



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

U. S. SURVEYOR GENERAL OF MINNESOTA An Inventory of Its Descriptive Lists of Survey Posts

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Agency:** United States. Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota.
- Series Title:** Descriptive lists of survey posts.
- Dates:** 1849-1907.
- Abstract:** Compiled lists describing survey reference posts and locations of section, quarter section, and meander posts for each township in Minnesota.
- Quantity:** 6.0 cu. ft. (4 oversize boxes).
- Location:** See Detailed Description section for box locations.

HISTORY OF THE MINNESOTA LAND SURVEY

The Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota, established by Act of Congress of March 3, 1857, was responsible for conducting the original government survey of the public domain in the territory and state of Minnesota.

The earliest surveys of land in Minnesota were conducted under the jurisdiction of the Surveyor General of Iowa and Wisconsin, headquartered at Dubuque, Iowa. These surveys, completed between 1848 and May 1857, were primarily on land located between the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers or in the southeastern corner of Minnesota. After the establishment of the Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota, copies of the field notes, plats, and other records relevant to these surveys were transferred from Dubuque to St. Paul.

The Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota continued in operation until December 1907, when the survey of Minnesota was essentially complete. After 1907, the commissioner of the U. S. General Land Office served, ex officio, as Surveyor General of Minnesota, and handled any requisite surveying activities and questions. A congressional act of 1940 provided that the records of the Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota be turned over to the Minnesota Secretary of State.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

The records also include comments on the topography, soil quality, and plant cover of each section. The lists were compiled by the surveyor general's office from information in the deputy surveyors' field notes and, in effect, are an abstract of the field notes. Some of the lists are dated and signed by the surveyor general.

Lists for the following townships have been found to be missing:

Becker County: R37-42, T141-142.

Beltrami County: R30-31, T146; R32, T155-156; R33-35, T151-156; R36-39, T151-154.

Cass County: R28, T42; R29, T141-144; R30, T142-144; R31, T140, 143-144.

Clearwater County: R36, T151-152; R37, T152; R38, T143-146, 152 (White Earth and Red Lake?).

Grant County: R41, T130.

Itasca County: R26, T145-148; R27, T145-148; R28, T146, 148; R29, T146.

Koochiching County: R22, T65; R25, T66-67; R26, T68; R27, T67-68; R25-27, T159-160; R28, T157; R29, T155-156, 159.

Lake County: R8-10, T161.

Lake of the Woods County: R32-35, T157-158.

Lincoln County: R46, T113.

Mahnomen County: R39, T143-146; R40, T143-144; R41-42, T143-146.

Ottertail County: R37, T133; R38, T133-134; R39, T133-136; R40, T134-135; R42, T132-133; R43, T132-133.

Pennington County: R39-41, T153-154; R42, T154.

Polk County: R39, T147, 150.

Pope County: R37, T124; R38, T123-124.

Roseau County: R37, T161.

Swift County: R37, T121-122; R38, T121-122.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE RECORDS

Arranged by county, thereunder by range and township. Records for a particular township may be filed under more than one county or, more often, under the county in which the largest part of the township is located.

ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

Other records relating to these records, including the original field notes, can be found in the records of the Secretary of State and U. S. Surveyor General of Minnesota, in same repository.

INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

Public lands—Minnesota—Surveying.
Soil survey—Minnesota.
Townships—Minnesota.
Vegetation surveys—Minnesota.

Places:

Minnesota—Description and travel.
Minnesota—Surveys.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the location shown below.

Location

106.F.12.6F	Aitkin - Dodge Counties.
106.F.12.7B	Douglas - Lyon Counties.
106.F.12.8F	McLeod - Roseau Counties.
106.F.13.1B	St. Louis - Yellow Medicine Counties.