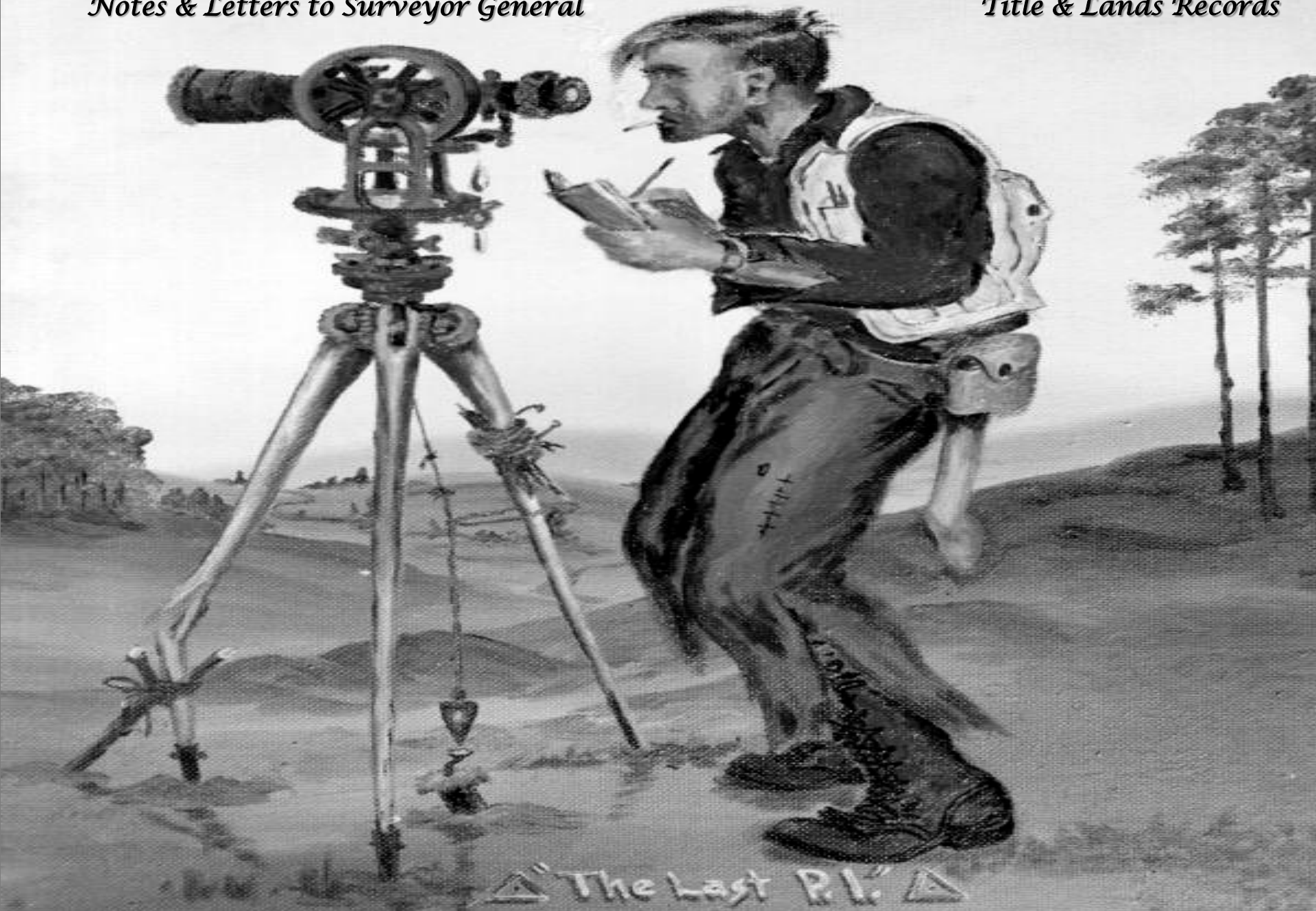


*Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement
Trust Fund History, Interesting Articles, Field
Notes & Letters to Surveyor General*

*Division of State Lands
Survey & Mapping
Title & Lands Records*



A Brief History of the Board of Trustees

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST FUND

A Brief History

Florida became a state in March 3, 1845 and by right of its sovereignty gained title to the waterbottoms of all the navigable waterbodies within the state's boundaries.

There were several federal land grants to the State of Florida in the years after statehood. The major grants are as follows:

Act of Congress dated September 4, 1841, granted to every new state admitted to the Union 500,000 acres of "Internal Improvement Lands Proper" for purposes of internal improvement, i.e., transportation and communication (roads, railroads, and canals). The governing body established in 1851 to administer these lands was the Board of Internal Improvement. Also, by virtue of statehood, the Act of Congress dated March 3, 1845 granted 92,160 acres of "Seminary Lands" to be used for two seminaries of learning, one east of the Suwannee River, and one west (present day University of Florida and Florida State University, respectively.) The state was granted approximately 1,000,000 acres consisting of every sixteenth section in every township as "School Lands Proper", to be used by the inhabitants of each township to support a school. A separate government body administered these lands, and eventually it was called the State Board of Education, and later the State Department of Education. Lastly, in the same Act of Congress, eight sections of land were granted to the state for the purpose of fixing a seat of government. The State of Florida was granted 20,438,253.17 acres of Swamp and Overflowed Lands by Act of Congress dated September 28, 1850. These lands were determined by the U.S. surveyors to be "wet and unfit for cultivation", that is, they were described as over 50% "swamp in character". The Governor selected the lands, and when approved, the federal government patented the lands to the state.

In 1851, another Board of Internal Improvement was established to administer all the swamp and overflowed lands. Finally in 1855, both boards were replaced by the new Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, today's Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida (BOT) consisting of the Governor and Cabinet, to administer the internal improvement lands, as well as, the swamp and overflowed lands and the resulting monies from the disposition of same.

Act of Congress dated May 17, 1856, granted 2,220,779.02 acres of land to the State of Florida for the purpose of aiding in the construction of railroads. This grant included every alternate section of land designated by odd numbers, for six sections in width on each side of each railroad line and branch mentioned in said Act.

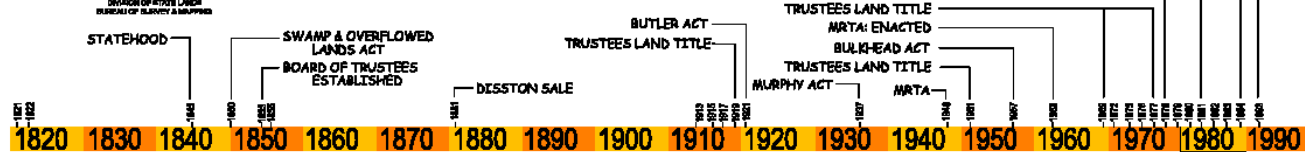
Title to sovereignty submerged lands was granted by the State Legislature in 1913, 1915, 1917, and 1919 to the BOT with authority to sell and convey.

The Butler Act of 1921 divested title and other interest in certain submerged lands lying in navigable waters adjacent to uplands in the direction of the channel, without obstructing said channel, dependent upon filling or permanently improving said lands by the riparian upland owner. Later repealed.

The Murphy Act of 1937 authorized statutory forfeiture of lands for non-payment of taxes. The lands, described in the resulting county tax sale certificates that had not been redeemed by June 9, 1939, were vested in the State of Florida with the BOT administering the sale of lands.

The Bulkhead Act of 1957, among other things, repealed the Butler Act of 1921 for Dade and Palm Beach Counties.

GRANT OF TITLE, LANDS
FILLED PRIOR TO JULY 1, 1975
MURPHY ACT
PARCELS RELEASED
MRTA: NOTICE
OF INTEREST
MRTA: SOVEREIGNTY
LANDS EXCEPTION

[illegible]

Prime Meridian Articles

OUT WITH THE OLD AND ... A NEW PRIME MERIDIAN MARKER: REFLECTIONS ON A NEW HISTORY

BY DR. JOE KNETSCH, ROBERT BECK P.L.S. AND LAMAR EVERS P.L.S.

In case you have not heard, the Cascades Park, where the original Prime Meridian and Basis Parallel Marker is located, is getting a huge face-lift. As part of the renovation, the monument set in 1925 has been removed and is now housed in front of the FSMS office. There will be a new Prime Meridian Marker put in its place which will feature the names of the U. S. Deputy Surveyors and the Surveyors General of Florida. This recognition of these brave and intrepid men is long overdue. Given the struggles they faced on the Florida frontier, complete with threatening Native Americans, alligators, malaria, yellow fever and a myriad of biting insects and reptiles, it is just short of a miracle that the surveys were completed with, for the most part, relative accuracy. As every property owner should realize, it is this early work that delineates their land to this day. The face-lift to this central park area and the new monument should become a center piece to any Tallahassee visit by our colleagues and friends.

Back in 1868, J. H. Hawes, one time principal clerk in the General Land Office in Washington, described in his *Manual of United States Surveying* the main ingredients to establishing an initial point for all surveys. He wrote: "The first step in proceeding to establish a meridian and base line, will be to select some prominent natural land-mark convenient to the locality where the earliest surveys will be needed, for an initial or starting-point. An isolated, well-defined mountain, or the point of confluence of two rivers afford favorable objects for the purpose indicated. If these are not to be found, some other prominent natural object should be sought for." Well, Tallahassee has no major rivers flowing through it and mountains are in short supply in Florida generally so the site near the St. Augustine Branch down the hill from the newly established capital was chosen instead. From all indications the first marker was made of native wood, most likely cedar or cypress. There is no mention of a stone or rock monument in the earliest records. As noted in the March 2000 article in *The Florida Surveyor*, the first monument was set by George Walton, then the acting governor for the Territory. The first governor, William Pope Duval, was in St. Marks negotiating with the local Native Americans and Robert Butler, the first Surveyor General, was only recently appointed and still in Tennessee at the time. It is from this point that Benjamin Clements was charged with running the Prime Meridian and the Basis Parallel to the west. Charles C. Stone was contracted with to run the Basis Parallel to the east from the initial point. Both Stone and Clements were very experienced surveyors.

Of course, there have been a few myths and lots of stories about the establishment of the Prime Meridian Marker and the initial lines run from it. One of the favorites of Tallahasseeans is that the stone marker fell off the wagon delivering it at least two hundred yards short of its destination. As noted above, this is highly unlikely since the original marker was probably made of durable wood and no

mention of stone markers is made in the correspondence. Another story was repeated in the July-August 1969 issue of the *Florida Land Title News* which has C. C. Stone running the line eastward to the St. Mary's River. Since the original marker denoting the end of that line was located a few years ago by the rangers at Big Talbot Island State Park, this story too is amusing but inaccurate. Confusing too is the notation that Benjamin and son Hosea extended the western base line to the 17th range line and then jogged northward for one township because of the waters of the bay. The bay is not named and since the line ran to the Perdido River, it may have been forgotten that the "Bruce Jog" (as it's sometimes called) avoids the waters of Choctawhatchee Bay, not Perdido Bay. Stones such as these simply add confu-



A Prime Meridian Marker in Cascades Park, 1974



B Prime Meridian Marker at FSMS Administrative Building



C Cascades Park Reception

lence. Stones such as these simply add confu-

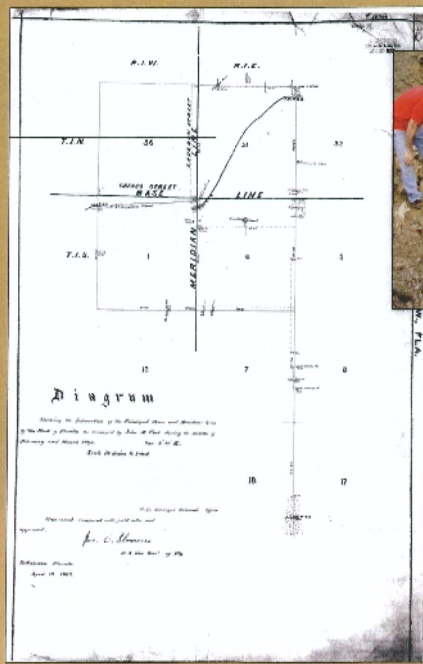
history corner | by Joe Knetsch, PhD, Lamar Evers, PLS, and Robert Beck, PSM

A New Prime Meridian Marker for Florida

If surveyors share one characteristic in general it is their perseverance in the face of adversity. In setting the initial points for the beginnings of surveys in the territories and states, many

surveyors suffered hardships that only one who reads the field notes understands. The threat of annihilation from hostile natives, the dread of Yellow Fever or some other deadly contagion, or

the sheer physical stress and danger of setting a point in the wilderness were enough to daunt even the most intrepid explorers. None of these deterred the steadfast surveyor in getting the monument set. Yet there are instances when a skilled professional surveyor is not available to face these dangers, and someone else must take on the task.



Cook's survey of 1862



In the case of Florida in 1824, it was acting-governor, George Walton, who took on the duty because the new surveyor general, Robert Butler, was not yet in the territory, and the governor, William Pope Duval, was negotiating with the natives 22 miles south of Tallahassee to secure the frontier of Florida from attack. A stake was driven in the ground at the point selected by Walton, and Benjamin Clements and Charles C. Stone were hired to run the prime meridian and the basis parallel for the new territory of Florida.

Above: A surveying team examines the excavation beneath the Tallahassee Guide Meridian and baseline for additional evidence. (L to R) Edwin Smith Arnold, PSM (City of Tallahassee Surveyor), Kevin Myers, PSM (Robert Consulting Group), Lamar Evers, PSM, and Doug Lennox, PSM (Sandoz, Inc., project contractor).

Andrew Jackson Letters

Dr. Col.

The inclosed letter from Genl. Houston has this moment been handed me by Mr. Patton Anderson, and I take the liberty to inclose it to you for your consideration. I am sure that Col. Martin of Williamson would not recommend a young Gentleman who was not deserving; however I believe you recollect Col. Martin, he was with us on the Seminole campaign & I believe at Orleans he was with me in the Creek Campaigns. I have great confidence in him as a man of truth.

I am respectfully yr. friend

Andrew Jackson

August 13th 1824

Col. Robt. Butler

Dr. Col.

This will be handed you by Leroy May Esqr who waits upon you to obtain employment as a surveyor in Florida. Mr. May has been employed as a surveyor under Col. Anderson & Genl Coffee. The enclosed letter is from Judge Isaacs, a prosecutor friend of mine & is now a member of Congress; The Judge is a man to be relied on; and all he has said in favor of Mr May I have no doubt but he meant (?). Should you not have engaged all your deputies. I am certain from information, that Mr May can be relied on as a correct surveyor and as such I introduce him to you. I am Sir being respectfully

yr friend

Andrew Jackson

Saturday July 17th 1824

Col. Robert Butler

Note: This is an *unofficial* transcription of the letter on file in vault.
March 2010 Kathy Miklus

Sam Houston & John Jackson Letters

Nashville
13th Aug 1824

Dear Sir

The bearer W Patton Anderson has been recommended to me by Col. William Martin of Williamson, in whom I have unbounded confidence; W Anderson wishes to obtain the situation of Deputy Surveyor under you. I am informed that W A's qualifications are very respectable, and that he has been engaged Surveying under W. Bright of Fayetteville Tenn.

W Anderson is a young man without resources, except those depending upon his qualifications, and industry; If it is practicable for you to render him any service consistent with your arrangements I am aware that you have every disposition to patronize young men without fortune.

I am truly
your friend
Sam Houston

Col Robt Butler

ADVICE

Vol.--Letters & Reports to Sur. Gen., Vol. 3
Page 80

John Jackson asks Sur. Gen. to say to the young men in the office to "beware of the widders."
Dated July 11th 1859, from Tampa.

Interesting Field Notes from US Surveyors

ALLIGATORS

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 220
Page 51

W. L. Apthorp states, "3rd mile East on S. Bdy
Sec. 33 (T 47 S, R 26 E)...45.00 to round pond
surrounded by bay and cypress swamp, impracti-
cable. Pond full of monstrous alligators.
Counted fifty and stopped--Relinquished line."
Dated 1872.

INDIANS (Problems with)

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 27
Page 324

B.
R. Ker reports in the survey of T13S, R25E dated
1835 while surveying the East line of Sec 27
running North: "50.00 descended hill, 61.00 X
scrub 1.50 x At this place a party of Indians
fired on me & my men. Their design was to kill
--they had previously threatened to shoot me if
I did not quit surveying there. A ball struck a
tree, against which I was leaning at the time,
while my compass, (needle) was sitting, not 6
inches from me. 62.50 came to lake Ker and
marked a fore & aft cabbage palmetto..."

*W.L. Apthorp - Alligators
Volume 220 Page 51*

*R.B. Ker - Problems With
Indians Volume 27 Page 324*

Interesting Field Notes from US Surveyors

OCHLOCKNEE SWAMP

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 87
Page 1/2

Surveyor Joseph Wright in 1825 says:

Look abroad into nature,
To the range of Planets and adamantyne spheres,
And think O! man of the Ochlockney Swamps.
For Ethiopia's wilds and Arabia's Deserts
Do not equal them;
Language there inferiority,
Fails to express.

Joseph Wright - Ochlocknee Swamp
Volume 87 Page 1/2

POLLUTION (Reports of)

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 84
Page 153

Geo. MacKay reports in his notes in the 1844 survey of South Boundary of T30s, R39e, "Camped on Coast may 8 refreshing breeze delightful bath--amid rocks & spars--planks--barrels and bottles"

George Mackay - Reports of
Pollution Volume 84 Page 153

Interesting Field Notes from US Surveyors

CHOCTAWHATCHEE

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 87
Page 204

Surveyor Joseph Wright in 1825 says:

The water is bad and the ice is the bred
In this here reupid swampe
Of the Choctawhatchee
Whar louse and muskeeters
And rats and Allegeatours
Abounds all Arounde
So you cant pull off yore Briches.

Joseph Wright - Choctawhatchee
Volume 87 Page 284

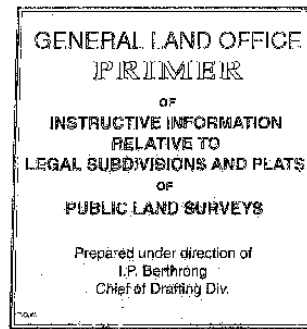
HORSEFLY

Vol.--Field Notes, Vol. 84
Page 154

Reported in Geo. Mackay's notes of West Boundary of T30s, R39e, "Large horsefly 3/4 of an inch long--outrageous--swarmed upon mule and bled her to death. Saved horses by rubbing them with tar and alligator oil mixed. May 17th 1844."

George Mackay - Horsefly
Volume 84 Page 154

General Land Office Primer of Instructive Information Relative to Legal Subdivisions & Plats of Public Land Surveys



Publication Printed since 1921

Reproduced by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management,
Government Printing Office

Instructions & Links to Lands Records Websites

BTLDs (Board of Trustees Land Document System) Website:

Access at <http://tlhdsweb.dep.state.fl.us/> or via www.myflorida.com by the following steps:

1. Click on "Find an Agency" tab
2. Click on "Environ. Protection"
3. Click on Website: www.dep.state.fl.us
4. Choose "State Lands" from the Programs drop down list;
5. Click on "Division of State Lands"
6. Click on "Links and Resources" under Quick Links
7. Click on **Board of Trustees Land Document System (BTLDs)**
(Agenda Documents, the BTLDs GIS map site and access to LABINS are available here)

BTLDs LAND DOCUMENT SEARCH

Choose **DOCUMENT TYPE:** (Drop down categories such as: ANY or a specific document type if known)

You can search for several types of instruments by: the **instrument (i.e. deed) number**; the **date of the document**; **grantor/grantee name**; **Section-Township-Range**; and/or **county recording book or volume Number & page number**.

Under "FAQ" the abbreviations to the document types can be found. If you should experience any technical problems with the site, or find any errors in the data please see **Contact Us**.

You may also contact Samantha Mercer of Title and Land Records Section at (850) 245-2788 with questions concerning the documents.

LABINS (Land Boundary Information System) Website

Access at <http://data.labins.org/2003/> or via www.labins.org by the following steps:

1. Under "Survey Data"
2. Click on "Land Records"
3. Click on "General Land Office (GLO) Early Records (Township Plats, Survey Notes & Survey Instructions"

