



# Madison County Genealogical Society



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## **When This County Was First Settled**

When this County was first settled, the British used metes and bounds description for land conveyances. An example of this would be that they would start from a known point such as beginning at an Old Oak tree on the North side of a dirt trail by Edwards' farm, said point being on the South side of a stream; thence Northeasterly following the meanderings of the stream to its intersection of Jones' rock wall fence; thence in a Southeasterly direction, following said rock wall, 600 feet more or less to dirt trail; thence Southwesterly to the point of beginning.

This particular system was the cause of many land disputes because of gaps and overlaps between adjacent owners. Our founding fathers realized a more uniform system was needed for the purpose of description and disposal of the public lands. The rectangular survey system was enacted by Congress in 1796. This act provided for Townships 6 miles square containing 36 sections. The East and West boundaries of said township were run due North and South and the North and South boundaries were parallels of latitude. This was done in Madison County in 1866.

The state of the art equipment for the government surveyors was the compass and the chains. When I began surveying 34 years ago, we used a transit and a steel tape. Since then, the equipment we use has evolved to instruments that read angle and distance electronically and satellite surveying equipment.

The task of a surveyor is to retrace the footsteps of the old surveyors. Only after extensive search to find the old monuments can a new monument be reset. Even with the most modern measuring equipment that show distances varying from the recorded distance, the old monument still holds as correct.

By LaVern F. Schroeder, R.L.S. 312

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