
General Land Office (GLO) Surveys

History The Federal Government inherited a substantial public domain from its predecessor, the government under the Articles of Confederation. By Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution, Congress was empowered "to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States."¹

In the act establishing the Treasury Department (1 Stat. 65), September 2, 1789, the Secretary of the Treasury was authorized "to execute such services relative to the sale of the lands belonging to the United States, as may be by law required of him," and the Office of the Register of the Treasury was designated the agency for the collection and dispersal of Treasury revenues. The Secretary of War, in the act establishing the War Department (1 Stat. 50), August 7, 1789, was made responsible for granting military bounty lands (lands to which veterans of the Revolutionary War were entitled by virtue of their military service). The Treasury responsibility for administering the public lands was defined initially in the Land Act of 1796 (1 Stat. 464), May 18, 1796, which provided for the orderly survey and sale of lands northwest of the Ohio River. This responsibility was extended geographically and amended procedurally by additional land laws of 1800, 1803, and 1804.¹

The act of 1796 required the Secretary of State to record and issue patents (titles) to public land.¹

Surveyor George Hyde

GLO History The General Land Office Act (2 Stat. 716), April 25, 1812, created the General Land Office (GLO) in the Department of the Treasury to "superintend, execute, and perform, all such acts and things, touching or respecting the public lands of the United States," including those functions formerly vested in the Secretaries of War and State. GLO transferred to the newly created Department of the Interior under provisions of its establishing act (9 Stat. 395), March 3, 1849. GLO and Grazing Service consolidated to form the BL in 1946.¹

Among the most useful and readily available documentary resources for western emigrant trails are the GLO survey plats produced from the 1850's through the early 20th century. Although most GLO plats were the result of conscientious surveys by competent surveyors, some of the plats are not trustworthy. There are historical records of large-scale fraudulent surveys and smaller-scale, so called "hotel room surveys" where no actual field survey was ever conducted. The researcher must compare what is seen on these old plats with other sources.²

Even the most competent GLO surveyors only recorded features along section lines within a township. A section is one mile square, with 36 sections in a township. Surveyors were required only to walk along section lines and record in their survey books what features they encountered along the section line. Thus, in most cases, field surveyors did not record features within the sections when surveying along section lines.²

More Information

George W. Hyde was a land surveyor for the GLO in the 1850s. During that time he completed numerous surveys in Josephine County, Oregon that have remained accurate to this time.

Local surveyors have testified to the accuracy of Hyde's surveys in Josephine County. That is a good thing as these original surveys are the authorities for today's modern surveys establishing the boundaries of your tax lot by township, range, section, and tax lot.

- Max Hull
- Glen Campbell
- Kelly Rarey
- Couple BLM surveyors Mike Walker meet at a Hugo History Day.

Hyde's GLO Surveys In Hugo, Oregon

- 1856 GLO Map: T. 35S., R. 5W., WM
- 1856 GLO Map: T. 35S., R. 6W., WM
- 1856 GLO Map: T. 34S., R. 6W., WM

Want more information? Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood* on how you can become involved.

1. The National Archives. 2008. Records of the Bureau of Land Management. Internet.

<http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/049.html#49.2>

2. Hugo Neighborhood. November 24, 2005. Updated June 23, 2006. *Hugo's Applegate Trail Field Notes*. General Land Office Field Survey Subcommittee, *Hugo's Emigrant Trails Committee*. Hugo, OR.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and to preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, if requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer.

Hugo Neighborhood Association

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Surveyor Hyde & General Land Office Surveys: 1850s



Brochure 17 in
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General Land Office

May 25, 2008

Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee

**Hugo Neighborhood Association &
Historical Society**