



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Minnesota State Archives

U. S. SURVEYOR GENERAL OF MINNESOTA An Inventory of Its Land Survey Field Notes

OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

- Agency:** United States. Office of Surveyor General of Minnesota.
- Series Title:** Land survey field notes,
- Dates:** 1848-1907.
- Abstract:** Handwritten copies of the notebooks kept by surveyors as they laid out the exterior and subdivision lines of each Minnesota township, recording survey reference points and marker posts and including plat drawings and comments on natural features. Supplemented by field notes of other surveyors commissioned to examine the accuracy and completeness of the surveys.
- Quantity:** 31.0 cu. ft. (31 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.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORDS

These records comprise two sets:

Field Notes of Township Exterior and Subdivision Survey Lines;
Field Notes of Survey Examiners.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE RECORDS

The field notes of survey lines are arranged by principal meridian, range, and township; the field notes of survey examiners are chronological.

ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL FORMS

The originals exterior and interior survey field notes are also available in the repository; filed under Secretary of State.

RELATED MATERIALS

Other records relating to the land survey 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

These records are 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.

Places:

Minnesota—Surveys.

Types of Documents:

Maps—Minnesota.

Field notes—Minnesota.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited volume and page or item and folder title here]. U. S. Surveyor General of Minnesota. Land Survey Field Notes. Minnesota Historical Society. State Archives.
See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

Accession Information:

Accession number(s): None; 415

Processing Information:

Catalog ID No.: 1735906

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

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

Field Notes of Township Exterior and Subdivision Survey Lines, 1848-1907.

Handwritten copies of the notebooks kept by deputy surveyors as they laid out the exterior and subdivision lines of each Minnesota township, recording survey reference points and the location of section, quarter-section, and meander posts. They also include plat drawings and comments on the topography, soil quality, plant cover, and other natural features of each township. The field notes for each township also give the names of the deputy surveyor and his assistants, dates the survey was begun and completed, affidavits attesting to the accuracy of the survey, and the surveyor general's certification of the accuracy of the copied notes.

These copies were made by the surveyor general's office. Some were made immediately after completion of the survey; others were done much later. Several are identified as copies of copies. They include both bound volumes containing field notes for several townships, and interfiled folders of unbound notes for single townships. In general, they are arranged by principle meridian, then range, then township; the bound volumes sometimes slightly disrupt this sequence.

This is not a complete set of survey field notes; notes for some townships are missing from volumes. The original land survey field notes are cataloged separately under the Secretary of State.

Note to users: Bindings of many volumes have been broken and pages removed; some leather bindings are badly deteriorated.

Note to users: R (Range); T (Township); N (North); W (West).

Location

111.E.5.6F

4th Principal Meridian:

R6E, T63, 64N. partial folder.

R7E, T63, 64N. partial folder.

R1W, T60N. partial volume.

R6W, T57-60, 63-66N. 3 folders and partial volume.

[Ranges 2W-5W appear to have been excised from this volume at some unknown time, leaving only Ranges 1W and 6W.]

R7W, T55-57, 59, 63-65N. 3 folders and partial volume.

R8W, T54-56, 62-65. 3 folders and partial volume.

R9W, T53-55, 62-65N. 2 folders and partial volume.

R10W, T52, 54, 55, 62-65N. 2 folders and partial volume.

Location

- 111.E.5.7B R11W, T55, 57, 59, 60, 62, 64-66N. 1 volume, 2 folders.
R12W, T64N. 1 folder.
R15W, T42-55N. 1 volume.
R16W, T41-47N. 1 volume.
R18W, T34, 40-48N. 1 volume.
R19W, T31-36N. partial volume, duplicated in next box.
R20W, T26-36N. partial volume, duplicated in next box.
- 111.E.5.8F R19W, T31-36, 38-49N. 2 volumes.
R20W, T26-47N. 2 volumes.
R21W, T26-49N. 2 volumes.
- 111.E.5.9B R21W, T26-36N. 1 volume, duplicate.
R22W, T26-62. 3 volumes, 2 folders.
R23W, T27-40. 1 volume.
- 111.E.5.10F R23W, T41-51, 53-60, 63N. 2 volumes, 3 folders.
R24W, T27-40, 43-50N. 2 volumes.
- 111.E.6.1B R24W, T51-59, 61-65, 70N. 1 volume, 4 folders.
R25W, T31-40, 43-60, 70N. 3 volumes, 2 folders.
- 111.E.6.2F R26W, T32-42, 45-60, 70N. 3 volumes, 2 folders.
R27W, T32-60, 70N. 3 volumes, 1 folder.
- 111.E.6.3B R28W, T32-47N. 2 volumes.
R29W, T33-35, 39-47N. 1 volume.
R30W, T34, 35, 39-47N. 1 volume.
R31W, T35, 36, 39-45N. partial volume.
R32W, T39-44. partial volume.
Islands, various ranges and towns. 1 volume.
Western Boundary of Minnesota. 1 folder.
Sioux Reservation. 1 folder.
- 111.E.6.4F **5th Principal Meridian:**
R3W, T101-104N. partial volume.
R4W, T101-104N. partial volume.
R5W, T101-106N. partial volume.
R6W, T101-107N. partial volume.
R7W, T101-108N. partial volume.
R8W, T101-108N. partial volume.
R9W, T101-107, 109, 110N. 1 volume.
R10W, T101-107, 109-111N. 1 volume.
R11W, T101-111N. 1 volume.
R12W, T101-111N. 1 volume.

Location

111.E.6.5B R13W, T101-111N. 1 volume.
R14W, T101-110N. 1 volume.
R15W, T101-114N. 1 volume.
R16W, T101-115N. 1 volume.
R17W, T101-115N. 1 volume.
R18W, T101-115N. 1 volume.

111.E.6.6F R19W, T101-115N. 1 volume.
R20W, T101-115N. 1 volume.
R21W, T101-120N. 1 volume.
R22W, T101-121N. 2 volumes.
R23W, T101-114N. 1 volume.

111.E.6.7B R23W, T115-121N. 1 volume.
R24W, T101-122, 134-137, 139, 141, 143-150N. 4 volumes, 1 folder.
R25W, T101-122, 137-143N. 3 volumes.

111.E.6.8F R25W, T144, 147-150N. 1 volume, 1 folder.
R26W, T101-122, 137-139, 141-150, 154, 156, 157. 4 volumes, 1 folder.

111.E.6.9B R27W, T101-122, 134-137, 139, 141, 143-150. 4 volumes, 1 folder.
R28W, T101-117N. 2 volumes.

111.E.6.10F R28W, T118-126, 133-136, 140-148, 155, 156N. 4 volumes, 1 folder.
R29W, T101-132N. 3 volumes.

111.E.7.1B R29W, T133-147, 151, 154-156N. 2 volumes, 1 folder.
R30W, T101-120, 134-147, 153N. 4 volumes, 1 folder.

111.E.7.2F R31W, T101-134, 136-141, 143, 149, 155N. 5 volumes, 1 folder.

111.E.7.3B R32W, T101-148, 150N. 5 volumes, 1 folder.
R33W, T101-113N. 1 volume.

111.E.7.4F R33W, T114-116, 123-148N. 4 volumes.
R34W, T101-116, 123-132N. 3 volumes.

111.E.7.5B R34W, T133-147N. 2 volumes.
R35W, T101-116, 127-147N. 5 volumes.

111.E.7.6F R36W, T101-116, 127-147, 150N. 5 volumes, 1 folder.
R37W, T101-111. 1 volume.

111.E.7.7B R37W, T112-122, 127-131, 141-147.
R38W, T101-112, 127-140N. 4 volumes.

Location

111.E.7.8F R38W, T101-148N. 1 volume, 2 folders.
R39W, T101-122, 127-141, 143-145, 147-150, 159-160, 162N. 5 volumes, 3 folders.

111.E.7.9B R40W, T101-108, 114-122, 127-141, 143-150N. 6 volumes, 1 folder.
R41W, T101-108N. 1 volume.

111.E.7.10F R41W, T114-122, 125, 131-151N. 5 volumes, 1 folder.
R42W, T101-108, 114-120N. 1 volume.

111.E.8.1B R42W, T121-122, 131-144, 146-153, 156, 157N. 3 volumes, 2 folders.
R43W, T101-108, 114-122, 131-139. 3 volumes.

111.E.8.2F R43W, T140-162N. 2 volumes, 2 folders.
R44W, T101-119, 121-122, 131-149N. 4 volumes.

111.E.8.3B R44W, T150-154, 156-162N. 1 volume.
R45W, T101-162N. 4 volumes, 3 folders.

111.E.8.4F R46W, T101-115, 131-162. 3 volumes.
R47W, T101-112, 122-129, 131-146. 2 volumes.

111.E.8.5B R47W, T147-162N. 1 volume.
R48W, T122-126, 133-162. 2 volumes.
R49W, T123-126, 141-162. 2 volumes.
R50W, T151-162. partial volume.
R51W, T156-162. partial volume.
R46-51, T163-164. 1 volume.

Townships for Which Field Notes are Missing: 4th Prime Meridian:

R1E, T61-65.
R2E, T61-65.
R3E, T61-65.
R4E, T62-64.
R1W, T61-65.
R2W, T60-65.
R3W, T59-65.
R4W, T58-67.
R5W, T58-66.
R6W, T62-63.
R7W, T58, 60-62.
R8W, T57-61.
R9W, T56-61.
R10W, T52, 56-61.
R11W, T52-54, 56, 61, 63.

Location

111.E.8.5B

R12W, T51-63, 65-66.
R13W, T49-68.
R14W, T49-68.
R15W, T56-68.
R16W, T48-68.
R17W, T40-69.
R18W, T35-39, 49-70.
R19W, T50-70.
R20W, T48-71.
R21W, T50-71.
R22W, T63-71.
R23W, T61, 64-71.
R24W, T60, 66-70.
R25W, T61-69.
R26W, T43-44, 61-69.
R27W, T61-69.
R28W, T36-38.
R30W, T36-38.
R31W, T37-38.
R32W, T38.

Townships for Which Field Notes are Missing: 5th Prime Meridian:

R8W, T109.
R9W, T108.
R10W, T108.
R12W, T112.
R13W, T112, 113.
R14W, T111-113.
R25W, T136, 145-146, 150-160.
R26W, T151-153, 155, 158-160.
R27W, T138, 140, 142, 150-154, 157-160.
R28W, T137, 139, 149-155, 156-160.
R29W, T132, 147-150, 152-153, 156-160.
R30W, T121-133, 148-161.
R31W, T135, 150-154, 156-15?
R32W, T149, 151-167.
R33W, T117-122, 149-168.
R34W, T117-122, 148-168.
R35W, T117-121, 148-164.
R36W, T117-126, 148-164.
R37W, T112-126, 132-140, 148-164.
R38W, T123-126, 148-164.
R39W, T123-126, 142, 146, 151-158, 160-164.

Location

111.E.8.5B R40W, T109-113, 123-126, 142, 151-164.
 R41W, T109-113, 123, 124, 126-130, 149-164.
 R42W, T109-113, 123-130, 154-155, 158-164.
 R43W, T109-113, 126-130, 163-164.
 R44W, T120, 123-130, 155, 163-164.
 R45W, T163-164.
 R46W, T116-130.
 R47W, T130.

Field Notes of Survey Examiners, 1857-1897.

Field notes of deputy surveyors commissioned by the surveyor general to examine the accuracy and completeness of surveys of township and subdivision lines, guide meridians and standard parallels, and boundaries of Indian reservations. They are chronological by the date each examination was completed.

The field notes consist of 33 “pocket diaries” (1854-1888) and twelve folders of folios (1889-1897). Field notes include the name of the examining surveyor, the survey to be examined, and the name of the original surveyor and date of his contract. They report on the accuracy of location and quality of construction of survey posts, condition of the blazed survey lines, accuracy of the original survey notes and plats, and any corrections the examiner made in the original survey. Some field notes are accompanied by, or incorporate, a daily journal that may include an account of the trip to and from the survey site, a record of expenses, comments on the weather, and daily notes on the progress of the examination.

Field notes for 1854-1857 are copies of originals obtained from the surveyor general’s office at Dubuque, Iowa. These include several volumes of field notes of original surveys of township lines, guide meridians, and standard parallels.

Also included are a journal (log) of survey examinations by Edward Atwater (1857-1858) and an account of expenditures by examiner George B. Wright (1862).

Location

111.E.9.8F Field Notes of Survey Examiners, 1857-1897. 1 box.