

Public Lands Survey System
"Rectangular Survey System"
Sections, Ranges, Townships

Roberta "Bobbi" King
Lakewood, Colorado

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State Land States
vs. Public Land States

- State Land States:
Metes and bounds
 - "...twenty rods to the ash tree thence west fifty rods to Powell's creek..."
- Public-land States:
Rectangular survey system
 - "SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 10 T29N R16W of the 6th PM"

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Early Colonists

- "Occupancy and Use"
 - based on the doctrine that living there and using the property made it yours
- Continued to present day
 - homesteading: "cultivate and settle"
 - pre-emptors: "cultivate and settle"

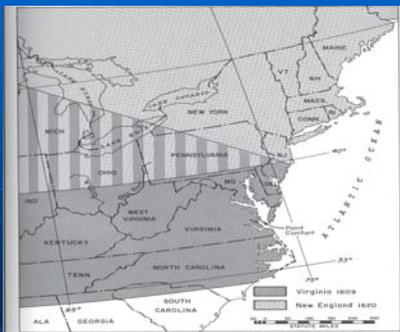
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Early Land Companies

- London Company
 - granted rights to settle 34°-41° north latitude
- Plymouth Company
 - granted rights to settle 38°-45° north latitude
- Virginia Company
 - lands: Old Point Comfort, to the Pacific Ocean
- New England Council
 - lands: 40°-48° north latitude, and "sea to sea"
- Massachusetts Bay Company
 - present-day Commonwealth of Mass., west

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New England, Virginia



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Origin of the term: Townships

- Conn., Mass., R.I. were corporations
 - 30 families given a land grant
 - survey done for a "town"
 - rectangles of 6-10 miles laid out
 - allotted according to each family's need
 - title given, couldn't be sold without group permission
 - common boundaries
 - **survey first, occupy later**
- Other colonies followed this pattern

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Colonial restrictions

- **Quitrent**
 - payment to the grantor
- **Primogeniture**
 - eldest inherits all
- **Entail**
 - lineal descendants only inherit
 - entailed land cannot be sold

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1780s

- **1781: Articles of Confederation**
- **1783: Treaty of Paris**
 - Ended the Revolutionary War
 - The United States of America exists

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Articles of Confederation

- **Maryland: "The back Lands claimed by the British Crown, if secured by the blood and treasure of all, ought in reason, justice, and policy...be considered as a common stock."**

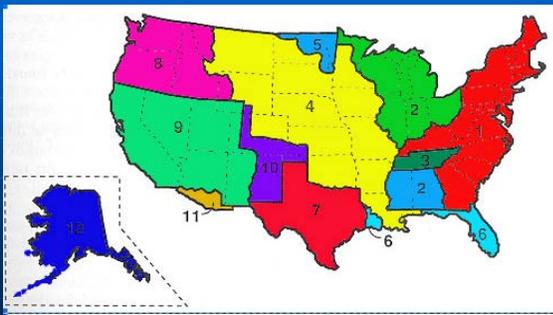
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Articles of Confederation

- Congress: "...the unappropriated lands that may be ceded or relinquished to the United States...shall be disposed of for the common benefit of the United States."

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Acquisitions to 1853



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Conflicting Opinions

- Hamilton: "Sell it to anyone for highest price"
 - Large parcels at low prices
 - Patent and survey their properties
- Jefferson: "Give every man the opportunity"
 - Small parcels at low prices
 - Survey first, sell later

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Land Ordinance of 1785

- "...surveyors...shall...divide... into townships of 6 miles square,..."
- "The lines shall be measured with a chain;..."
- "...and exactly described on a plat..."
- "...subdivisions...640 acres...numbered 1 to 36"
- "...No. 16...for the maintenance of public schools"

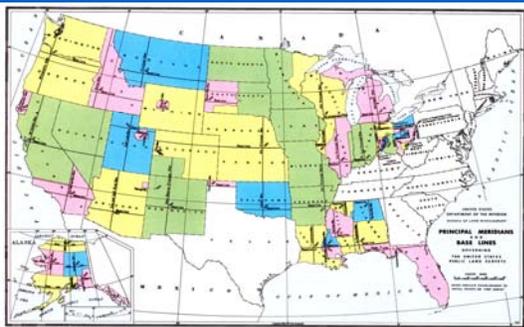
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Northwest Ordinance of 1787

- Eliminated primogeniture and entail
- Provided for territorial governors, judges
 - Officials needed to be landowners and residents
- Northwest Territory be divided into 3-5 states
 - set pattern for organization of statehood
- Slavery outlawed

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Survey Systems



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6th Principal Meridian



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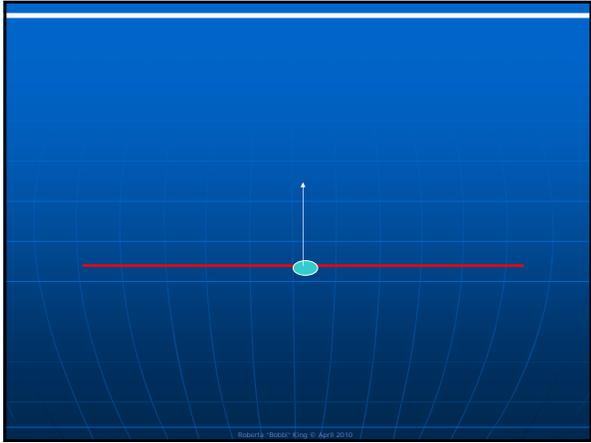
Survey

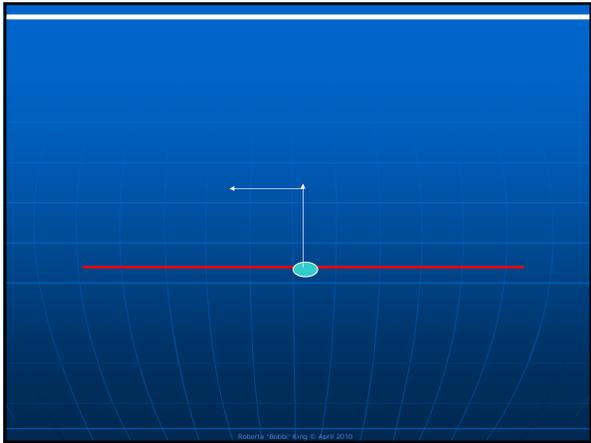


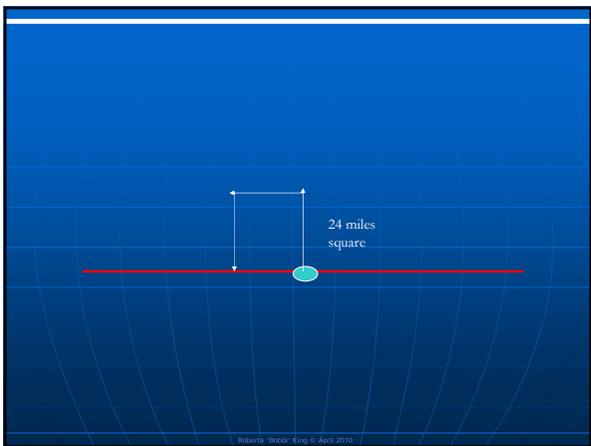
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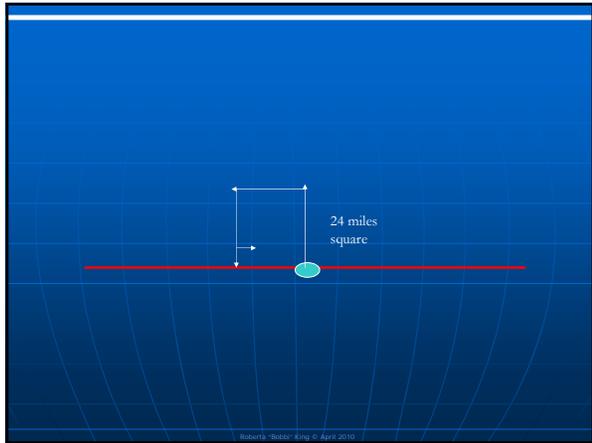


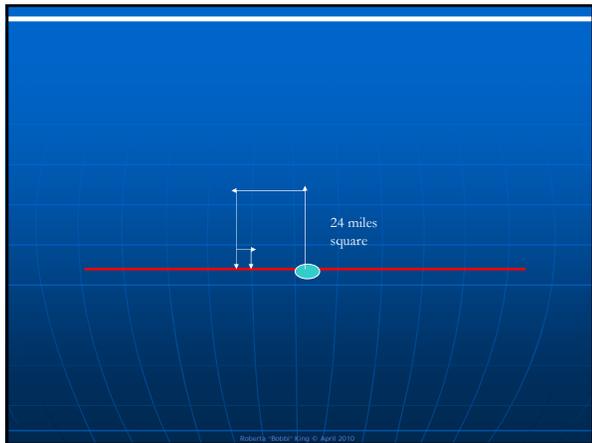
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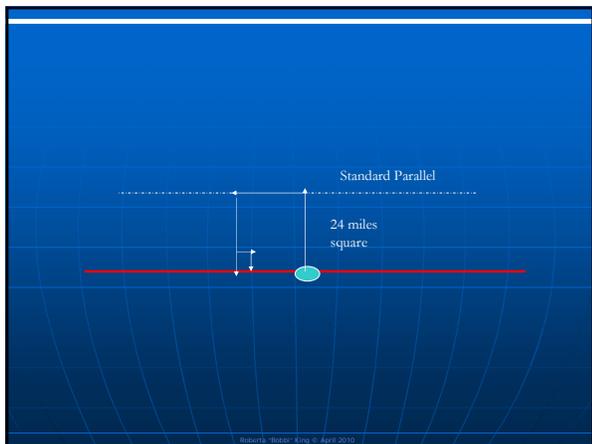


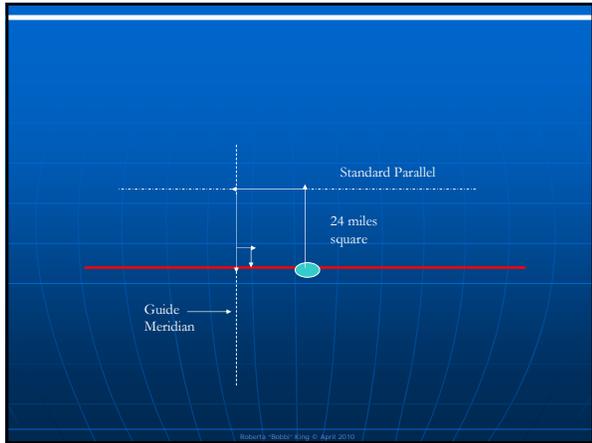


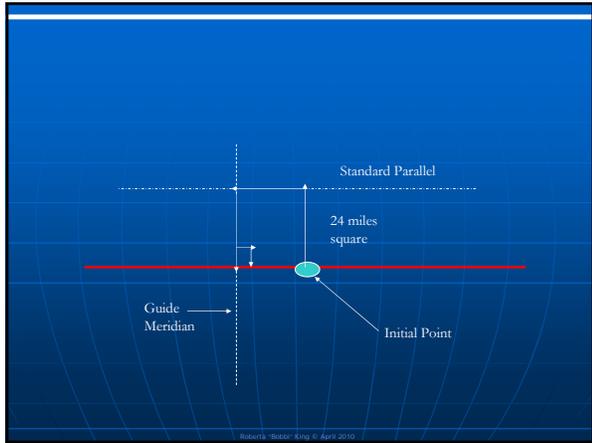


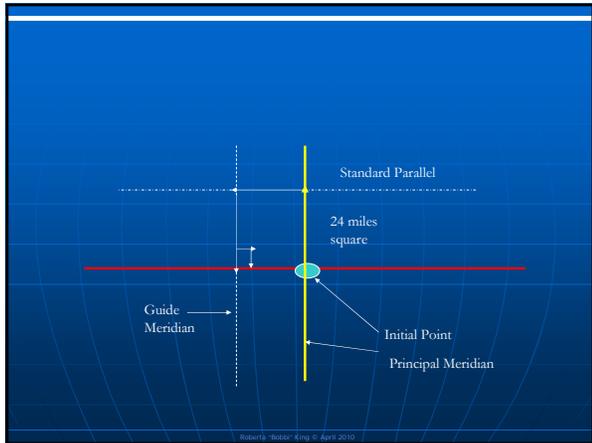


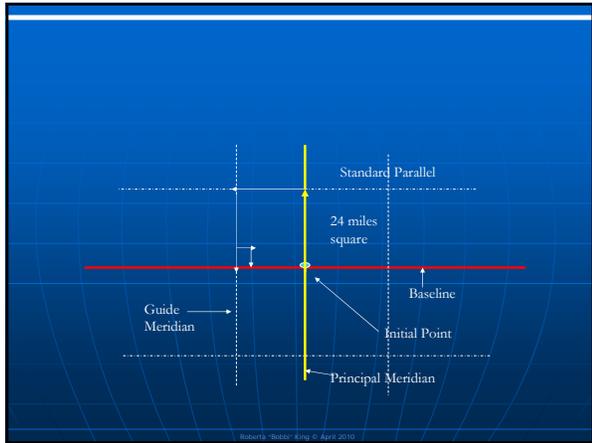


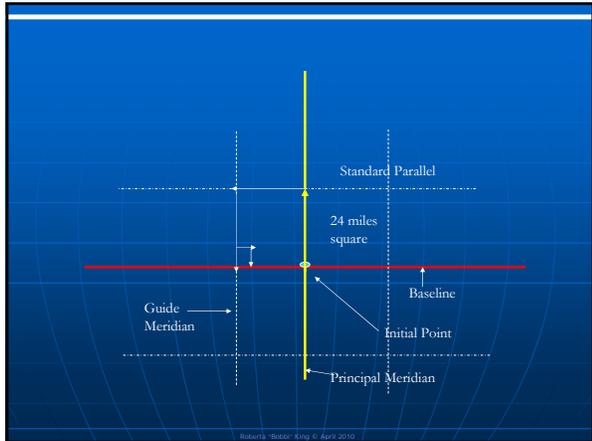


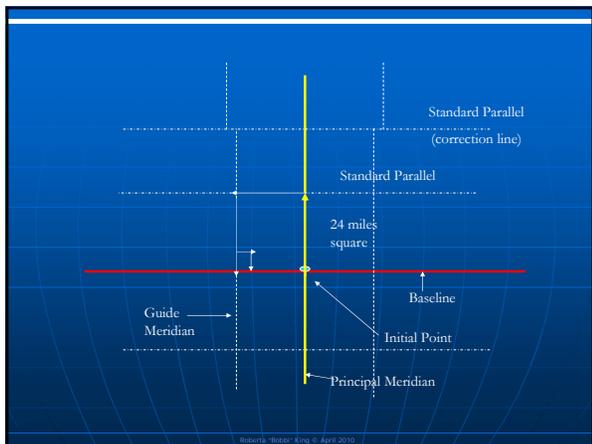


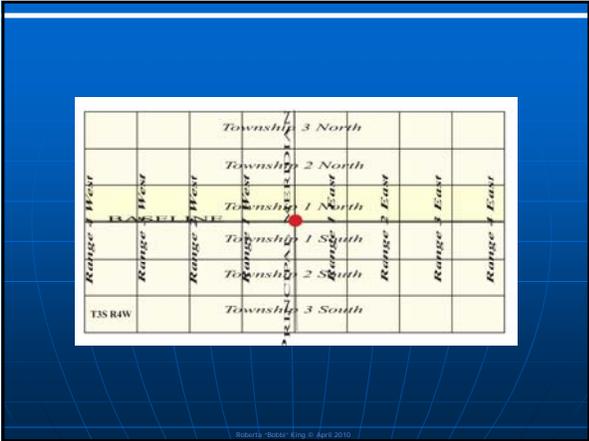


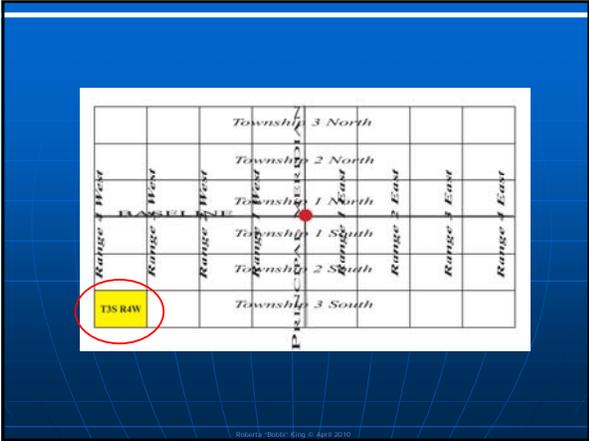




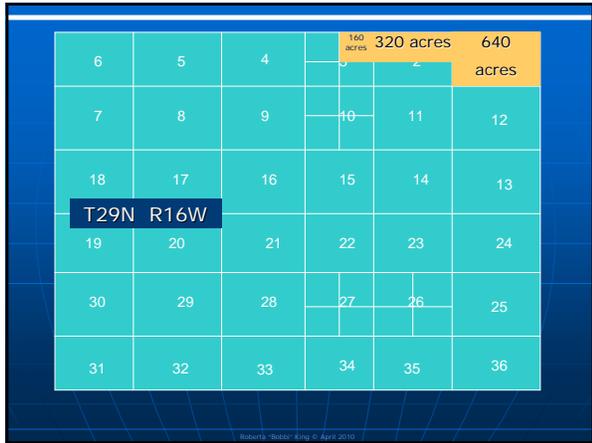




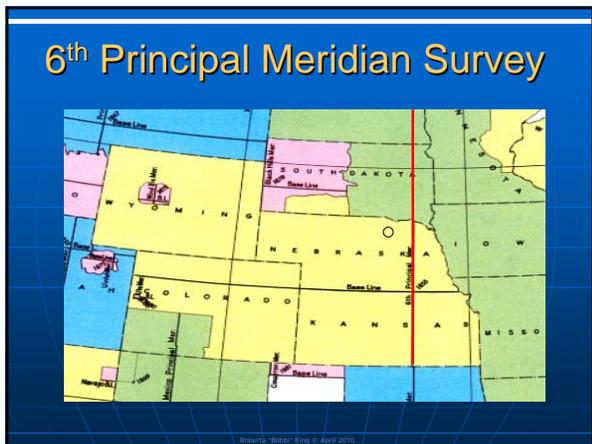


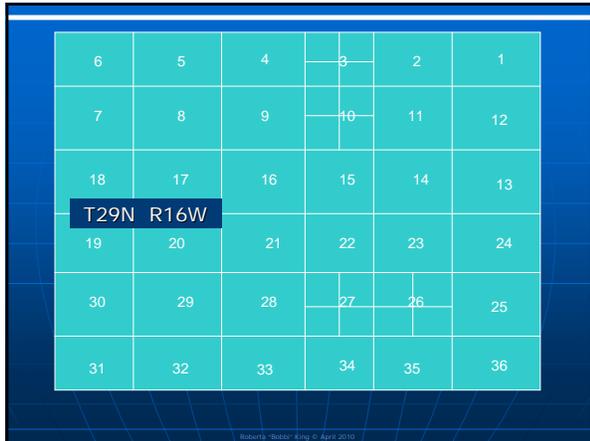








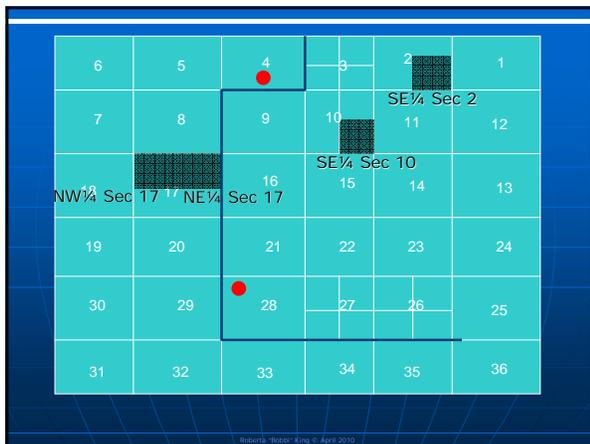




Legal Land Descriptions

- SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 10 T29N R16W of 6th PM
- SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 2 T29N R16W of 6th PM
- NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 17 T29N R16W of 6th PM
- NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 18 T29N R16W of 6th PM

SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec 10 T29N R16W of 6th PM



Great Salt Lake Initial Point



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6th Principal Meridian Initial Point



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6th P.M. Initial Point



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Good Luck!

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