



**Plat Map Showing Early Settlers in the Town of Medford
Before 1900**

Be a Geologist and/or a Geographer

Geologists study rocks minerals and soils. Most of these are covered by snow in winter but some can be seen in the walls of the house, barn, and other buildings near the trail. Think about the way moving ice, glaciers, freezing and melting have changed the landscape. Read about the geology of the area near the school. (See Kalmon, S., 2011)

Geographers look at landforms, water, maps, and the way the earth is described and measured. They think about where they are in the world. They also think about the ways different cultures and individuals have interacted with their environment and how human activities have impacted the world. Be a geographer. Learn about your place in the world by taking a close look at the nearby places where you work or play.

- Use a road map, plat map, and aerial or satellite photo of the locations where you are walking. Try to place yourself on the maps.
- Take a compass on the walk. Use it to find directions.
- In Wisconsin, land is measured east and west of the 4th Principal Meridian. In Taylor County, that goes along County Trunk E. Look at a Plat Book and read about longitude and latitude before taking a trail walk. Notice that the trail and school are in Section 28 of the Town of Medford. It is listed as T. 31N.- R.1E. That means 31 townships north of the Wisconsin southern border and one east of the 4th Principal Meridian.

- Early settlers were very aware of the “Meridian” when they were locating a place for their new farms. They talked about living on or near it. Who lives near it today? Who travels on a school bus or car that goes along the Meridian?
- In 1874 when the Lawrence Johnsons homesteaded the land where the school and trail are located, it was described according to its location and the way surveyors had measured it. Look at early survey maps and abstracts. You can also use a plat book to find a land description for the place where you live.
- When the Kuses bought some of the land from the Johnsons and when some of the land was bought to build the school, the land was measured again. Look at abstracts and maps that were made. Some of those maps show where corner posts are located as markers. Where on the property would you find them?
- Early surveyors had to describe the land they measured. How would you describe the land along or near the trail? (Hilly, rolling, swampy, flat, bodies of water, kinds of trees, etc.) Read survey descriptions to see if you agree. What may have changed since the survey? Why?
- Look at pictures or museum displays of the tools early surveyors used. (compass, chain, transit, ax, notebooks,) How were they used? What problems might those surveyors have had? What tools are used today? Why may today’s tools be more accurate?
- People use GPS devices or sites such as Google to help them find a place where they are or want to go. Enter the address of the Kuse Farm Museum (W6219 Allman Ave.) to get a location. Would the device take you to the right place? You may be surprised at the results!!!!!!
- Some people enjoy geocaching. Talk to someone who does it. If you were to place a cache along the trail, where would you put it and what would you put in it? Why?
- What resources were on this land when Native Americans, loggers, farmers, school children and others used it? How did they use the resources? Which ones are no longer here? Were the resources used wisely or wasted? How and for what reasons are different groups of people using the land today?
- Use your photos. Take pictures of geographical features and cultural changes. Put them on a map of the area.
- Why is the meridian in Taylor County called a Principal Meridian and the one in Marathon County a Prime Meridian?

Sources

Kalmon, S., (2011). Ice Age History of Taylor County, Section I. In Kalmon S. *Our Home Taylor County, Wisconsin* . Medford, WI: (Privately printed).

Lippelt, I. (2002). Understanding Wisconsin Township, Range, and Section Land Descriptions. *Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey . Educational Series 44*. Retrieved January 31, 2013, from <http://wisconsingeologicalsurvey.org/pdfs/espdf/legdes.pdf>

Map of Taylor County Wisconsin (c. 1894). Milwaukee, WI: Fred'k C. Bogk.

Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands. Plat Map for T31N R1E, Retrieved January 31, 2013, from [http://images.library.wisc.edu/awareImageServer/SurveyNotesImageNav.jsp?collection=SurveyNotes&resource=PlatMaps/TN31/reference/003101EA.jp2&title=Plat+Map+for+T31N+R1E%20\(original\)](http://images.library.wisc.edu/awareImageServer/SurveyNotesImageNav.jsp?collection=SurveyNotes&resource=PlatMaps/TN31/reference/003101EA.jp2&title=Plat+Map+for+T31N+R1E%20(original))

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