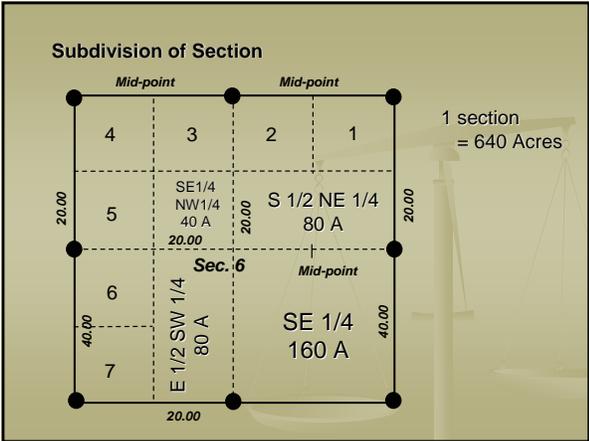
- Individual State Authority
 - After Title To Land Has Passed From The Public Domain Into Private Ownership, Jurisdiction Over The Property, Including Surveying Authority, Passes To The State.
 - Records at county or similar offices

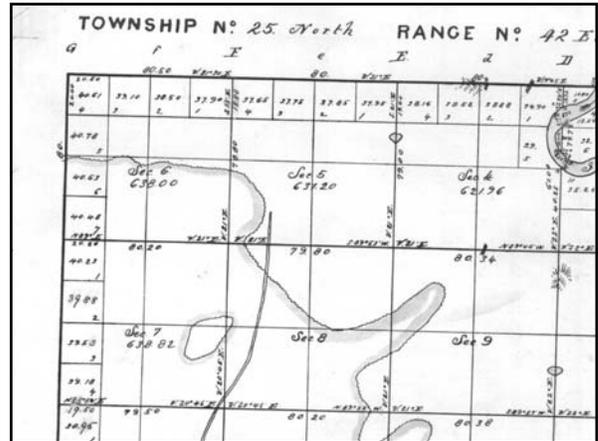
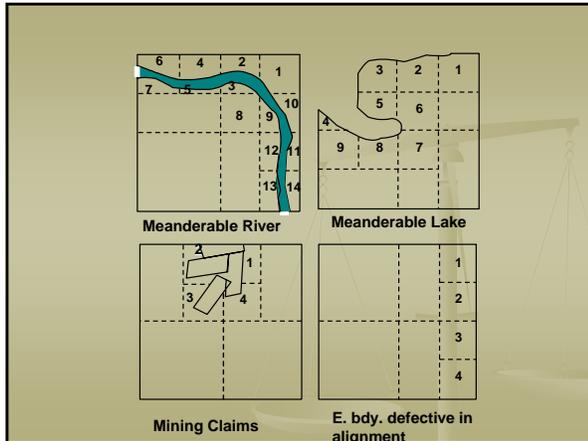


Boustrophedonic?



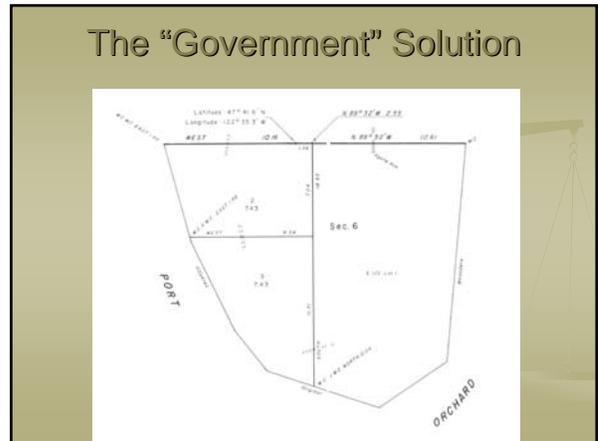
- ### PLSS Below the Section Level
- The original surveys did not break the system down any further
 - Sections and parts of section were protracted on the plats
 - It was anticipated that any further surveying would be performed by county or local surveyors



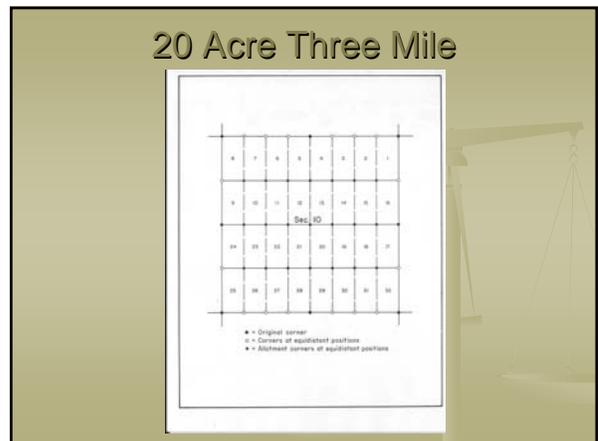


How About Half-Lot Descriptions?

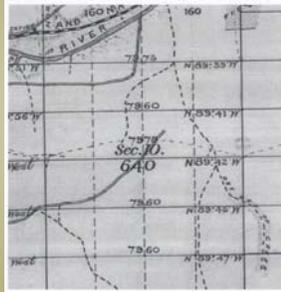
- An landowner died and left the N ½ of his property to one daughter, the S ½ to another daughter. The E ½ is sold to a private individual who wants you to mark the dividing line. The property is bounded by water on three sides. How do you divide the lot?



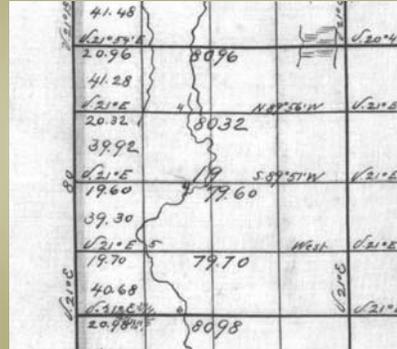
Indian Allotment Surveys and Three Mile Section Subdivisions



3-Mile GLO Survey

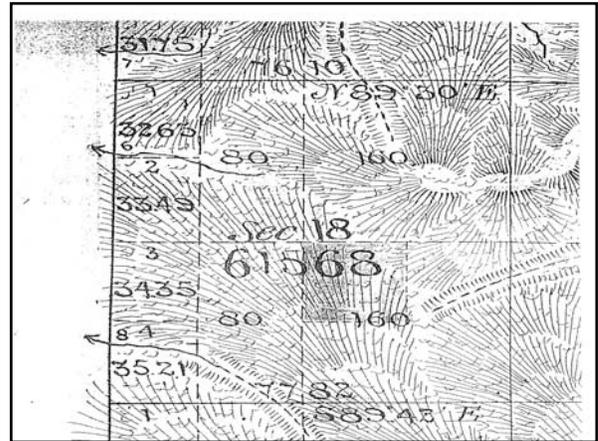


What Difference Does It Make?

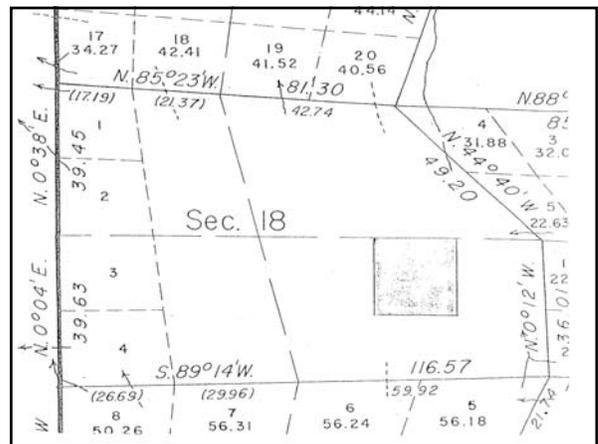


Metes and Bounds Descriptions

- Widely used in the original 13 colonies
- Doesn't provide for easy identification of land, especially in today's automated systems
- Descriptions crafted many years ago can be next to impossible to follow today
- Generally, they describe a beginning point then in narrative form describe the boundaries of the land in question



Was changed to
 "Beginning at a point 1320 feet west of the 1/4 section corner of sections 17 and 18, thence south 1320 feet, thence west 1320 feet, thence north 1320 feet, thence east 1320 feet to the point of beginning"



Remember The Resurveyor's Guidelines

- Reestablish lost corners as close to the original position as possible
- "Follow the footsteps..."
- Determine what the land owner considers his or her corners to be
- Check all available records, develop the situation, and consult with BLM's appropriate Cadastral Survey Office for guidance if assistance is needed

A Quick Review

- The rectangular survey system
- How it is designed
- How the surveys were supposed to be performed
- Some unique aspects of the system

Survey Books by C. Albert White

- "A History of the Rectangular Survey System" (out of print)
- "Initial Points of the Rectangular Survey System" (www.plsc.net)
- "A Casebook of Oregon Donation Land Claims" (www.plso.org)

Information

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