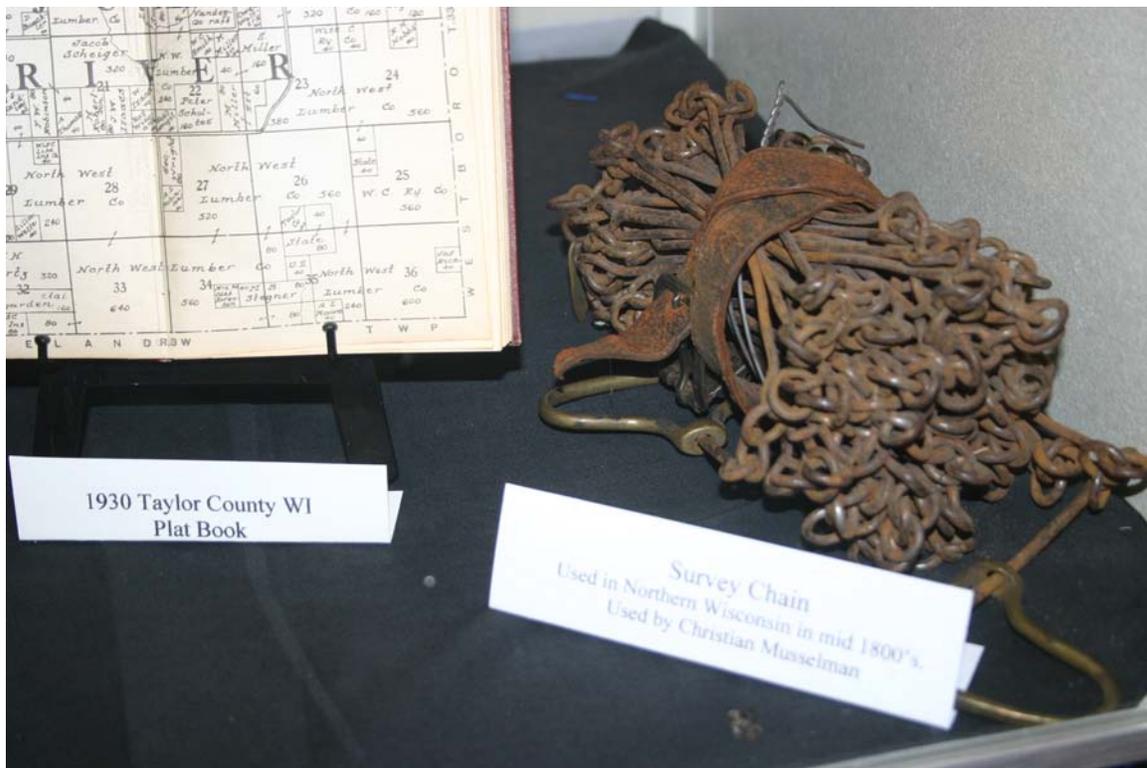


Measuring Land

In 1785, the Continental Congress decided on a way to measure the land. People could know what belonged to them and what belonged to their neighbors. The leaders decided that if they measured and divided the land into rectangles, it would be easy to know what belonged to each person. They numbered the rectangles and described on paper what each person owned.

From 1833-1856, men came to Wisconsin to measure the land into these rectangles. The men who measured the land were called surveyors.



**Surveyor's Chain and Early Plat Book Showing Map
(Courtesy of Taylor County Historical Society)**

They used a compass to find their way in the woods. They used chains to do the measuring and then they put markers at the corners of a piece of land they were measuring. Sometimes the markers were on trees and sometimes stones were used. As time went on, pieces of metal such as rebars or pipes were used. Now special electronic devices are used to find the iron markers and accurately measure the land. No one may move the markers!!!

Imaginary lines on the earth that run from north to south are called meridians. They are the lines from which surveyors measured the land. One of these VERY IMPORTANT LINES is known as the Fourth Principal Meridian. Latton, an early Taylor County historian said, "In May 1854, Wm. E. Dougherty

was hired to make the survey of this part of the state and extend the fourth principal meridian which runs four miles west of Medford.”

All land in Wisconsin is measured from the Fourth Principal Meridian. The meridian begins at the southern border of the state and runs north from there. School property and the posts that mark it are measured east from it.



The Fourth Principal Meridian Goes Along County Trunk E

Find this iron marker on the east side of the road near the parking lot that is near the baseball diamond.



Iron Marker Showing Where School Property Begins and Ends

When people want to buy land or build new buildings, they use the markers to be sure they know where their boundary is.

When the Kuse family wanted to add land to their farm, they talked to a neighbor named Augusta Billings. They paid her money for the land and had what they owned recorded on a paper called a deed. Walter Kuse looked for the marked stone boundary marker buried in the town road, now called Allman Avenue, so that he would be sure to know where to build the fence. His mother, Eleonore Bolz Kuse, recorded that event in her diary on May 19, 1936. It was written in German.

“Mai 19 Walter sucht den gemarkten Xstein auf der Road mit Fritz Werner
Walter fixtt neues Fenz zwischen Billings” (May 19 – Walter looked for the marked cornerstone on the road with Fritz Werner. Walter fixed the new fence between us and Billings.)

By digging up the corner stone, Walter discovered that the boundary fence was in the wrong place. Property he had thought was his really still belonged to the Billings family. Hildegard Kuse had enjoyed getting the cows on a special cow path or lane along that fence. Now she learned that the path really did not belong to the family. The Kuses knew they needed to be honest and be good neighbors, so Walter moved the fence to the new and correct place. He had to move it to the west. Hildegard and the cows made a new path.

Where are the markers near the school you attend? You will be able to find them because they have been drawn on a kind of map called a survey map. What do they tell about where the boundary line between land belonging to the school and the neighbors really is? Nobody is allowed to move such an important marker!!

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