

REPORT

ACTING SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

COMMUNICATING

*The annual report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office.*

DECEMBER 13, 1847.

Read, and ordered that 500 copies, in addition to the usual number, be printed for the use of the General Land Office.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
December 13, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor, herewith, to communicate a report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, and accompanying papers, exhibiting the operations in that branch of the public service, during the last year.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

McCLINTOCK YOUNG,  
*Acting Secretary of the Treasury.*

HON. GEORGE M. DALLAS,  
*Vice President of the U. S. and President of the Senate.*

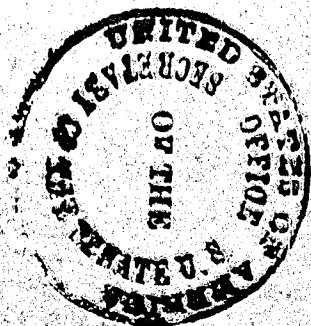
GENERAL LAND OFFICE,  
November 30, 1847.

SIR: I have the honor, respectfully, to communicate the following report of the operations of the land system, in reference to the survey, sale, and disposal of the public domain, for the year 1846, and the first, second, and third quarters of the year 1847.

I. SURVEYS OF THE PUBLIC LANDS.

In Ohio and Indiana, the former having an area of 25,361,593 acres and the latter of 23,411,431 acres, the whole of the public lands have been surveyed, and the plats returned to this office, and to the respective district land offices. The same may be said of Illinois, containing 35,235,209 acres, except a few detached tracts, which will be completed as fast as circumstances will permit. The

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## REPORTS

OF

## THE SURVEYORS GENERAL, &amp;c.

ACCOMPANYING

*The annual report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office.*

No. 1.

SURVEYOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
Detroit, November 5, 1847.

SIR: In obedience to your instructions of the 22d of April last, I now report to you the condition and progress of the surveys in this district during the past year, with the annexed statements containing the usual estimates for the fiscal year ending on the 30th of June, 1849.

## IN OHIO.

Since the last annual report, the township plats and descriptive notes of eighty-three townships and fractional townships of the several Indian reserves in the State have been recorded in imperial folio volumes, together with the town plats of Perrysburgh and Croghanville; and I am informed that about 2,000 pages of the usual cap size of records of field notes have been made by Samuel Williams, esq., formerly chief clerk in this office, for which he has not yet presented his account. When this account shall have been settled and paid, all the surveys and records of surveys in that State may be considered as completed.

## IN INDIANA.

The survey of the Miami reservation, (embracing twenty-eight townships and fractional townships,) which was under contract, and the field work of which was progressing at the date of the last annual report, has since been completed, examined, and approved.

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Plats and descriptive notes thereof have been made for this office and the district land offices, and plats have also been made for your office; and those for your office and the district offices were forwarded to their respective places early during the last summer.

The field notes of fifty-four townships, and township plats of one hundred and fifty-eight townships of the surveys in that State, remain to be recorded, and the field notes of twenty-eight townships and fractional townships are yet to be transcribed for preservation at the seat of the general government. When this shall have been done, all the surveys and records of that State will have been finished, with the exception of such islands in the Tippecanoe and other rivers, as may be of sufficient size to warrant the expense of surveying them. This work is now waiting for some competent surveyor to be found who is willing to undertake it.

#### IN MICHIGAN

*Southern Peninsula.*—The resurvey of the exterior boundaries of private claims, and of intervening and adjacent public lands on the river Raisin, which was in progress at the date of the last annual report, has been finished, the field notes returned to this office, a connected plat projected therefrom, and a copy of the field notes, together with the plats, transmitted to you. It appears, however, from your letter on that subject, that such defects were found in this work, as to make it necessary for the surveyor to go over it again in the field, and he will accordingly be required to do so, as soon as he shall return from the completion of his present survey, unless he shall be able to make such explanations as may be satisfactory, which it is hoped he will have no difficulty in doing.

At the request of the register of the land office at Kalamazoo, instructions have been given to Amos C. Roberts of that place, to meander, and connect accurately with the section lines, all the unsurveyed islands in the Kalamazoo river that will be likely to sell for enough, at \$1 25 per acre, to pay double the amount of his account for surveying them. His returns will probably be received some time during the coming winter.

Orange Risdon, D. S., has been employed, since the opening of navigation last spring, in surveying, under his contract of the 29th of April last, ten fractional townships embraced in the Manistee reservation, on the border of Lake Michigan, together with the Manitou islands, and such other islands in the vicinity of Grand Traverse bay as may be worth surveying.

No returns have yet been received from him, but from information communicated by his family, it is expected he will complete his work and return his field notes about the first of January next.

Orson Lyon, D. S., commenced early last spring, under his contract of the 14th April last, to resurvey ten townships of erroneous and fraudulent work returned in the year 1838, by Geo. W. Reilly. Field notes of three townships have been received and platted, and two or three others are expected soon; but the woods

and swamps prevent his contract work next.

The more that are examined, them has been surveys will be the peninsula the original work possibly do his work. Most intended, it is done for the particularly the great States, among J. A. Rousseau work well with surveyed, many been surveyed the fraud thus the usual rates

In the north Messrs. Higginson during the present at the date of completed, during ships and fractional been surveyed of the survey.

Algernon M. son, the subdivided around Little and he has also townships in ready received

The condition sula, under follows:

William A. last, has completed between Michigan Brule river and "Act to enable substitution, and into the Union returns are expected report thereon of his map ofveys in Michigan accompanies the

The exterior

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and swamps prove to be so thick and difficult to get through, that his contract will, probably, not be finished before the first of May next.

The more the old surveys in the northern part of this peninsula are examined, the more certain it appears that a large portion of them has been so loosely and fraudulently made, that extensive resurveys will be necessary. The woods and swamps in that part of the peninsula are so difficult to get through, and the price paid for the original work there was so small, that no surveyor could possibly do his work well, and receive a fair compensation for his services. Most of the deputies who were residents of Michigan intended, it is believed, to do their work as well as it could be done for the price that they received for it; but others, and especially the greater number of those whose residence was in other States, among whom were Geo. W. Reilly, of Ohio, and R. H. and J. A. Rousseau, of Kentucky, finding it impossible to do their work well without losing money by their contracts, returned, as surveyed, many lines, and even whole townships, which had not been surveyed at all; and, as this office had no means of detecting the fraud thus committed, their work was received and paid for at the usual rates.

*In the northern Peninsula.*—Messrs. Ives and Hubbard, and Messrs. Higgins and Hubbard, completed last season, and early during the present season, the surveys in which they were engaged at the date of the last annual report; and Samuel W. Hill has completed, during the present season, the resurvey of the seven townships and fractional townships, mentioned in that report as having been surveyed by the late Doctor Houghton, with whom the notes of the survey were lost when he was drowned in Lake Superior.

Algernon Merryweather has completed, during the present season, the subdivision of the ten townships and fractional townships around Little Bay de Noquet, mentioned in the report of last year, and he has also subdivided, in addition thereto, two or three other townships in that vicinity. The remainder of his returns, not already received, are expected within a few weeks.

The condition and progress of the surveys in the northern peninsula, under contracts made *during the present year*, are as follows:

William A. Burt, esq., under a contract dated the 27th of April last, has completed the survey of so much of the boundary line between Michigan and Wisconsin as lies between the source of Brulé river and the source of the Montreal river, as defined by the "Act to enable the people of Wisconsin Territory to form a constitution and State government, and for the admission of such State into the Union," approved on the 6th of August, 1846, and his returns are expected in time to have a copy of his field notes and report thereon reach you before the meeting of Congress. A copy of his map of that boundary, showing the connexion of the surveys in Michigan therewith, on a scale of eight miles to an inch, accompanies this report.

The exterior township lines in that part of northern Michigan

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bounded south and west by the above mentioned State boundary, north by the fifth correction line and Lake Superior, and east by the surveys made last year, making eighty-seven townships and fractional townships, have been surveyed this season by William A. Burt and Austin Burt, aided by John Burt, under a contract dated the 27th of April last. Their returns are looked for soon.

William Ives, under a contract dated the 23d of April last, has surveyed the exterior township lines, and subdivided the townships embracing the easterly half of the Isle Royale, in Lake Superior; and Sylvester W. Higgins, under a contract dated the 5th of May last, has subdivided four townships in the mineral region on the Ontonagon river; and their returns are expected daily.

On the 26th of June last, a contract was entered into with John Mullett for surveying all the township boundaries in that tract lying south of the fourth correction line and between Green bay and the Menomonic river, which, when completed, will finish the survey of all the township boundaries in Michigan. From various causes, however, but little progress has yet been made in the work under this contract, and it cannot, therefore, be finished until sometime next year.

Since your letter, dated the 22d of April, was received on the 11th of May last, advising this office of the separation of the "survey with reference to mines and minerals" from the linear surveys, and limiting the maximum average price of the latter to four dollars and fifty cents per mile, no contract for subdividing in the mining district has been made, for the reason that no competent surveyor could be found to enter into such a contract for the highest rate of compensation that your instructions allowed. No portion of the seventeen thousand dollars apportioned to this district for surveys in the copper region can, therefore, be expended, excepting the amount that may be necessary to pay for Mr. Mullett's survey of township lines, above mentioned, which will probably be about twenty-five hundred dollars. To enable this office to use the remainder, the price of surveying will have to be increased, for there are two causes of delay and expense in the survey of the mining regions, which are not usually met with in the public surveys. One is the character of the woods, swamps, and wind-falls, which are so thick and difficult to penetrate, not only in the mining country, but also throughout the whole northern peninsula and the northern half of the southern peninsula of Michigan, that neither horses nor mules can be used by the surveyors for packing, and they have, therefore, to hire men to pack all their baggage and supplies on their shoulders. The other is the local attraction that exists in every part of the mining region and vicinity, which is so great, and every where so variable, that no reliance can be placed on the magnetic needle; in consequence of which the surveys there can be made only with a solar compass, and when the sun shines, and the work cannot be carried on more than about ten hours in a day, even then.

In the estimate accompanying this report, the average maximum price for subdividing in that region is, therefore, put at six dollars

per mile, which is to lay out the amount of the former as fast as possible in the district in this State.

Since the last six townships and approved, and to this office and the two townships both for this office the same time.

Copies of the notes of one hundred made, at the request to supply the plates in his office. Copies of fifty-four townships and use of the descriptions of errors of Michigan.

A half-bound volume containing a copy of diagrams illustrating a map of the whole State was on his way to plats of thirty-three were made and for

During the year has been recorded townships, one in the State of Indiana Michigan, covering pages of large capital preservation at the townships in the twenty-eight page scripts, eighteen and

The above, with among other things constantly made in surveys, has kept

Accompanying material and exhibits.

A.—General statement of the public good, for the year

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per mile, which is as low as experience will justify. It is proposed to lay out the amount of this estimate, together with the remainder of the former appropriation above referred to, in subdividing, as fast as possible and as far as it will go, the whole iron and copper district in this State.

#### *Office Work.*

Since the last report, the field notes of the subdivision of eighty-six townships and fractional townships have been examined and approved, and township plats have been made therefrom, both for this office and the General Land office; register's plats of ninety-two townships, and descriptive notes of twenty-eight townships, both for this office and the register's offices have been made within the same time.

Copies of the plats of five townships, and of the descriptive notes of one hundred and twenty-four townships, have also been made, at the request of the register of the land office at Detroit, to supply the place of those that had been mutilated and worn out in his office. Copies of the field notes, and of the township plats of fifty-four townships, have likewise been made for the information and use of the deputy, who is engaged in making examinations and resurveys of erroneous and fraudulent work in the southern peninsula of Michigan.

A half-bound volume of 231 pages, of large size cap paper, containing a copy of all the geological reports in this office, with diagrams illustrating the report on each district, and a connected map of the whole, was made and delivered to Dr. Jackson when he was on his way to Lake Superior last summer, and copies of the plats of thirty-three townships in the mineral district of this State were made and forwarded to him shortly afterward.

During the year ending on the 30th of September, 1847, there has been recorded the field notes of two hundred and seventy-three townships, one hundred and ninety-six of which are of surveys in the State of Indiana, and seventy-seven of surveys in the State of Michigan, covering eight thousand six hundred and forty-four pages of large cap paper. There have also been transcribed, for preservation at the seat of government, the field notes of eighteen townships in the State of Indiana, covering six hundred and twenty-eight pages, making, in the aggregate of records and transcripts, eighteen and a half volumes, of five hundred pages each.

The above, with the current official correspondence, embracing, among other things, answers to the numerous inquiries that are constantly made for information in regard both to the old and new surveys, has kept the force of the office busy for the past year.

Accompanying this report you will receive the following estimate and exhibits, viz:

A.—General statement of receipts and disbursements for surveying the public lands in the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, for the year ending September 30th, 1847.

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B.—Estimate of salaries for surveyor general of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, and of clerks in his office, for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1849.

C.—Estimate of appropriations required for surveying the public lands and for incidental expenses in the district composed of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, for the year ending June 30th, 1849.

D.—Tabular statement of contracts for surveying in the district composed of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, for the year ending September 30th, 1847.

E.—Triplicate maps of Michigan, showing the townships of which the maps, descriptive, and field notes have been recorded and transcribed, and those re-surveyed.

F.—Triplicate maps of Indiana, showing the townships of which the maps, descriptive, and field notes have been transcribed and recorded.

G.—Triplicate maps of the boundary line between Michigan and Wisconsin, as run and established by William A. Burt, D. S., in the summer of 1847, under the fourth section of the act of the 10th August, 1846, together with the township lines in Michigan, in connexion therewith.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LUCIUS LYON,  
Surveyor General.

A.

*General statement of receipts and disbursements for surveying the public lands in the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, for the year ending September 30, 1847.*

DISBURSEMENTS.

RECEIPTS.

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