

INTRODUCTION TO LAND RECORDS

Revised: July 16, 2014

By Michael F. McGraw

SOME DETAILS ABOUT THE MILITARY TRACT –

Reserved Lots, the “Surveyor’s Fifty Acres,” and the “State’s Hundred”

“By an act passed April 6th, 1790, it was ordered ‘that the quantity of fifty acres, in one of the corners of the respective lots to be laid out in squares of 600 acres, shall be and are hereby subject to the payment of the sum of forty-eight (48) shillings to the Surveyor-General, as a compensation in full for his services and expenses in marking, numbering and surveying each of the said lots; and in every case where the said sum of 48 shillings, or any part thereof, shall remain unpaid for the term of two years next after the issuing of the respective patents, it shall and is hereby made the duty of the Surveyor-General to sell the same at public vendue; and the money arising from such sales, shall be applied in payment of expense of such survey.’ And in case a surplus of money was in the hands of the Survey-General, after paying such expenses, it was to be applied to the payment of expense of laying out and making roads in the said tract.”

By act of Feb. 28, 1789, six lots in each township were reserved and were to be assigned, ‘one for promoting the gospel, and a public school or schools, one other for promoting literature in this State, and the remaining four lots to satisfy the surplus share of commissioned officers not corresponding with the division of 600 acres, and to compensate such persons as may by chance draw any lot or lots, the greater part of which may be covered with water.’

The act of 1780 provided ‘that whenever it appeared that persons applying for bounty or gratuity land, and had received from Congress the bounty promised by that body, or in case they failed to relinquish their claim to such lands, then the commissioners were to reserve for the use of the people of the State, one hundred acres in each lot to which part of such lot such reserved part was located. This gave rise to the term ‘State’s Hundred’ so frequently applied to sections of land on the Military Tract.” p. 217-8

“At a meeting of this [Land] Commission, held at the Secretary’s office in the city of New York, on Saturday, the 3rd day of July, 1790, ... It was also resolved that the ‘States Hundred,’ when occurring in any lot, should be located in the South-east corner of said lot, and be laid out in a square, or as nearly so as may be. No resolution being passed or law providing for the location of the ‘Survey Fifty,’ it was variously located.” p. 219

*Re-Union of the Sons and Daughters of the Old Town of Pompey
Held at Pompey Hill, June 29, 1871, Proceedings of the Meeting, Speeches, Toasts and other Incidents of the Occasion Also A History of the Town, Reminiscences and Biographical Sketches of its Early Inhabitants; Publication Committee: Wm. W. Van Brocklin, LeRoy Morgan, Richard F. Stevens, Ebenezer Butler and Homer D. Sweet Pompey: Published by Direction of the Re-Union Meeting, 1875*

LAND MEASUREMENTS

1 Chain = 66 feet

1 link = 1/100 of a chain

1 link = 66/100 feet = 0.66 feet = 0.66 x 12 inches = 7.92 inches (exactly – no round off)

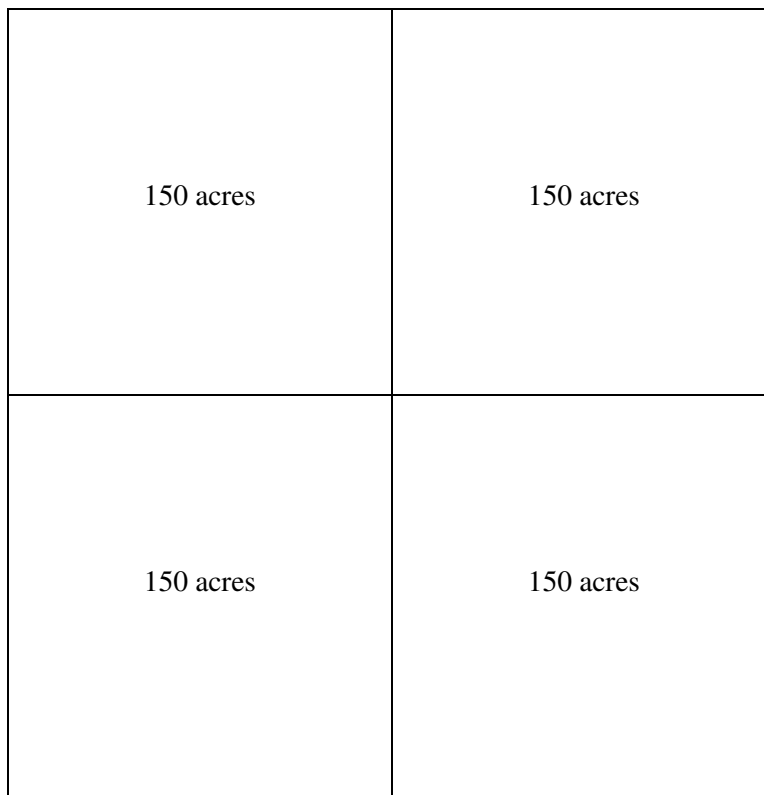
1 rod = 1 perch = 1 pole = 5.5 yards = 16.5 feet

4 rods = 66 feet = 1 chain = 100 links

1 acre = 43,560 feet² = 660 feet x 66 feet = 10 chains x 1 chain = 10 chains² = 220 yds x 22 yds

All the older surveys were done in chains and links. Each link is just 1/100 of a chain. They were written separately for the purpose of accuracy. However, 62 chains and 73 links is the same as 62.73 chains. After calculating the area of a parcel of land in square chains, it is only necessary to divide by 10 to get the number of acres.

The Great Lots of the Military Tract were approximately 600 acres in size. One square mile = 640.0 acres. Dividing these lots by 4 give parcels of land 150 acres in size, which might be the size of a typical farm.



The 600 acre square yields a dimension of 77.460 chains by 77.460 chains
These 150 acres blocks measure 38.730 chains by 38.730 chains.

Dimensions in Chains of Various Square Parcels of Land

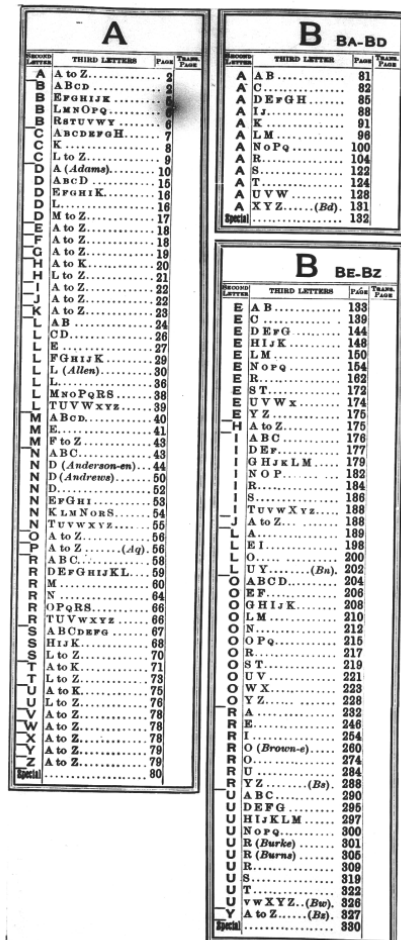
Acreage	Dimension
600	77.46
550	74.16
500	70.71
450	67.08
400	63.25
350	59.16
300	54.77
250	50.00
200	44.72
150	38.73
100	31.62
50	22.36
25	15.81
10	10.00
1	3.16

ONONDAGA COUNTY LAND RECORDS FROM 1790 TO 1870.

They are found on the familysearch.org website. Recently the site was improved to allow downloads of any of the pages.

<https://familysearch.org/search/image/index#uri=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Fccapi%2Fcard%2Fwaypoint%2FM7HG-TM3%3A358132901%3Fcc%3D2078654>

Onondaga Co Grantee Books	Onondaga Co Grantor Books
Vol. 1: A, B (Index IMG 7)	Vol. 1: A, B (Index IMG 6)
Vol. 2: C, D, E (Vol 2 Index IMG 434)	Vol. 2: C, D, E (Index IMG 7)
Vol. 3: F, G, H (Index IMG 6)	Vol. 3: F, G, H (Index IMG 7)
Vol. 4: I, J, K, L, M (Index IMG 7)	Vol. 4: I, J, K, L (Index IMG 7)
Vol. 5: N, O, P, Q, R (Index IMG 7)	Vol. 5: M, N, O, P (Index IMG 7)
Vol. 6: S – V (Index IMG 2)	Vol. 6: Q, R, S (Index IMG 7)
Vol. 7: W-Z (Index IMG 2)	Vol. 7: T-Z (Index IMG 7)



The Grantee Index Book is ordered on the purchasers of land. The Grantor Index Book is ordered on the sellers of land. Shown on the left is an example of the index that is found in the front of each Grantee and Grantor Index Book. Using the first three letters of the surname gives the page number in that index book where a summary of the land transaction is found. The summary will contain the Deed Book and the page in that Deed book where the details of the deed can be found.

9

INDEX TO DEEDS - GRANTEES - ONONDAGA COUNTY, N. Y., FROM 1794 TO 1870.

YEAR	ABCD	EFGH	I J	KLMNOP	QRSTU VWXYZ	GRANTEE	GRANTOR	BOOK	PAGE	LOC#	LOT	BLOCK	TRACT	Notes
1795	Amos					Ackley	S. Draper	1163	584	Form	70			
1822						William Ackerson	J. Street	stand	00	442	Form	74		
1828				Olin		Ackley	S. Draper	66	141	Shaf	84			
1827			Jurusha			Mr Ackley	A. Wheaton	stand	100	848	Form	89		
1829					William	Acker stand	J. D. Hammond stand	00	145	Man	28			
1881		Elisha				William Ackerman	A. Wheaton	stand	PP	62	Sully	110		
		John				Ackerman stand	A. Ackerman	Will	22	loom	16			
1888		Joseph		Moses		Ackles	W. Hodges	51	15	Sully	18			
		James				Ackles	J. Shue	stand	51	208	leaf	88		
1886						Ackles	W. Ackles	stand	56	214	leaf	78		
1888				Matthias		Ackerman	A. Leno	stand	69	884	Form	95		
					William	Acker	J. & Du Puy	stand	71	167	Will	82		
	Charles					Ackles	J. Surlow	stand	71	410	Sully	18		
	Charles					Ackles	S. Arnold	stand	71	411	Sully	18		
1889					Syranus	Ackles	W. Alvord	stand	75	189	Sully	9		
1840				Moses	Richard	Ackles	P. Van Cortlandt	75	319	Form	78			
						Ackles	W. Ackles	stand	76	55	Sully	18		
1841		Friedrich				Ackles	J. Christian	stand	77	282	Sully	18		
	Charles					Ackles	People of the State of N.Y.	78	111	Form	78			Patent
					Sheldon	Ackerman	Mr. Noble	stand	78	430	leaf	85		
1842					William	Ackles	S. A. Wetmore	stand	80	412	Shaf	75		
					William	Acker	S. Woodfillow	stand	81	451	Man	23		
				Moses		Ackles	H. Ackles	82	371	Sully	18			
				Moses		Ackles	W. Sherington	stand	82	572	Sully	18		
1843	Charlotte					Ackles	H. Stevens	stand	83	283	leaf	78		
1845		Norton				Ackles	W. Ackles	stand	87	814	Shaf	75		
	Annis				Phib	Ackles	R. Ackles	stand	87	891	leaf	78		
	Annis				Phib	Ackles	R. Ackles	stand	87	892	leaf	78		
					Mathias	Ackerman	W. Wilson	stand	87	420	Form	80		
					Mathias	Ackerman	W. Wilson	stand	87	421	Form	80		
			John			Ackles, Jr	J. Ackles	88	288	Sully	18			Patent
			Joseph			Ackles	J. Maryne	stand	88	882	leaf	88		
			Joseph			Ackles	R. Ackles	stand	88	883	leaf	78		
1848		Harmon				Ackerman	A. H. Newcomb	stand	93	422	Duv	10		
	Charles					Ackles	J. Ackles	stand	94	861	leaf	88		
	Charles					Ackles	J. Ackles	stand	95	289	leaf	78		
						Ackerman	W. L. Shepard	stand	97	463	Dup	15		
					Sheldon	Ackerman	W. Beach	stand	99	78	leaf	85		
					Sheldon	Ackerman	W. Beach	stand	99	78	leaf	85		
					Sheldon	Ackerman	W. Baldwin	stand	99	260	leaf	85		
						Ackles	W. Ackles	99	277	leaf	88			
						Ackles	W. Ackles	100	117	leaf	78			
						Ackerman	S. Smith	stand	100	158	Dup	20	21	
						Ackerman	S. J. Davis	stand	100	198	Dal	87		
					Sheldon	Ackerman	H. Westfall	stand	100	259	leaf	85		
						Ackerman	S. W. Brewster	stand	101	199	Dup	11	9	
						Ackerman	W. Williams	stand	102	69	Dup	3	15	
						Ackerman	Mr. Gleason	102	105	Dup	820			
1851					Civil	Samuel	W. Keigg	stand	102	467	Shaf	10		
	Ann					Ackles	J. G. ...	stand	108	180	leaf	71		
1848						Ackerman	...	94	69	Duv	10			

Above is an example of a page from the Grantee Index

An example of a full deed and the description summary that will be used in these papers is shown below. In most cases it is only the legal description of the property that is needed for our purposes.

The Date is the year when the deed was recorded in the County Clerk’s office. The Grantor is the person or persons selling the land. The Grantee is the person or persons purchasing the land. The Bk, Pg notation is the number of the Deed Book and the Page in that book where the deed is recorded. (IMG) is the image number, on the FamilySearch.org site, where that deed can be viewed in the Onondaga County Land Records section. Location gives the town name and lot number of the purchased land. Also included is the number of acres and the amount paid.

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Bk, Pg (IMG)	Location
1830	A. Lamb & ano	Thomas Richmond	SS, 45	Manlius 8; 623a; \$3000 Manlius 20; 30a
Date of Indenture:		August 18, 1830		
Grantor:		Anthony and Mary Lamb of City County and State of New York		
Grantee:		Thomas Richmond of Salina		
Amount:		\$3000		
Description:		...all that certain lot piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the town of Salina aforesaid known and distinguished as Lot Number Eight of the Township of Manlius containing <u>six hundred and twenty three acres</u> of land be the same more or less, also <u>thirty acres</u> of land in the form of a square as nearly as may be in the northwest corner of lot Number Twenty of the said Township of Manlius in the Town of Salina,		
Date Recorded:		September 4, 1830		

The Full Deed – summary shown in table above

(This section contains the parties involved in the transaction and the price)

This Indenture, made the eighteenth day of August in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty between **Anthony Lamb** and **Mary**, his wife of the City County and State of New York of the first part and **Thomas Richmond** of Salina in the County of Onondaga and State aforesaid of the second part witnesseth that the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Three thousand dollars money of account of the United States to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part the receipt whereof is hereby confessed and acknowledged ha(?) granted bargained sold remised released aliened and conformed and by these presents do grant bar gain sell reunite release alien and confirm unto the said party of the second part and to his heirs and assigns forever

(This is the legal description of the parcel)

all that certain lot piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the town of Salina aforesaid known and distinguished as *Lot Number Eight of the Township of Manlius containing six hundred and twenty three acres of land be the same more or less, also thirty acres of land in the form of a square as nearly as may be in the northwest corner of lot Number Twenty of the said Township of Manlius in the Town of Salina,*

(This following section contains any special conditions and much boiler plate and witnessing)

aforesaid together with all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances there unto belonging or in any wise appertaining and the reversion and reversions remainder and remainders rents issues(?) and profits thereof and all the estate right title interest claim and demand whatsoever of the said parties of the first part either in law or equity

of in and to the above bargained premises with the hereditaments and appurtenances to have and to hold the said lands tenements hereditaments rights and privileges above mentioned granted and described and every part and parcel thereof to the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns to the sole and only proper use benefit and behoof of the said party of the second his heirs and assigns forever And the said parties of the first part for their ??? heirs executors and administrators do covenant grant bargain provide and agree to and with the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns to warrant and forever to defend the above bargained premises and every part and parcel thereof against the said parties of the first part their heirs executors administrators and assigns and against all and every person or persons claiming or to claim the said premises or any part thereof. The witnesses where of the said parties of first part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written. **Anthony Lamb** (S.S.) **Mary Lamb** (S.S.) Sealed and delivered in presence of **D. D. Williamson** City & County of New York. On this seventeenth day of August one thousand eight hundred and thirty personally appeared before me **D. D. Williamson** a Commissioner authorized by law to take the proof and acknowledgment of deeds and other conveyances. **Anthony Lamb** and **Mary** his wife known to me to be the persons described in and who executed the within conveyance who severally acknowledged that they had executed the same for the uses and purposes therein mentioned and the said **Mary** being examined by me privately apart from her said husband acknowledged that she had executed the same freely without any fear threat or compulsion of or from her said husband and not finding there in any alterations I do allow it to be recorded **D. D. Williamson** Cour?? of deeds **[[LS]]** State of New York City and County of New York **S.S. I Nicholas Dean** – Clerk of the City and County of New York do hereby certify that **D. D. Williamson** Esqr whose name is subscribed to the certificate of the proof or acknowledgment of the annexed Indenture and there on written was at the time of taking such proof or acknowledgment a Commissioner in and for the City and County aforesaid dwelling in the said City commissioned and sworn and duly authorized to take the same. And further that I am well acquainted with the writing of such Commissioner and verily believe that the signature to the said Certificate of proof or acknowledgment is genuine. In testimony where of I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said County the seventeenth day of August 1830. **N. Dean** ... Recorded September 4, 1830 at 9 o'clock A.M.
A. Edwards Jun. Dep. Clerk

INTERESTING EXAMPLES OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

“Beginning in the centre of the State road leading from Salina to Sacket’s Harbor where the road to the Richmond Settlement on Military lot No. Eight (8) in said township leaves the same.”
(Intersection of State Road (Salt Road) and E. Molloy Road.)

“Beginning at a white cedar Stake at the south east corner of said lot No. Three a hemlock tree ten inches in diameter marked on four sides standing north seven links from said stake...”

“Beginning at a red cedar stake standing on the south west corner of said lot number three a large yellow Pine stump standing north thirteen degrees east ten links therefrom...”

“Beginning at the north west corner of said Lot at a stake north 26 degrees west 32 links from a white pine stump numbered II & III.”

“Beginning in the east line of said lot in the center of the Richmond road at the north west corner of lot No. nineteen (19) in said township at a stump Eighty links north forty three degrees east from a Beach Tree marked A. C. V. C. 1835...”

“ thence north at right angles to said south line eighteen chains and twenty five links to a stake standing five links southwest of a red cherry tree now standing (or which stood at the time of conveyance of these premises from Michael Lynch & wife to the said Daniel)...”

TRACING PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

Understanding exactly where one's ancestor lived requires the ability to turn the legal description of their property, found in the deed, into a boundary diagram on a map. In some cases this is very easy and straight forward. However, in other cases it is a tedious time consuming and many times totally frustrating experience.

First the deed must be found so that the legal description can be copied or transcribed. At this point the hope is that the description has enough detail but not too much. The worst case is one where your ancestor's boundaries are described in terms of the boundaries of the neighbors on all sides. Those boundaries are all relative, whereas absolute boundaries, including exact locations, direction and distance information are needed before the boundaries can be traced out. At the other end of the spectrum are the lengthy, very detailed descriptions using directions with angles, minutes (and sometimes seconds) and multiple zig-zag segments to precisely capture the exact boundaries. If one is a surveyor or a property owner, the more detail the better. However, if you are a genealogist or historian just trying to get an approximate idea of the extent of the property, that is way too much information. By keeping the time period of interest to be prior to about 1900 most of the very detailed legal descriptions can be avoided.

Next a map needs to be selected, on which the boundaries can be traced. I have chosen the 1860 and 1874 maps from the two Onondaga County Atlases. These maps contain detail within each lot, in a given town, that included the names of property owners, location and ownership of larger structures and sometimes the amount of acreage. These maps were available on line and were the product of a high resolution scan of the original maps. It is important that there is no distortion in the aspect ratio of the maps. Xerox machines introduce a stretch in the scan direction for cosmetic reasons and cause an elongation of the document in the scan direction. This isn't a problem with scanned images.

The first thing that needs to be determined is the scale of the map. There might be an actual linear scale on the map itself and that could be used. A simple statement alone, such as, "500 feet per inch," is only useful when dealing with the actual map. Another method is to match up a dimension from the legal description with some feature on the map itself. In the early deeds entire sections of the lot were changing hands. Quite often a measurement would represent the entire length of the height or width of the entire lot – these are the best.

In placing the actual boundaries on the map a decision needs to be made. Should the boundaries strictly follow the angles and distance, or should they follow the physical feature shown on the map. The description might give a particular distance to travel and then state that at the end of that distance the point is in the center of a road. Those two items might not always match up. Features found on these 1860 and 1874 maps were not always in the correct locations. It must be realized that these maps were not surveyors map and they can't be used to resolve detailed boundary questions. This misplacement happened most often with creeks and roads. On the 1874 maps the placement of Bear Trap Creek caused a few problems, Bailey Road was too far south

and East Molloy Road was too far north. Most of the time the geographic features was chosen instead of the exact distance from the legal description. If the southern boundary of a property ran along Molloy road it would send the wrong message if the boundary was drawn a little north of the road just to be numerically correct. No one will ever notice that the west line of the property was only 28.7 chains when it was really 25.3 chains without getting out a ruler and calculator. Most property is described verbally in terms of the roads that bound it and that is more important.

The map for Lot 18 depicted the location of E. Molloy Road, or Richmond Road as it was known then, was too far north. On closer examination it can be seen that it is about 6 chains (about 400 feet) north of the intersection of the Plank Road and Lemoyne Ave. The property boundaries along the western boundary were out of proportion due to this misplacement. The correction needed to correct the proportion was to shift Molloy Road down by 6 chains and that was exactly where the Plank Road and Lemoyne came together, exactly where it belongs.



On the 1874 map above the blue double line shows the downward displacement of E. Molloy Road that is discussed in the paragraph above. This displacement allows the boundary dimensions and the location of geographic objects to be consistent.

On the map, when only one property is displayed at a time, the problem isn't noticeable. When all the properties are placed on the map at the same time it becomes noticeable. On Lot 18 the road wasn't moved and the geographic features mentioned in the legal descriptions were followed. The most obvious result of this is that the size of the properties might not be in proportion but the boundaries are all physically correct.