

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

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Finding Aid for the

Kent County, Michigan Original Survey Collection,
from records held at the State of Michigan Archives and the
Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Collection # 099

September 2009 version

Abstract

The Kent County Michigan Survey Collection is a study collection, the bulk of which is survey records duplicated from material at the State of Michigan Archives and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, both located in Lansing, Michigan. The photocopied material is from the original surveyors' reports for Kent County. The first reports delineate the exterior lines for the County and its townships. The second section of the reports delineates the interior, or section, lines. The reports contain extensive descriptions of the County's topography and flora at the time of the surveys, as well as maps plotting physical features such as Indian villages, trails and gardens, in addition to the requisite survey lines. The original manuscript material dates from 1826 to 1838. The manuscript maps on microfilm date from 1826 to 1958. Additional reference materials on the life of surveyors and Michigan surveying, as well as links to Internet sites, has been added to provide context for the survey data.

Collection #: 099
Accession #: 00.000
Donor: Library purchase, 1989
Span dates: 1826-1958, n.d.
Original processing date May 1989, revised 2004.
Size: 1.1 linear ft. (13.25 inches)

Related Collections

Coll. 279, Lucius Lyon Papers.

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
Box Inventory 9/2009		
1	Exterior Lines 1825-1837 Interior Lines 1831-1837	standard document case
2	Exterior Lines 1831-1837 Survey map, 1826-1953	Standard
3	Michigan Surveying historical reference materials	slim legal

[Box 3 added 11/2/2004]

Citing the Collection

The survey documents in the collection are facsimile copies of holdings at the Michigan States Archives and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This material was provided to the Grand Rapids Public Library in 1989 for the purpose of creating convenient local access to this historical research material. Citations should always indicate that this data is a copy of material held by the Michigan States Archives and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Related Websites

State of Michigan Archives

Michigan Department of National Resources. Maps

<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>

Public Land Survey System

<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Public%20Land%20Survey%20System>

Measuring America (M973 L648m)

<http://lakenet.ilcoop.org/search/tmeasuring+america/tmeasuring+america/1%2C2%2C%2CB/frame&FF=tmeasuring+america+how+an+untamed+wilderness+shaped+the+united+states+and+fulfilled+the+promise+of+democracy&1%2C1%2C>

Michigan Museum of Surveying

http://www.surveyhistory.org/museum_of_surveying_michigan.htm

<http://www.surveyhistory.org/>

NARA. Special List 29: List of Selected Maps of States and Territories

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/finding-aids/maps/mi.html>

Ancestry.com Michigan Land Records.

[See also Ancestry Plus at the Library]

<http://www.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2075>

Great Lakes Ecology Assessment Reports. Significant Events in Michigan Forest History

<http://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/gla/reports/history.htm#mievents>

U.S. Bureau of Land Management Land Patents Database

<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/Results.asp?QryId=56811.84>

History

The Public Land Survey System, also called the rectangular survey system, was the second survey system used in the United States. The original survey system used for the 13 colonies was based upon a British system that had some disadvantages. The rectangular system records a baseline (east and west) and a meridian (north and south). See the “Public Land Survey System” Internet link above for a fuller explanation. The townships and sections laid out under the system provide the structure into which specific legal land descriptions, used in land titles and deeds, are specified.

Other computer sites above, such as Ancestry.com, provide access to the files of the different historical Michigan land offices. One site above and others identifiable through Goggle, provide information or maps of surveys done by Lucius Lyon, a Grand Rapids resident, and later one of the first U.S. Senators from Michigan.

The first meridian baseline survey in Michigan was in 1815.

The surveyors listed in these Kent County records were, in order of number of surveys they performed:

Charles W. Cathcart
John Mullet
Lucius Lyon
Rasselas Witcomb
Noah Brookfield
Enoch Hammer
Robert Clark, Jr.

While surveying an exterior line of T.8 N., R.11 W. (Plainfield Township), Robert Clark died. His death and location of death is noted in the surveyor's report.

For additional historical information see the reference sources in Box 3 of this collection, and the Internet sites listed above.

Scope Notes

The material in the Kent County Michigan Survey Collection consists of the original surveyors' reports for Kent County. The first reports delineate the exterior lines for the County and its townships. The second section of the reports delineates the interior, or section, lines. The reports contain extensive description of the county's topography (land forms, water courses and swamps) and flora at the time of the surveys, as well as maps plotting Indian villages, trails and gardens in addition to the requisite survey lines. The manuscript material dates from 1826 to 1838.

The manuscript maps on microfilm date from 1826 to 1958. The maps detail the entire southwest quarter of the Lower Peninsula and the Kent County maps will be found approximately two-thirds of the way into the roll. Generally the townships are listed in order beginning with the northeastern most township in the county and proceed in alternating horizontal tiers of townships.

Contents

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
		Exterior Lines, 1826-1837.
1	1	T.7-8 N., R.9-13 W., 1837.
	2	T.3-8 N., R.11 W., 1826.
	3	T.3-10 N., R.2-10 W., 1826.
	4	T.5 N., R.1-10 W., 1826.
	5	T.9 N., R.7-13 W., 1837.
		Interior Lines, 1831-1838, 1826-1953, n.d.
1	6	T.5 N., R.9 W. (Bowne), 1831.
	7	T.6 N., R.9 W. (Lowell), 1831, 1837.
	8	T.7 N., R.9 W. (Vergennes), 1838.
	9	T.8 N., R.9 W. (Grattan), 1837.
	10	T.9 N., R.9 W. (Oakfield), 1837.
	11	T.10 N., R.9 W. (Spencer), 1837.
	12	T.5 N., R.10 W. (Caledonia), 1830.
	13	T.6 N., R.10 W. (Cascade), 1831.
	14	T.7 N., R.10 W. (Ada), 1837.
	15	T.8 N., R.10 W. (Cannon), 1837.
	16	T.9 N., R.10 W. (Courtland), 1837.
	17	T.10 N., R.10 W. (Nelson), 1837.
	18	T.5 N., R.11 W. (Gaines), 1831.
	19	T.6 N., R.11 W. (Paris), 1830.
	20	T.7 N., R.11 W. (Grand Rapids), 1831.
2	1	T.8 N., R.11 W. (Plainfield), 1831, 1837.
	2	T.9 N., R.11 W. (Algoma), 1837.
	3	T.10 N., R.11 W. (Solon), 1837.
	4	T.5 N., R.12 W. (Byron), 1832.
	5	T.6 N., R.12 W. (Wyoming), 1832, 1838.
	6	T.7 N., R.12 W. (Walker), 1831, 1837.
	7	T.8 N., R.12 W. (Alpine), 1838.
	8	T.9 N., R.12 W. (Sparta), 1837.
	9	T.10 N., R.12 W. (Tyrone), 1837.
	10	Fractionals, Meanders, Corrections, n.d.
2		35mm diazo film of manuscript survey maps, 1826-1953.

Michigan Surveying Historical Reference Materials

[added 11/2/2004]

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|---|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | 1 | Historical Events Influencing Surveys of U.S. Public Lands [timeline] /
source unknown |
| 3 | 2 | Surveys and Surveyors in Frontier Michigan / by Alan S. Brown, WMU.
(Michigan History Division. Great lakes Informant. Series 1, no. 3, 1975) |
| 3 | 3 | Michigan Museum of Surveying flyers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Brief History of Surveying• The Michigan Society of Registered land Surveyors Foundation
presents Michigan Museum of Surveying. |
| 3 | 4 | General Instructions to Deputy Surveyors / Office of the Surveyor General
of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. |
| 3 | 5 | “Workaday life of Early Surveyors” Ch. 5 from Public Land Surveys :
history, instructions and methods / Lowell O. Stewart. Minneapolis, Mn. :
Meyers Printing Co., 1975. |