

# GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS (1883) FOR THE SURVEY OF INDIAN RESERVES

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

1883

CIRCULAR

To Surveyors employed by the Department, containing instructions regarding the system of practice in the Survey of Indian Reservations or other lands of the Department.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that it is requisite that each and every Surveyor employed by this Department or any of its Agents should observe the following System of Practice in the Survey of Indian Reservations or other Lands of this Department.

**First.** That the Latitude of some point of Survey be established.

The Variation of the compass ascertained and date thereof.

When a number of surveys of small Reserves occur near each other a connecting line from one to another may be drawn or run (provided such line or lines do not take up too much time) or astronomic or magnetic intersections made to relatively position them.

That the locality of all surveys be well and fully described.

That an outline tracing be (if procurable) forwarded to this Department of the River, or portion of the Coast, Lake or Township in or near which such survey may be made, so that the same may be positioned on the maps of the Dominion.

In description when a bank of a River is named it is to be understood that the right and left bank is the right or left side of the river when looking downstream.

**Second.** The Maps, Plans or if only Tracings are returned to this office. The Latitude to be marked thereon, a full description of Position of Reserve.

The signature of the Surveyor, Place and Date attached to each.

The Station, Bearing and Distance of each line run and surveyed to be given in Tabular form on Plan or Tracing.

The stations in tabular form to correspond whether in letters or numbers to those on plottings. Letters or numbers to be placed at every station.

To state on maps etc. if the courses are astronomic or magnetic.

Each map etc. to have an Astronomic north point as also the Magnetic Variation marked thereon.

The color to be used for Rivers, Lakes and Seas to be blue.

Light red or pink to be the color of the Indian Reserves or the lands of this department.

The contents of each Reserve to be marked on the maps etc.

The scale of the construction of the maps etc. marked thereon.

The Bearings and Distances of each course shown marking a complete plot i.e. all sides measured and bearings given.

Forty (40) chains to an inch being the general scale of maps, plans or tracings.

Where a quantity of detail is required to be shown, or the Reserves are very small, 10, 20 or 30 chains to an inch may be used, but these maps etc. should not exceed in size 22 inches

by 20 inches.

Where a number of small surveys are made adjacent to one another they may be put upon one sheet, such sheet not to exceed the size above i.e. 22 inches by 20 inches.

The Chainbearers to be sworn.

The four Pole Gunter chain to be used and kept checked to its proper length.

The chainage to be horizontal and whatever the chain crosses to be noted i.e. marking any peculiarities or changes such as the right or left bank of a River or streams, the shores of Lake crossings, entering or leaving a swamp, woods, prairie or marsh, the bases and tops of Hills etc.

The lines run to be well cleared and the adjacent trees blazed in woods, on three sides of the trees - each side of the tree in the direction that the line runs and the side of the tree facing the line.

All of the rear angles to be posted and the extreme front angles, where the Reserves front or face on Rivers, Bays, Lakes or Sea shores. The intermediate stations points or angles in the scaling of Rivers, Bays, Lakes or sea shores need not necessarily be posted, but all the Stations, Bearings and Distances given in Tabulated Statement before referred to.

The posts to be of sound and durable wood, squared for 18 inches at the top end, to be 4 feet long having three feet out of the ground and one foot in the ground, in Prairie or Meadow. The posts to have a mound of 18 inches high around them of loose stones or earth and to be one foot in the earth.

The posts to be marked I.R., Indian Reserve, on the sides facing the Reserve, the marks to be cut into the posts with a knife or scribing iron. A tree may be marked instead of a post planted if in proper position.

**Third.** A Field Book of all the operations of the survey to accompany the plan, map or tracing, giving all necessary data for plotting the survey so that in the event of the plan etc. being lost, it can from the Field Book be exactly reconstructed.

The Field Notes and Map, Plan or Tracing to agree in every point.

The quality and quantity of Timber to be noted.

The class of soils also.

The waters met with if sweet, salt or Brackish.

If known the Character of Rocks and if mineral deposits exist or are on such Reserves as may be surveyed.

*Note:*

*The foregoing was found about a year ago in the Public Archives. It was handwritten, in department of Indian Affairs manuscript form, and bore the following notation.*

*"Mr. Austin:*

*Approved by Commissioner Dewdney - Have these printed for the Surveyors in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.*

*R.S. April 9, 1883"*

*Mr. W. A. Austin, D.L.S., held the position of Surveyor and Chief Draftsman at that time. Commissioner Dewdney was the Indian Affairs Commissioner for the Northwest Territories. The initials R.S. stand for R. Sinclair, the Chief Accountant.*