

INITIAL POINT DEDICATION

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: This Post was the Initial Point for measurement of the Iowa Minnesota Border, which is the Baseline for all 5th Principal Meridian Surveys in Minnesota and the Dakotas. These surveys established the Township and Section Corners which defined the property lines for the homesteaders and are still used today as the basis for all property descriptions.

THE MONUMENT: The monument set at the Initial Point was an eight foot long "White Oak Post 12 inches square branched on the 4 sides as follows to wit -- Upon the sides facing S.E. & S.W. the letters (I. B. Iowa 43° 30' North) & upon the sides facing N.E. & N.W. the letters (M. B. Minnesota 42° 30' North)"

RESTORATION CREW:
 Chief Restoration Surveyor: Donald Borchering
 Chief Restoration Scriber: Edward J. Otto
 Houston County Surveyor: Richard D. Walter
 Houston County Engineer: Brian Pogodzinski
 Allamakee County Engineer: Brian T. Ridenour
 Landscaping Crew: MSPS Chapter Three


CONTRIBUTORS:
 Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors, Minnesota Association of County Surveyors, Society of Land Surveyors of Iowa, National Surveyors Historical Society, Allamakee County, & Houston County

CORPORATE SPONSORS:
 Ayres Associates, Davy Engineering, JHS Engineers Surveyors, Moha Surveying, Otto Associates, Rani Engineering, Sunde Land Surveying, Ulteig, Westwood, Yaggy Colby Associates

INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS:
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CAPTAIN ANDREW TALCOTT (1797-1883)



Andrew Talcott
1822
Carl Weinedel
watercolor on ivory
Smithsonian American Museum.

1818 graduated second in class West Point,

1819-1820 Yellowstone Expedition up the Missouri river Under General Atkinson.


1820 Surveyed route from Camp Missouri to Fort Snelling

1835 Surveyed disputed Ohio Michigan Border with Lieutenant Robert E. Lee

1836 Resigned to private practice as Civil Engineer

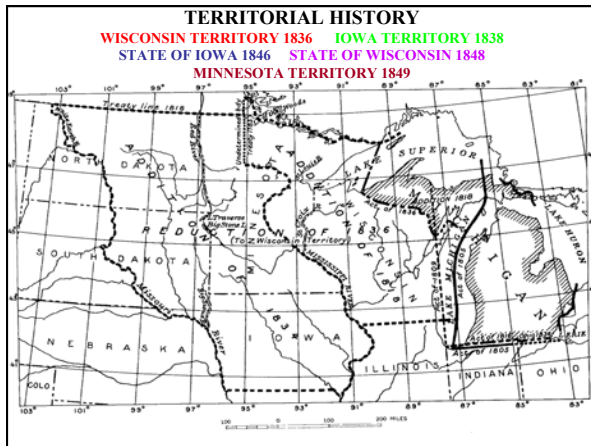
1848-1855 Chief Engineer Richmond to Danville Railroad

1852 At request of General Land Office Commissioner Butterfield hired as Chief Astronomer and Surveyor of Northern border of Iowa



PictureHistory

Born 20 April, 1797,
Glastonbury, Connecticut,
Died 22 April, 1883,
Richmond, Virginia.



SUMMARY OF IOWA MINNESOTA BORDER SURVEY

On December 28, 1846 the State of Iowa was admitted to the Union. The Iowa Constitution fixed the northern boundary of the state at the parallel of latitude of 43 degrees 30 minutes north. This line became the southern border of the Minnesota Territory which was organized on March 3, 1849.

CAPTAIN LEE & CAPTAIN TALCOTT
 Captain Thomas J. Lee was first sent by the Surveyor General to establish a monument on the parallel. Because of existing Indian Reserves and the outbreak of an epidemic of Asiatic cholera the survey of the line itself was delayed until 1852. At the recommendation of General Land Office Commissioner Justin Butterfield, Captain Andrew Talcott was hired by Surveyor General George B Sargent to be Principal Surveyor & Astronomer for the survey of the Northern Boundary of Iowa.

MEETING IN WASHINGTON
 In February 1852 they met in Washington D. C. to make final arrangements for the survey. Isaac W. Smith was hired as First Assistant to be in charge of the field operations. David B. Sears was hired as Quartermaster to outfit and supply the 40 man crew for the expected 6 months of surveying across 250 miles of uncharted prairie.

INSTRUCTIONS
 Their instructions from the Commissioner were to start the survey by projecting a line north from the nearest existing township corner in Iowa and intersecting the parallel as established by Captain Lee for the INITIAL POINT of measurement on the line. From this point they were to measure east to the Mississippi River and West to the Big Sioux setting Township, Section and Quarter-section corners every half mile on the gradually curving parallel.
 For more information on the survey visit the Initial Point which has been historically recreated (See photo at left) by the Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors about 5 miles west of here. (See location map below.)

LEE'S IRON MONUMENT (Lee's Notes 1849)



This is a hollow pyramid of Cast Iron, Six feet high, 11 inches at the base and 7 at the top, weighs nearly 600 lbs. It has upon the four sides the inscription, in raised letters as follows

Iowa
Lat 43° 30'
1849

Minnesota

It was firmly planted, about a foot below the surface of the ground, upon an oak log having a large butt which was sunk 5 feet and rammed; the iron post being further secured by driving stout pegs with projecting heads along the flange at the bottom of the casting, and by earth thrown round its base.

It is conspicuously placed at the northern extremity of an open prairie of some 2 miles in extent, not far from high water mark. A well worn Indian Trail passes within a few feet of it.

INITIAL POINT MONUMENT (Talcott's Notes 1852)



Township 100 North
Between Ranges 4 and 5, West of the 5th Meridian
North between Sections 1 and 6
Variation 8° 00' East

4.35 Intersect the Boundary of Iowa and Minnesota. Set White Oak post 12 in square branded upon the 4 sides as follows to wit:
Upon the sides facing S.E. and S.W. the letters (I. B. Iowa 43° 30' North) and upon the sides facing the N. E. & N. W. the letters (M. B. Minnesota 43° 30' North) also marked with other characters designating the Range, Township and Section as required by instructions.

White Oak 8 S. 87° 30' E. 289 lks
Black Oak 10 N. 37° 15' E. 244 lks
Black Oak 9 N. 9° 30' E. 305 lks
White Oak 8 N. 20° 30' W. 279 lks

The foregoing Range Line was surveyed north to its intersection with the parallel of 43° 30' North Latitude that one range line might serve as a common meridian for the land surveys of Iowa & Minnesota. This intersection determined the initial points for the measurements east to the Mississippi River and west to the Big Sioux.

Latitude of post marking intersection 43° 30' 02"



IOWA MINNESOTA BORDER INITIAL POINT

This Post became the Initial Point for the measurement of all 37 Township Sections between the Minnesota and the Dakota. These sections, established by the Township and Section Survey, which divided the property lines for the homesteaders and is still used today in the base for all property descriptions. A duplicate of the monument has been created and placed along the line (between the post) for the efforts and contributions of the individuals and organizations listed on this card.

Captain Andrew Galena (1779-1852)
Talcott graduated second in his class from West Point 1818. In 1849 he was Chief Engineer of the Richmond and Shenandoah Railroad, Virginia. Under Johnston, a Commissioner of the General Land Office, he worked on the Survey of the Western Coast of the State of Wisconsin Territory in the Territory of Wisconsin. On the Survey of the Northern Boundary of the State of Iowa, he was 18 1/2 days.

To get the survey started, the Survey General had to first order an accurate determination of the parallel of 43 degrees and 30 minutes north latitude.

The Border had been fixed at that parallel by the First Survey Commission. Capt. Thomas Jefferson Lee, of the U.S. Topographical Engineers, was selected to determine the location of the boundary line on the west bank of the Mississippi River on the western side of the river and make a long series of observations of the stars. There he affixed the line to the west side of the river about 1 mile from the present line of a range line. The line was marked with a post 12 inches high and weighing 400 pounds with the words "Iowa" and "Minnesota" and "1849" and "Lat 43° 30'" engraved on it.

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John W. Miller (1826-1897)
John Miller graduated from the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, Va. in 1846. On February 10th, 1851, he arrived at the location of the Initial Point and set the post 12 inches high and weighing 400 pounds with the words "Iowa" and "Minnesota" and "1849" and "Lat 43° 30'" engraved on it.

John W. Miller (1826-1897)
John Miller graduated from the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, Va. in 1846. On February 10th, 1851, he arrived at the location of the Initial Point and set the post 12 inches high and weighing 400 pounds with the words "Iowa" and "Minnesota" and "1849" and "Lat 43° 30'" engraved on it.

RESTORATION CREW
Shannon County Surveyor
Richard D. Walker
Shannon County Engineer
Steve Papadimitriou

Admission County Engineer
Steve T. Anderson
Landmarking Crew
MFP's Captain Thoms

ORIGINAL NOTES

Surveying the Iowa Minnesota Border

Automatic Stations

SURVEYING THE IOWA MINNESOTA BORDER

The Iowa-Minnesota border is the longest of any state border in the United States. It is a 1,200-mile-long border that runs north-south for 1,100 miles and east-west for 100 miles. The border is defined by the 90th meridian west longitude, which is 90 degrees west of Greenwich, England. The border is marked by a line of 1,200 iron monuments, each 10 feet high and 10 inches in diameter. The monuments are spaced every 100 miles along the border. The surveying of the border was completed in 1858 by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy. The surveying was done using theodolites and other surveying instruments. The surveying was done by a team of surveyors led by Major General John C. Brown. The surveying was done in three stages. The first stage was the surveying of the 90th meridian west longitude. The second stage was the surveying of the latitude of the border. The third stage was the surveying of the longitude of the border. The surveying was done using theodolites and other surveying instruments. The surveying was done by a team of surveyors led by Major General John C. Brown. The surveying was done in three stages. The first stage was the surveying of the 90th meridian west longitude. The second stage was the surveying of the latitude of the border. The third stage was the surveying of the longitude of the border.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS:
 Edward J. Stilling, Terry Stoenkel, Charles S. Krizan, Kenneth J. Olson, Myron & David Landwehr, RENOVA Survey Corp, Steven A. John, John C. Peterson, Edward H. Sunde, Kenneth L. Whitburn, Richard Lee

IOWA MINNESOTA BORDER INITIAL POINT

Along the old meridian, there is a monument that is 10 feet high and 10 inches in diameter. This monument is the initial point of the border. It is located at the intersection of the 90th meridian west longitude and the 45th parallel north latitude. The monument is made of iron and is located in the town of Le Sueur, Minnesota. The monument is the starting point for the surveying of the border. The surveying of the border was completed in 1858 by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy. The surveying was done using theodolites and other surveying instruments. The surveying was done by a team of surveyors led by Major General John C. Brown. The surveying was done in three stages. The first stage was the surveying of the 90th meridian west longitude. The second stage was the surveying of the latitude of the border. The third stage was the surveying of the longitude of the border.

TALCOTT'S MAP

YOU ARE HERE

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS:
 Edward J. Stilling, Terry Stoenkel, Charles S. Krizan, Kenneth J. Olson, Myron & David Landwehr, RENOVA Survey Corp, Steven A. John, John C. Peterson, Edward H. Sunde, Kenneth L. Whitburn, Richard Lee

CAPTAIN THOMAS J. LEE'S IRON MONUMENT

The monument is a 10-foot high iron monument that is located in the town of Le Sueur, Minnesota. It is the initial point of the Iowa-Minnesota border. The monument is made of iron and is located at the intersection of the 90th meridian west longitude and the 45th parallel north latitude. The monument is the starting point for the surveying of the border. The surveying of the border was completed in 1858 by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy. The surveying was done using theodolites and other surveying instruments. The surveying was done by a team of surveyors led by Major General John C. Brown. The surveying was done in three stages. The first stage was the surveying of the 90th meridian west longitude. The second stage was the surveying of the latitude of the border. The third stage was the surveying of the longitude of the border.

TALCOTT'S MAP

LEE'S MAP

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The Evolution of the Iowa and Minnesota Borders

The border of the states of Iowa and Minnesota was established in 1858. The border was defined by the 90th meridian west longitude, which is 90 degrees west of Greenwich, England. The border is marked by a line of 1,200 iron monuments, each 10 feet high and 10 inches in diameter. The monuments are spaced every 100 miles along the border. The surveying of the border was completed in 1858 by the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy. The surveying was done using theodolites and other surveying instruments. The surveying was done by a team of surveyors led by Major General John C. Brown. The surveying was done in three stages. The first stage was the surveying of the 90th meridian west longitude. The second stage was the surveying of the latitude of the border. The third stage was the surveying of the longitude of the border.


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STEAMBOATS DELIVERED SUPPLIES TO THE SURVEYORS

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 STEAMBOAT DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO THE SURVEYORS, April 1852





The steamer "Lamberton" left the city on Monday morning for the Landing in Allamakee county, where she arrived on the 18th inst. She delivered to the surveyors the supplies which she had on board, and returned to the city on the 20th inst. The following is a list of the supplies delivered to the surveyors:

1. Flour, 100 barrels
 2. Sugar, 100 barrels
 3. Coffee, 100 barrels
 4. Tea, 100 barrels
 5. Rice, 100 barrels
 6. Beans, 100 barrels
 7. Corn, 100 barrels
 8. Potatoes, 100 barrels
 9. Apples, 100 barrels
 10. Butter, 100 barrels
 11. Lard, 100 barrels
 12. Soap, 100 barrels
 13. Candles, 100 barrels
 14. Salt, 100 barrels
 15. Iron, 100 barrels
 16. Lead, 100 barrels
 17. Tin, 100 barrels
 18. Copper, 100 barrels
 19. Brass, 100 barrels
 20. Steel, 100 barrels
 21. Cast-iron, 100 barrels
 22. Wrought-iron, 100 barrels
 23. Nails, 100 barrels
 24. Spikes, 100 barrels
 25. Chains, 100 barrels
 26. Ropes, 100 barrels
 27. Tarpaulins, 100 barrels
 28. Canvas, 100 barrels
 29. Sails, 100 barrels
 30. Rigging, 100 barrels
 31. Masts, 100 barrels
 32. Yards, 100 barrels
 33. Blocks, 100 barrels
 34. Pulleys, 100 barrels
 35. Blocks, 100 barrels
 36. Pulleys, 100 barrels
 37. Blocks, 100 barrels
 38. Pulleys, 100 barrels
 39. Blocks, 100 barrels
 40. Pulleys, 100 barrels



REMARKS BY WHITE

On the 18th inst. the steamer "Lamberton" arrived at the Landing in Allamakee county, and delivered to the surveyors the supplies which she had on board. The following is a list of the supplies delivered to the surveyors:

IOWA MINNESOTA BORDER INITIAL POINT PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS: On April 18th 1852 Deputy Surveyor James Marsh intersected the Range Line between Ranges 4 and 5 with the Boundary of Iowa and Minnesota. He "set a White Oak post 12 in square branded upon the 4 sides as follows to wit: Upon the sides facing S.E. and S.W. the letters (I. B. Iowa 43° 30' North) and upon the sides facing the N. E. & N. W. the letters (M. B. Minnesota 43° 30' North)"

WHEREAS: According to Captain Talcott's final report "The foregoing Range Line was surveyed north to its intersection with the parallel of 43° 30' North Latitude that one range line might serve as a common meridian for the land surveys of Iowa & Minnesota. This intersection determined the initial point for the measurements east to the Mississippi River and west to the Big Sioux."

WHEREAS: The Iowa Minnesota Border was used as a Baseline for all 5th Principal Meridian Surveys in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

WHEREAS: These surveys established all of the Township and Section Corners which defined the property lines for the homesteaders and are still used today as the basis for all property descriptions.

WHEREAS: The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors Association with concurrence of the Society of Land Surveyors of Iowa, the Minnesota Association of County Surveyors and the Surveyors Historical Society deems this point to be historically significant.

WHEREAS: Allamakee County Iowa agreed to provide right of way and grading of the site and Houston County Minnesota agreed to provide surveys and gravel for the site.

WHEREAS: The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors Historical Committee arranged for the recreation and scribing of said White Oak Post, planning, construction and landscaping of the site, and designing, building and erecting an informational kiosk.

THEREFORE: The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors, Allamakee County Iowa and Houston County Minnesota proclaim their dedication to preserving this historic site