GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS (1883) FOR THE SURVEY
OF INDIAN RESERVES
DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
1883
CIRCULAR

To Surveyors employed by the Department, containing
instructions relating to 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 estab-
lished.

The Variation of the compass ascertained and noted there-
of.

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 astronomical 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 at the River, or portion of the Coast, Lake of Town-
ship 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 descrip-
tion 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 astronomical or
magnetic.

Each map etc. to have an Astronomical 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
e 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 Gunner 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 on Rivers, Bays, Lakes or
Seas 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 or 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 planting 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 North-
west Territories.
R.S., April 8, 1883"

Mr. W. A. Austin, O.L.S., held the position of Surveyor and
Chief Draughtsman 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.