

Tracing the Development of the General Land Office's "National Map": From Lands Surveyed to Territorial Acquisitions

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From the foundation of the republic, the government of the United States promoted western expansion through the surveying and sales of the public domain. The agency responsible over most of this period, the General Land Office (GLO), produced maps of the progress of surveying and sales on an annual basis. This article reviews a notable series, from the first "connected" map (i.e., one showing all the public lands in a single view) in 1864 until the last in 1953. In each period, the national map produced by the agency reflects the concerns of the time, as it records the preparations for the sale of the public domain for settlement. In the first decades of the connected maps, the primary thematic elements documented the work of GLO in surveying what is now called the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). These maps evolved to include a treatment of "territorial acquisitions," which eventually became the most prominent thematic element, while still including a representation of the PLSS grid. The series' first depictions of territorial acquisitions included an exceptional error, one of several, indicating that the Oregon Country was part of the Louisiana Purchase. Commissioner Binger Hermann expounded his understanding of the United States' territorial history in an eighty-seven page monograph, an unusual recognition of a cartographic error, which led to corrections. The long history of this map series provides material to understand the role of maps in the history of the country.

KEYWORDS: history of cartography; national mapping; American expansion; territorial acquisitions of the United States; General Land Office; Louisiana Purchase

FROM 1864 TO THE 1950S, the United States General Land Office (GLO), succeeded by the Bureau of Land Management, created and published a national map that first showed the growing nation's progress in controlling territory from sea to sea and later incorporated a representation of its overseas territories. While Short (2001) recounted part of this story in a general coverage of mapping the United States from 1600 to 1900, we will add greater detail regarding one of the longest series of annual maps produced by the United States federal government.

Our examination adds to a steady accumulation of cartographic understanding of the circumstances under which maps have been produced. Initially, Harley and Blakemore (1980) set out the argument to move away from the specific map artifact to its historical context. Subsequently, a number of scholars have contributed studies of the institutional and political backgrounds involved in map series of British India (Edney 1997), Egypt (Godlewska 1988), Canada (Taylor 1994), and the United States (Short 2001).

The first part of the story we will tell regards the process that led the agency to produce an annual map that showed GLO activity across the whole national territory. GLO had the task of dividing the public domain into saleable parcels, then selling them to provide revenue to the early republic. As a part of an annual report to Congress, the GLO's maps record the westward expansion of settlers moving into what had been aboriginal lands. In the second part, at a key moment in the agency's history, these detailed maps of new "townships" become overlain by a bold theme recording "territorial acquisitions," largely from European imperial claims. In this manner, this map series records the development of the United States of America from its foundation through its imperial ambitions of the late nineteenth century. This record can be used to support or question prior work on the politics and public concerns of the era.

The story of these national maps enfolds a massive mistake, something that had to be confronted with an



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eighty-seven page retraction/explanation. The error was not due to a slip of the wrist or an act of forgetfulness. It arose from the same sources as the truth in the maps. The story of these maps needs to be encased in the sweep of institutional and historical context it deserves, following the administrative and institutional setting that called for these maps and realizing that prior to this national series

the United States government, and private consumers, relied on commercially produced maps of the nation. While this story raises parallel questions about other mapping efforts, with ninety years to cover, the focus must remain on just one agency, the General Land Office, and its mapping efforts.

MAPS OF STATES, TERRITORIES, AND DISTRICTS

PRIOR TO THE 1812 ESTABLISHMENT of the General Land Office within the Department of the Treasury, surveying of lands available for distribution or purchase was undertaken by state surveyors or the geographer of the United States, who initially was mandated to supervise the surveying of the seven ranges of the Northwest Territory and to communicate the resulting plats to the board of the Treasury (Figure 1).

The Department of the Treasury was directly responsible for the way that the Northwest Territory, the Louisiana Purchase, and other land accessions were integrated into the public domain and for the process of land sales both to those interested in purchasing large expanses and to individuals and families who made much smaller purchases. The public domain was a heavy, and ever increasing, administrative burden for the Department of the Treasury. A request by the secretary of the treasury for additional funding to handle land matters led the Senate Committee on the Public Lands to recommend establishing a bureau within the department to handle all aspects of land business. President James Madison signed the bill establishing the General Land Office on April 25, 1812.

The General Land Office was charged to

superintend, execute, and perform all such acts and things, touching or respecting the public lands of the United States, and other lands patented or granted by the United States, as have heretofore been directed by law to be done or performed in the office of the Secretary of State, of the Secretary and Register of the Treasury, and of the Secretary of War (US Congress 1812, 716)

When created, the General Land Office was placed in the Department of the Treasury because of the anticipated revenues that it would be collecting. Edward Tiffin, the first commissioner, gathered clerks with applicable

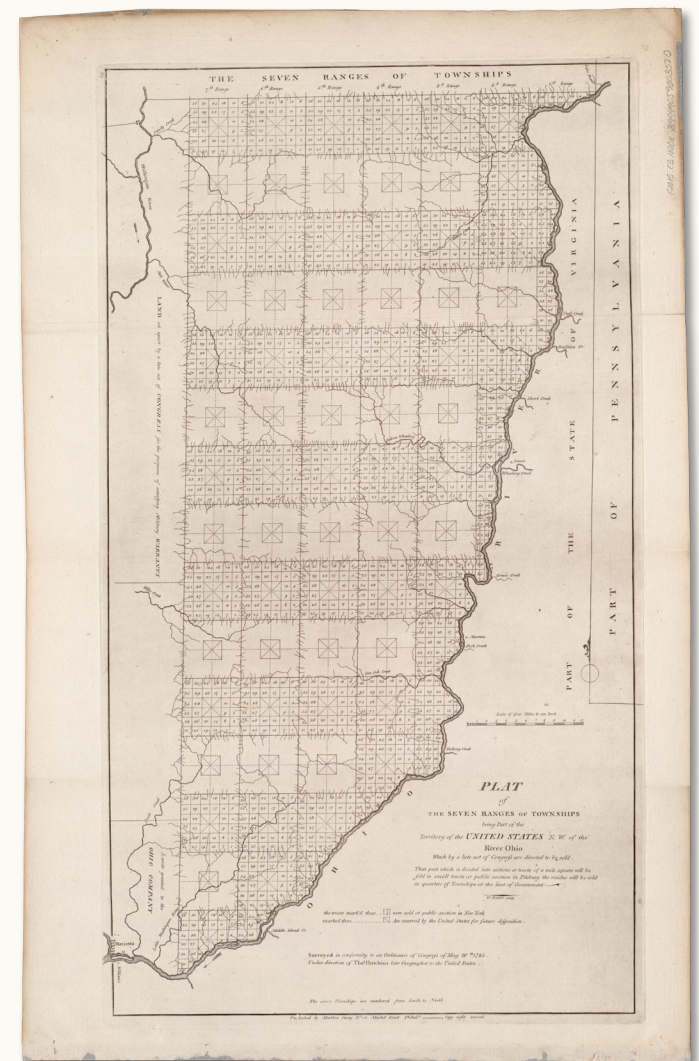


Figure 1. *Plat of the Seven Ranges of Townships Being Part of the Territory of the United States N.W. of the Ohio River which by a Late Act of Congress are Directed to be Sold* (Hutchins, Carey, and Barker 1800). Courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, Boston Public Library.

experience from other departments to staff his office: clerks from the War Department who had worked with military land bounties, clerks from the Department of

State with experience in land patents, and clerks from the Department of the Treasury to provide continuity in record keeping (Rohrbaugh 1968, 54).

The role of the commissioner of the General Land Office was primarily administrative. He had control of all the books and records about public lands and provided information about public lands to the president or to Congress upon request. An oversight of the 1812 act is that no clear reporting or supervisory roles were established between the surveyor general in each district and the commissioner of the General Land Office. Congress and the secretary of the treasury largely continued to direct the work of each surveyor general. The surveyors general, and their contracted deputies, remained autonomous and separate from the General Land Office until 1836, when the General Land Office was re-organized.

The General Land Office's draftsmen were critical to the bureau's mapping enterprise. They compiled maps from plats submitted by field operatives that were later sent back out to the district offices, marked sales of public lands on maps maintained in the office, and prepared maps for Congress and department heads. Maps showing lands surveyed, sold, and available hung in land district offices (Figure 2).

The General Land Office's portfolio of responsibilities ballooned over time from its initial charge. Beyond surveying and selling public lands, and collecting the proceeds, the GLO administered preemption acts and homestead laws, responded to land claims made through military warrants, issued land grant patents for railroads, and handled the sales of lands specifically for timbering and mining. Additionally, because of speculative buying and the government's policy of extending credit to land purchasers, the GLO became a mortgage holder. The General Land Office ended up with the same problem as its parent department—too much work and not enough hands.

In 1849, the same year during which Congress created the Oregon Territory, the General Land Office, along with the Patent Office (from the Department of State), Indian Affairs Office (War) and military pension offices (War and Navy), was transferred to the newly created Department of the Interior, as was the surveyor general. The new department had a broad-ranging set of responsibilities, all focused on the internal development of the nation or on



Figure 2. Map of the Bounty Lands in Illinois Territory (Gardiner 1812). Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

the well-being of its inhabitants. The GLO operated under a number of congressional acts, many of which referred to specific states or territories or even smaller areas. The role of the GLO within the new department further emphasized its mission to provide surveys of the public domain in support of land grants to states, corporations, and individuals. Maps remained the central tool to communicate this work.

The annual report of the commissioner of the General Land Office, submitted as part of the secretary of the treasury's (after 1849 the secretary of the interior's) annual report to Congress, habitually included separate maps of states and territories, sometimes ten or more, showing areas that had been surveyed (Figure 3). The maps accompanied reports submitted to the commissioner by state and territorial surveyors general. Usually there was one map per state/territory report, covering the entire region, but occasionally additional maps would be included focusing on specific areas of interest. In bound copies of the *Congressional Record*, the maps tended to be bound



Figure 3. Sketch of the Public Surveys of Iowa (GLO 1847). Note the large area titled “Sioux” and the diagonal zone “Ceded to the United States October 13th, 1846.” Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

immediately after the corresponding report. This arrangement would have made using the maps cumbersome.

As Figure 3 demonstrates, the district maps provide a snapshot of the procedures followed by the GLO concerning treaties with Indian tribes. It is part of a long and complicated history of the piecemeal destruction of native sovereignty. Up to 1832, Iowa had been part of “Indian Territory.” It was opened to settlement following the Black Hawk War. The required pre-settlement surveys began when the government had concluded treaties with the local tribes; many of these lopsided treaties were followed by continued pressure to remove the Indian population further away, west of the Missouri River. The text “Sioux”

on the map and the map’s mention of specific treaties shows the attention paid at a district level to the removal procedures. The group referred to as “Sioux” are more properly referred to as the Lakota.

While surveying and land distribution continued to be fragmented because of the separate mandates in each district, the context of the work became increasingly national in scope because of a number of developments that cut across state and territorial boundaries. Railroad development, spurred by the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862, created a national focus, along with railroad grants managed by GLO. In the short period of twenty years after the 1847 publication of the map in Figure 3, railroad grants came to

cover most of Iowa (Figure 4). Additionally, there is no remaining trace of any native groups in Iowa. Through the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, the Lakota ceded 24 million acres, including an area in northern Iowa, to the United States federal government in exchange for cash, goods, education, and a reservation.

The GLO's work also exploded with the Homestead Act of 1862. 270 million acres in 30 different states were settled in fairly small transactions, all handled by the GLO. The Homestead Act in conjunction with railroad land grants and events of the Civil War may have led to a demand for a more national view.

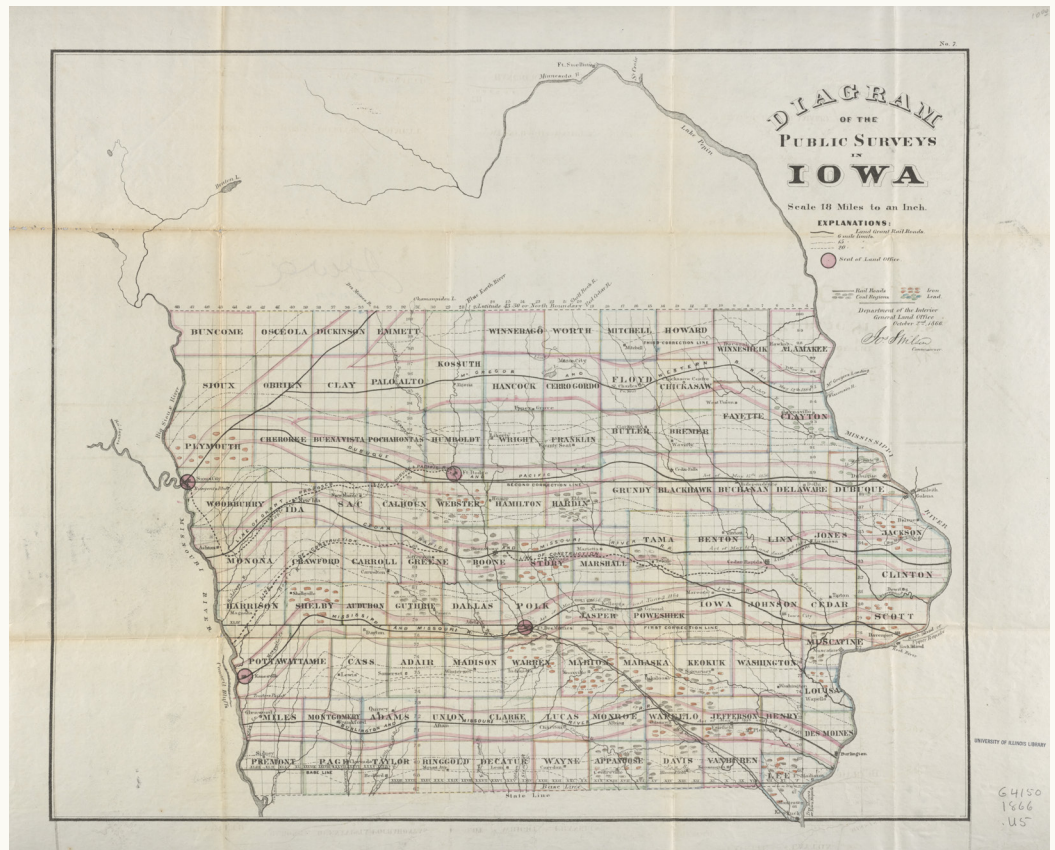


Figure 4. Diagram of the Public Surveys of Iowa (GLO 1866). Note the rapid progress since 1847 (Figure 3) and the near saturation of railroad grants. Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

CONNECTED MAP

THROUGH A JOINT RESOLUTION on January 6, 1863, Congress made some specific changes to how the General Land Office produced maps. Most of the state and territory maps that accompanied reports would now be produced commercially, under contract, instead of by General Land Office personnel. Additionally, the office was directed to create an annual map showing all of the lands in the public domain to accompany the year-end report of the commissioner of the General Land Office.

With a view of expediting the issue of the annual report of the general land-office, the public printer is hereby authorized to contract for the lithographing of the maps of the several states and territories, . . . except in regard to the connected map accompanying the last annual report of the public lands east and west of the Mississippi, in regard to which the commissioner of the general land-office is hereby authorized to procure an engraved plate thereof, to be perfected by adding from time

to time the further surveys that may be made. (US Congress 1863, 822)

From the record in the *Congressional Globe*, it appears that this joint resolution (Senate No. 110) had its beginning in a Senate committee on printing; it was introduced to the Senate on December 10, 1862, by Senator James Harlan of Iowa, Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Lands. In his introduction, Harlan indicated that “they [the General Land Office] have been using a map prepared in the War Department, but they have all been exhausted, and are not very well adapted for the purposes of the office.” The resolution was “for the purpose of engraving a map connected with the surveys, to which they may add from year to year an exhibit of the additional surveys. This is now done by hand, by the clerks in the office, draughtsmen, and costs the Government doubtless ten times as much as it would have to have them engraved” (*Congressional Globe* 1863, 52). The resolution seems to have been read in the Senate and passed without further discussion before it was sent

to the House where it was read three times and approved without any recorded discussion.

It is important to remember the distinction between printing technologies of the period. Lithography was less expensive, for a single image. However, once the image was traced onto the stone, it could not be easily changed. Engraving, by contrast, etched the surface of a copper plate chemically, and new linework could be added incrementally. The printing office had been recently established, and had become a specialist in engraving for currency, and thus provided a means to print maps. Congress has a long history of cost-cutting, and this Senate committee seems to dive deep into the details of GLO's operations.

Of course, Congress in 1863 was not in full control of the national territory that would be shown on this "connected map." By that year, eleven states had seceded from the Union and established a rival government. Maintaining the Union's claim to the whole could have been one possible motivation to create a map of national extent. Another motivation may have been the number of changes to

territories and states, as Congress was no longer locked into sectional division that had plagued the prior decades. Without the southern senators, new states were admitted, some of them before they had the required population. Each year saw some change in status, boundaries, or both.

There was no mention of the required "connected map" in the annual report submitted for the GLO at the end of 1863 as either a completed work or a work in progress. The maps included with the report were only the state and territory maps following prior convention.

The first connected map, *Map of the Public Lands and Territories, Constructed from the Public Surveys and Other Official Sources in the General Land Office*, at a scale of 1:3,801,600, accompanied the commissioner's 1864 report (Figure 5). Within the text of the report, the map is listed as the final accompanying item or report: "Connected map of the public land, States and Territories compiled from the diagrams accompanying the reports of the surveyors general." It is curious that this map shows Virginia at its pre-war extent, as West Virginia had been admitted to the

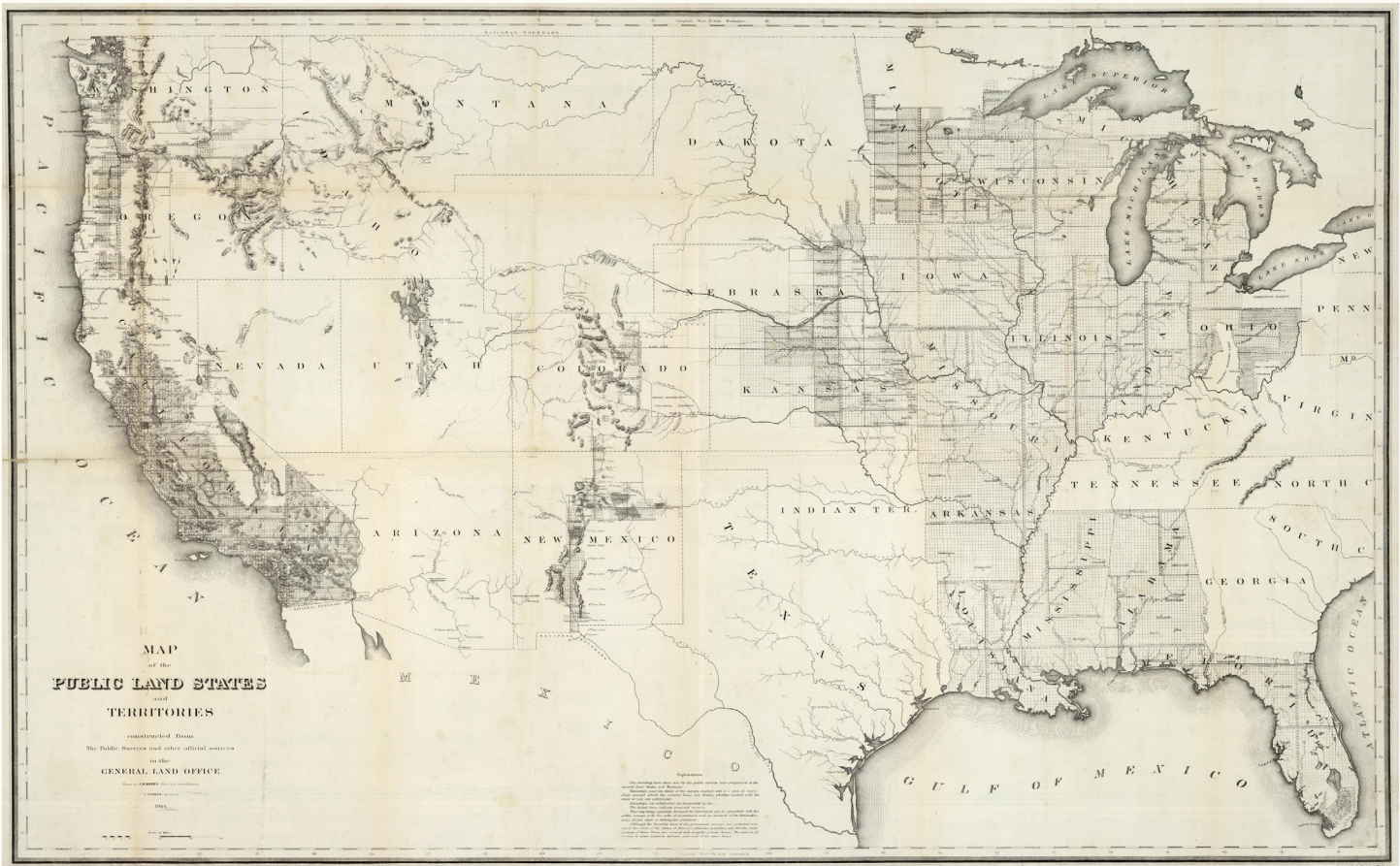


Figure 5. *Map of the Public Land States and Territories, Constructed from the Public Surveys and Other Official Sources in the General Land Office* (Hawes 1864). Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

Union in June 1863. Yet, it shows the Montana Territory, which was not created until May 1864. GLO could have updated the map to include West Virginia, but it was neither in its region of operations nor a public land state.

The list's entry for the connected map is followed by a statement regarding the multiple state/territory maps that had previously been distributed with the commissioners' reports.

The diagrams accompanying the annual reports of the surveyors general are omitted, and the connected map of the public land States and Territories, brought up to date therefrom, is bound with this report in lieu of them." (US GLO Annual Report 1864, 29)

This statement appeared in the commissioner's reports in 1864 and 1865. The connected map was intended to serve as an aggregator or distillation of data that appeared on the individual state maps. By 1866, the materials accompanying the annual report included the connected map and, once again, maps of individual states and territories, 22 individual areas in 1866.

Relief on the map from 1864 was shown by hachures; townships were coded as divided or not divided into

sections by symbols. The small amount of text included a disclaimer about the use of a rectangular projection and explained that patterns of previously surveyed areas, such as long lots in Louisiana or Spanish and Mexican land grants in California, were not specifically depicted on the map. The map does not cover the entire eastern seaboard, omitting Maine through North Carolina and including no details for South Carolina and Georgia. It covers only the parts of the United States in the public domain, the areas relevant to GLO operations. The focus was clearly westward facing. A mostly regular square grid pattern represents areas surveyed, using the actual townships, baselines and meridians. Railroads extending diagonally from population centers are visually emphasized. The map issued with the commissioner's annual report was black and white, a blank canvas that could be used to depict information about mineral resources.

Two years later, the map distributed with the commissioner's report included complete coverage of the east coast, though some of the boundaries (such as Vermont-New York) look rather dubious to modern eyes. Its title changed to reflect the full national scope of coverage: *Map of the United States and Territories, Shewing the Extent of Public Surveys and Other Details Constructed from the Plats and Other Official Sources of the General Land Office*, and it remained at a scale of approximately 1:3,900,000 (Figure 6).

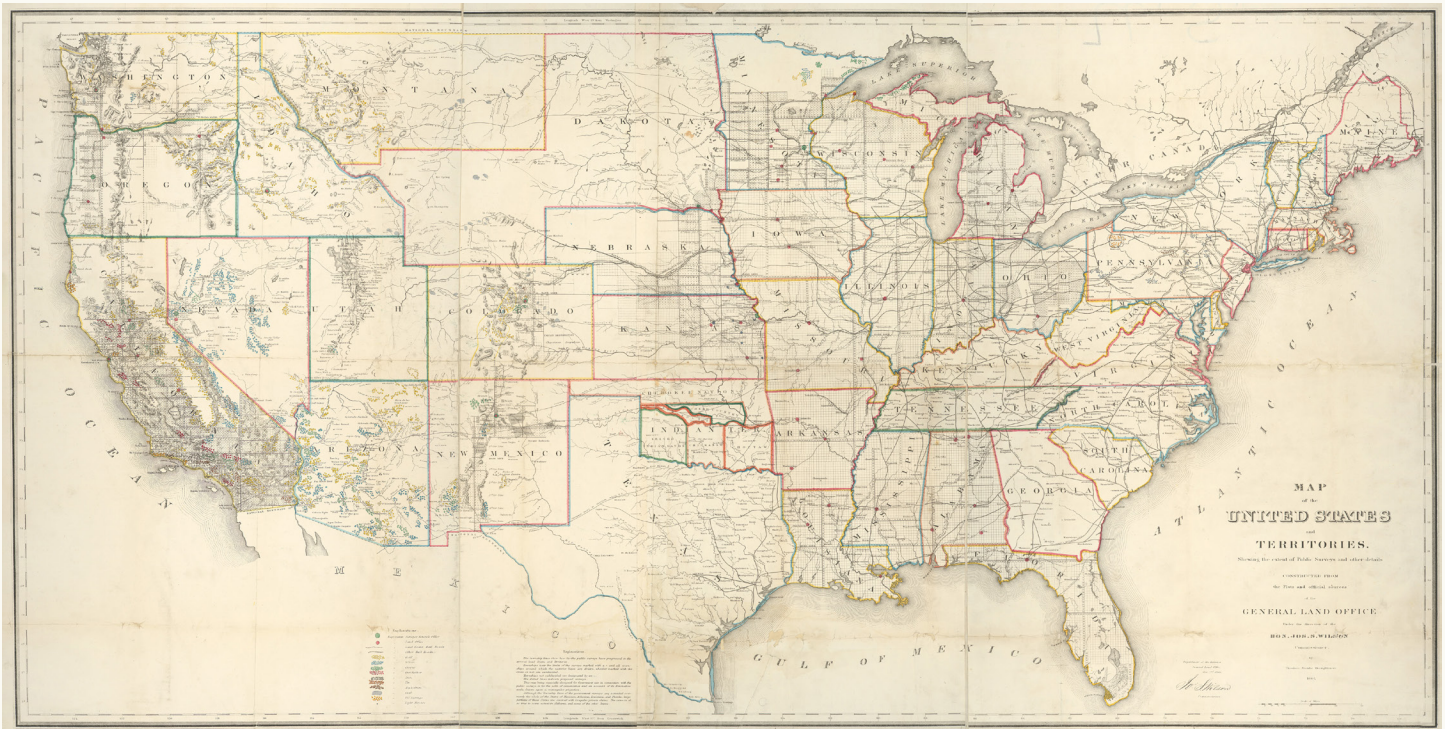


Figure 6. *Map of the United States and Territories, Shewing the Extent of Public Surveys and Other Details* (Franks 1866). Courtesy of the Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, New York Public Library.

The description of the map in the list of accompanying items in the annual commissioner's report was quite fulsome; item 16 was "Connected map of the United States from ocean to ocean exhibiting the extent of the public surveys, localities, land districts, seats of surveyors general's offices and district offices; also localities of railroads of general interest and mineral deposits" (US GLO Annual Report 1866, 40). Oil springs and light houses were also indicated. State and territory boundaries are picked out in color. GLO put a date of 1866 on this map, although it shows the expanded boundaries of Nevada that were not approved until January 1867.

Just as the state maps had shown the status of treaties with Indian nations, this 1866 map uses the garish colors of state boundaries for six nations inside the Indian Territory. The spatial arrangement of the territory and the groups in the area are a product of the work of the Southern Treaty Commission which met beginning in the fall of 1865 with resulting treaties ratified in spring and summer of 1866. A number of tribes had aligned with the Confederacy making any prior treaties with the United States null and void, thus new treaties had to be negotiated. As a penalty for aligning with the Confederacy, the "Five Civilized" tribes, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole, all lost approximately half of their territory in

Indian Territory. The relinquished territory was used to provide rights of way for railroad construction and to create space for Great Plains tribes that were being moved from their traditional lands into the Indian Territory. There are a few other black outlined Indian reservations noted in some other areas. Due to the reduction of scale, the level and amount of detail on the state maps regarding Indian claims and treaties could not continue on the national map.

The map from 1867 is very similar to the 1866 map except that states and territories were shown by color fill. For some reason, West Virginia shares the same color as the residual Virginia, although they had been separated officially for four years. The color fill allowed a line symbol, in the same color but a more saturated shade as the states and territories, for showing the boundaries of land office districts inside of states and territories. This technique to show land office districts was also used to show different tribal areas in the Indian Territory; they are not as easily differentiated from each other as they were on the 1866 map (Figure 7).

The 1867 map was described in the commissioner's text as "a connected map of the United States, as it existed prior to the Russian purchase" (US GLO Annual Report 1867,

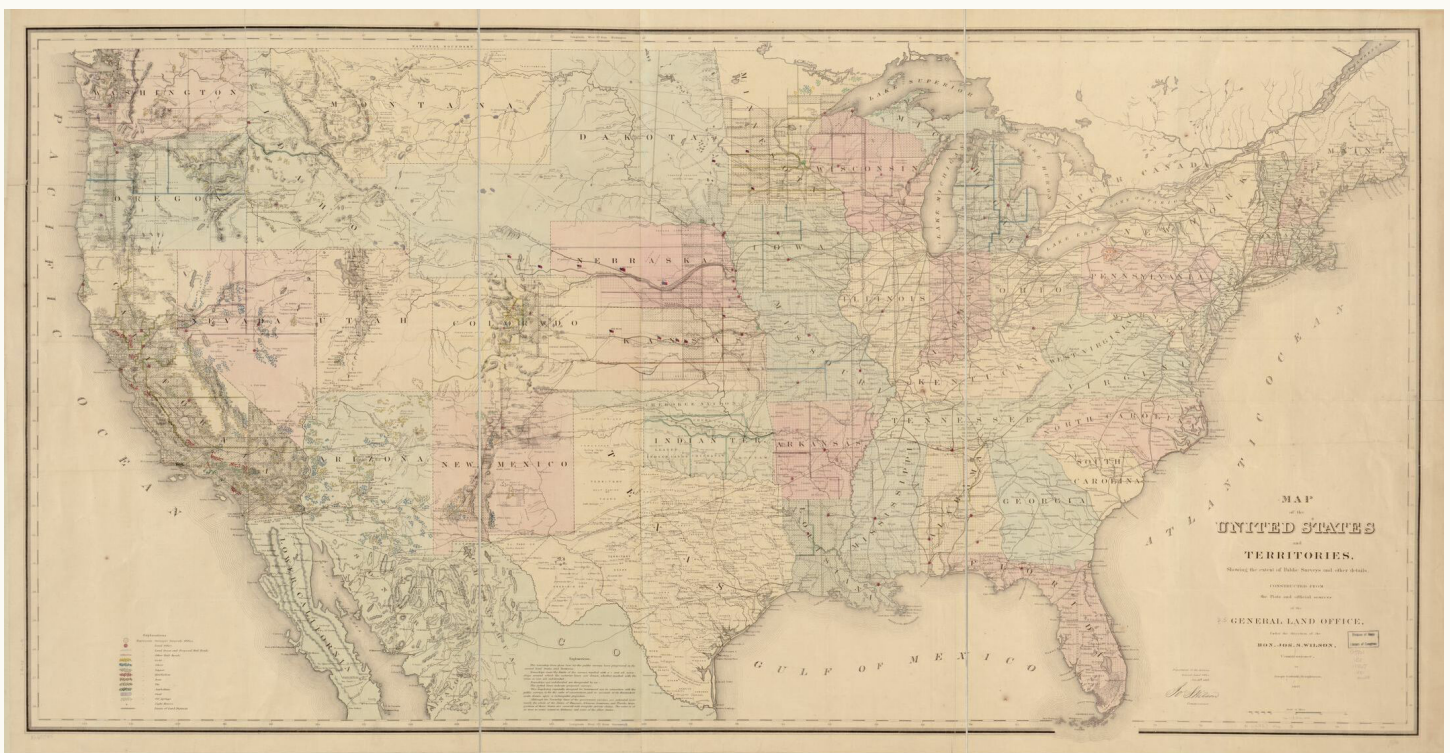


Figure 7. *Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys and Other Details* (Gorlinski 1867). Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

6). The map would be referred to as a “connected map” or, in conjunction with the state maps, “connected and separate United States maps” in either the text of the GLO annual report or its budget request through 1900.

For the next five years, the maps created and distributed by the General Land Office followed a similar pattern to the 1867 map. They were approximately 71 × 139 cm (28 × 56 inches), at a scale approximately 1:3,800,000, and of a size appropriate for and printed on paper suitable for folding and inclusion in the General Land Office commissioner’s report to the secretary of the treasury, and later of the interior, for transmission to the president and Congress. The 1868 map recorded the creation of the Wyoming Territory and the boundary change for Idaho Territory.

A footnote appears in the Estimates of Appropriations budget section in 1870 and 1871 to explain the request made “For constructing the connected map of the public lands States and Territories:”

The map prepared in 1862, and the engraved plate thereof authorized by joint resolution of January 6,

1863, having proved by subsequent actual surveys during eight [or nine] years to be imperfect, and not susceptible of being corrected, and, besides, the map not embracing Alaska, acquired by subsequent treaty, this estimate is submitted in order to acquire a correct map of the public domain, greatly needed for Government purposes. (US GLO Annual Report 1870, 322; 1871, 334)

Indian Territory was not public land or in the public domain and thus not in the purview of the General Land Office for surveying. But, it is interesting to note that as early as the 1871 map evidence of surveying appears in Indian Territory. Unlike territories on the path to statehood, a surveyor general was not appointed for Indian Territory. Surveying was done directly by the General Land Office commissioner through separately issued contracts. The first survey was contracted in July 1870.

The map changed radically in 1873 without further comment or explanation in the commissioner’s annual report. The root title of the map remained *Map of the United States and Territories*, but its physical nature changed extensively.



Figure 8. Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Land Grant R.R.; Rail Roads, Canals, and Other Details (Roeser 1873a). Courtesy of the Map and Geography Division, Library of Congress.

The map more than doubled in area, now measuring approximately 122 × 197 cm (49 × 79 inches) at a scale approximately 1:2,500,000. In the new format, the GLO abandoned the earlier rectangular (cylindric) projection for a conic projection. By this date, the states and territories had taken on boundaries that have proved to be stable up to the current day, with the exception of the division of Dakota Territory into two states in the spree of statehoods of 1889 (Figure 8).

On this larger map, the treatment of Indian nations and reservations shows much more detail, in part due to the creation of a number of new zones for the federal government to manage. Indian Territory shows a different set of boundaries for the individual nations and substantial survey activity in the Cherokee and Arkansas sections. The Oklahoma Panhandle has been separated from the Indian Territory as “Public Land.” Outside Oklahoma, the reservations are shown with a similar green boundary, including a Sioux reservation that essentially covers all of modern South Dakota west of the Missouri River. Most show no surveying activity, although the Navajo reservation is completely laid out in townships and ranges, spanning northwest New Mexico and northeast Arizona Territory. Established the year before, Yellowstone National Park has the same green boundary treatment as the reservations. Through the use of color fills and outlines for various forms of federal control, the public survey element of the map was visually diminished. These changes continued incrementally.

The spatial scope changed as well. Alaska, purchased from Russia in 1867, and with most of its 586,412 square miles

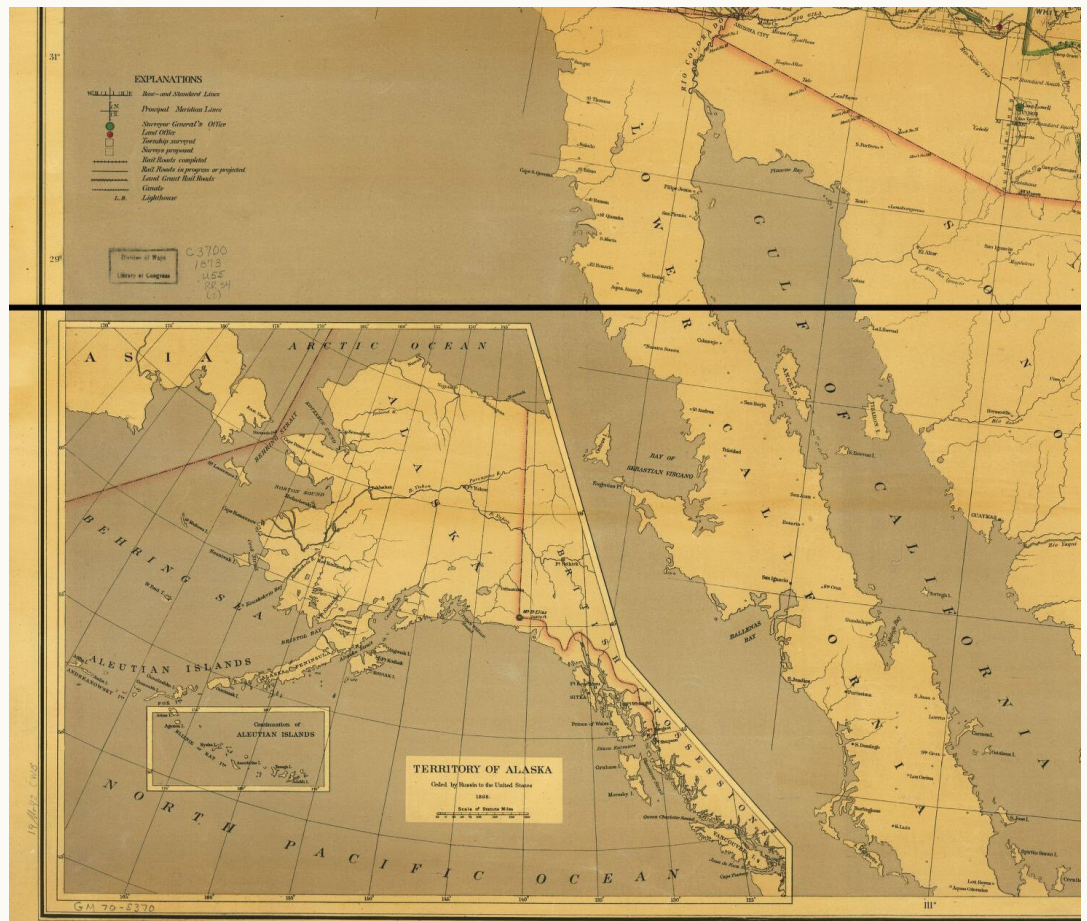


Figure 9. Alaska and Baja California as shown on Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Land Grant R.R.; Rail Roads, Canals, and Other Details (Roeser 1873a). Courtesy of the Map and Geography Division, Library of Congress.

of land in the public domain, finally appears on the new larger format map in an inset off Baja California (Figure 9). The inset’s subtitle reads, “Ceded by Russia to the United States 1868.” The statement and inset map set the style for including future acquisitions. There is no indication of any surveying activity in the Alaska Territory, in contrast to the conterminous United States, as none had yet happened, but including Alaska on the map could be seen as the first acknowledgement of a United States empire.

There appear to be two versions of this wall map. The title blocks differ in shape even though both copies are photolithographed and printed by the same company. Color is also used differently, with the copy held by the Library of Congress (Figure 8) having no blocks of color but showing federal lands, such as reservations and the newly established Yellowstone National Park, outlined in green, as described above. The copy from the New York

Public Library uses varying hues of color fill to highlight reservation lands but gives no color to the boundaries of Yellowstone (Figure 10).

The GLO's next version of the annual map was issued in 1876/1878 as the "centennial map" of the United States, at a scale of 1:1,267,200. The map does not seem to have completely originated within the GLO. It was produced under the direction of the House Committee on Public Lands. If joined, the sixteen sheets would create a map 2.43m x 3.64m (8 x 12 feet). For the most part, this map is the same as the previous ten years' worth of maps, just much larger. The color variants observed in 1873 are replaced by a grey to demonstrate areas where surveys have been completed (including the western part of Indian Territory). Military reservations are colored rose. An index map to accompany the full-size map is seen in Figure 11. While this index to the much larger sixteen-sheet map does not highlight Indian lands, they do appear prominently in green on the map sheets.



Figure 10. Title block and northwestern United States as shown on *Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Land Grant R.R.; Rail Roads, Canals, and Other Details* (Roesser 1873b). Courtesy of the Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, New York Public Library.

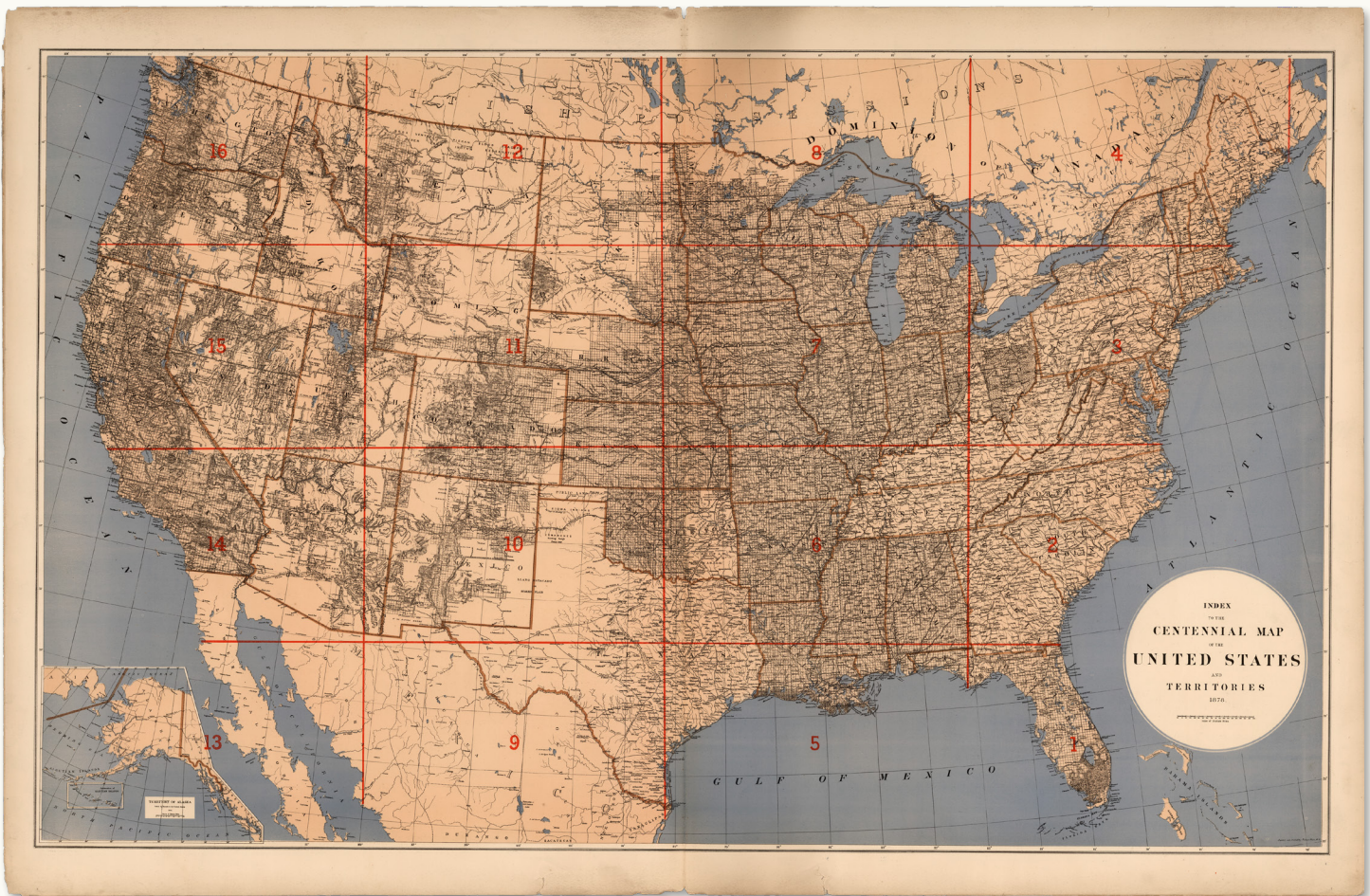


Figure 11. *Centennial Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Land Grants R.R., Rail Roads, Canals, Cities, Towns & Other Details* (Roesser 1878). This image shows the index sheet to a 16-map set, sheets numbered in red. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.



Figure 12. *Map of the United States and Territories, to Accompany the Annual Report of Hon. N.C. MacFarland, Commissioner, General Land Office for Fiscal Year which Ended June 30, 1884 (US GLO 1884).* Courtesy of Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps.

In 1884, the General Land Office prepared two maps, both titled *Map of the United States and Territories*. The first followed the established pattern of the wall map at a scale of approximately 1:2,500,000, was printed on multiple sheets of paper, mounted on linen and features the expected content for the wall map, “the extent of public surveys, Indian and military reservations, land grant R.R.; rail roads, canals, and other details.” The second (Figure 12) clearly is intended to accompany the commissioner’s annual report given the title, *Map of the United States and Territories, to Accompany the Annual Report of Hon. N.C. MacFarland, Commissioner, General Land Office for Fiscal Year which Ended June 30, 1884*. It has a smaller scale of approximately 1:3,500,000 and smaller dimensions of 61cm × 96cm (24 × 38 inches).

The sole purpose of this map is to identify public domain states and territories. Although surveying of Indian Territory had begun through contracts from the office of the General Land Office commissioner, Indian Territory was not a public domain territory and is indicated as such.

The Oklahoma Panhandle, “Public Lands,” clearly is part of the public domain. The extent of surveys has disappeared as have other details such as railroads, reservations, or national parks. Interestingly, mountain ranges are visually prominent. Similar maps illustrating public domain states appeared in later annual reports but they were page-sized rather than printed on an oversized, folded sheet that had to be tipped into the volume.

The wall map’s title changed in 1886. No longer *Map of the United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Land Grant R.R.; Rail Roads, Canals, and Other Details*, the new title is *Map of the United States and Territories, with Adjacent Parts of Canada and Mexico, also Part of the West India Islands, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Rail Roads, Canals and Other Details* (Figure 13). This map displays greatly increased amounts of Canada and Mexico in comparison to earlier editions. In an era of burgeoning empires, the map boldly establishes the United States as the core of North America with a title that places

emphasis on location. This moment establishes the visual for the United States as a unified territory from sea to sea.

Cuba, but not Puerto Rico, and all of Baja California appear. Alaska pays the price for Baja California and is constrained in a very small box. Although Alaska is small, the Aleutian Islands are not treated as an inset within an inset as they were in 1873, nor is the archipelago truncated as it was on the map that accompanied the 1884 and 1885 annual reports. The inset also shows the distance to the other Pacific coast states. As before, Indian reservations are shown in a green fill, and Yellowstone is not filled. Military reservations are in a bold red, while a lighter reddish tint covers areas of Spanish land grants in California and New Mexico.

The 1886 report (US GLO Annual Report 1886, 358) indicates that 3500 copies of the map were received. Without a significant change in format, the print run expanded to 14,000 copies for 1890 and to 11,000 for 1891 (US GLO Annual Report 1890, 247; 1891, 224). In 1893, 16,224 copies were printed (US GLO Annual Report 1893, 206). It is not clear where all these copies ended up, but these press runs were far above the number needed for Congress itself. The records are incomplete, and the next reported production numbers do not appear until 1902. However, the appropriations continued, and the maps were updated each year.

Besides obscuring Indian reservations by indicating them with a beige-pink, the 1890 map shows an administrative

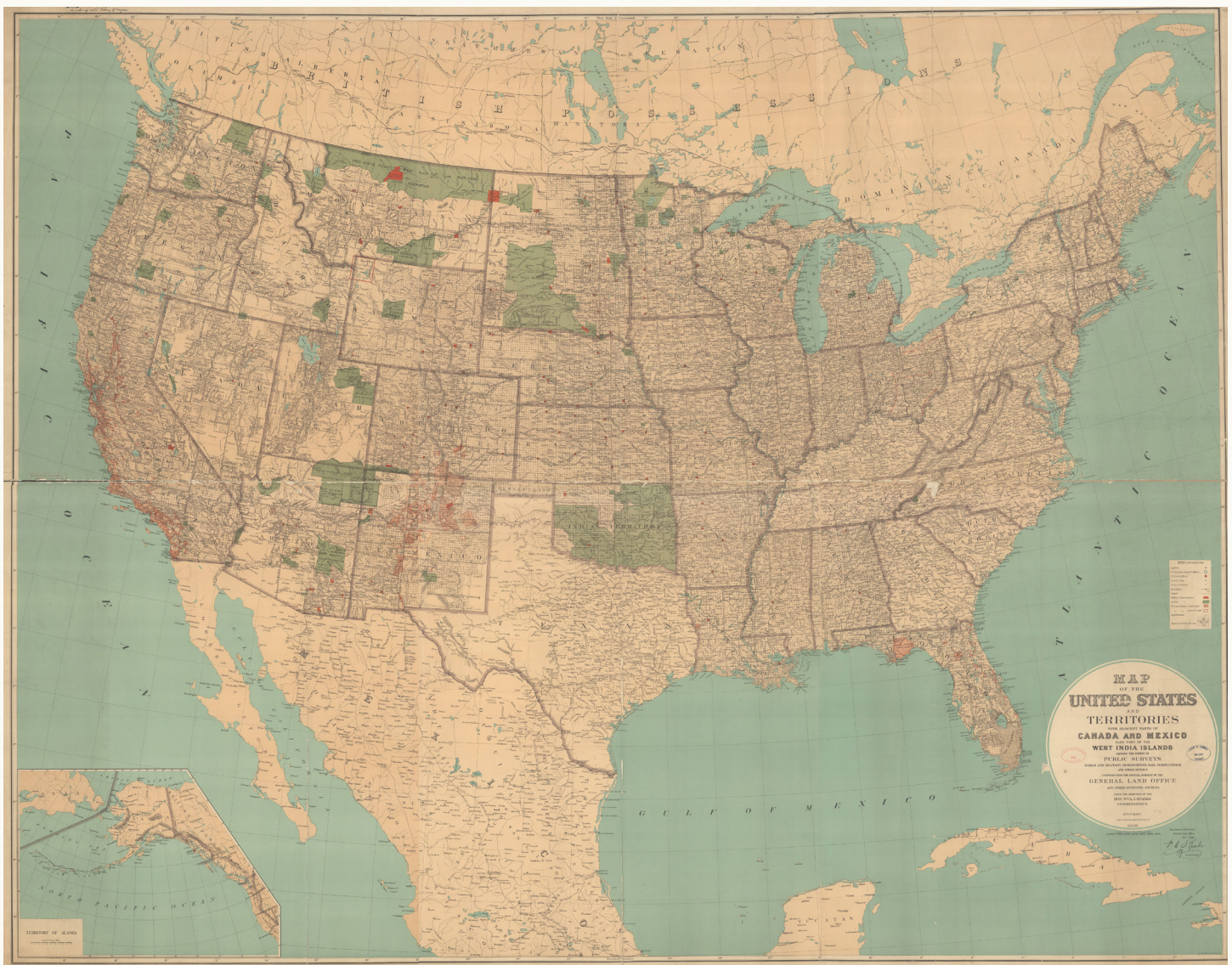


Figure 13. *Map of the United States and Territories, with Adjacent Parts of Canada and Mexico, also Part of the West India Islands, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian and Military Reservations, Rail Roads, Canals and Other Details (US GLO 1886).* Courtesy of the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Libraries.

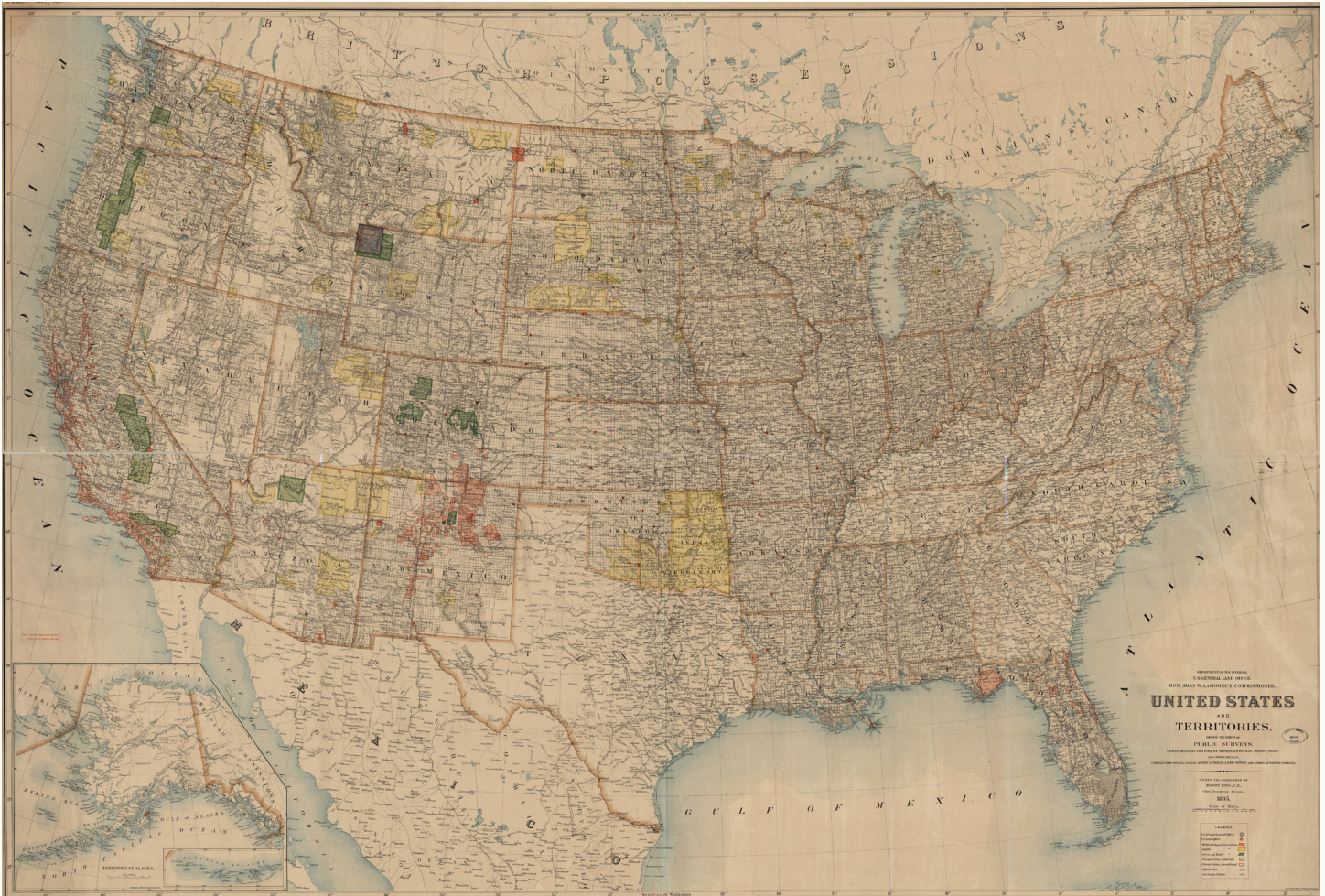


Figure 14. *United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Railroads, Canals and Other Details* (US GLO 1895). Courtesy of the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Libraries.

resolution for the area now known as the Oklahoma Panhandle. Originally part of the Republic of Texas, the area was separated when Texas joined the United States because the strip of land was north of the Missouri Compromise line. The early GLO maps of the United States showed the strip attached to Indian Territory, which was not subdivided. The 1866 map shows Indian Territory divided into six units with the panhandle attached to the lands of the Cherokee Nation. It was separated from the Cherokee Nation on the 1868 map and remained separate, and labeled “Public Land,” on the maps until 1890 when the Oklahoma Territory, the western half of the current state of Oklahoma, was organized.

In 1895, the layout of the map changed again. As reported in the 1894 commissioner’s report, “A new and effective coloration of the United States and Territorial maps has been adopted” (US GLO Annual Report 1894, 330). The

map, with a scale of 1:2,217,600, focuses more narrowly on the United States, with smaller areas to the north and south of the international borders included (Figure 14).

Cuba has disappeared, and Alaska’s inset is over Baja California with, again, the western portion of the island chain inset within the inset. The map’s geographical extent is similar to that of maps prior to 1886. The changes in “coloration” continued the shift of thematic content away from the public surveys. Federally held lands expanded beyond Indian (yellow) and military (red) reservations to include forest and timber reservations (green), many of which later became national forests and parks, making the narrative about federal lands more nuanced. Indian reservations are not as visually present in yellow as they had been in green. Yellowstone National Park is the only holding marked in purple. Purple does not appear in the legend.

TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS—ERRORS AND CORRECTIONS

THE REFORMATTING THAT OCCURRED with the 1895 edition led the way for a most notable change in content—and thus possible change in purpose and audience—that occurred in 1896. The title and legend stayed the same but an entirely new thematic layer appeared: when, and from whence, territory had been acquired, shown by brush text and bold boundary line treatment, on top of the continued public land survey representation (Figure 15).

There is no indication in the commissioner's annual report from 1896, or any prior year, that the change was happening or why it was made. The standard language that appeared in all other reports is used to report on this particular annual map: "The map of the United States for [year] revised, corrected up to date. . ." (US GLO Annual Report 1896, 272). The same map appeared in 1897.

Possible motivations for the GLO to make this particular change at this particular time need to be considered. Some of the reasoning may be internal. The GLO had been promoting its importance for decades to Congress using the inexorable march of rectangular surveys across the map. While surveying continued for various reasons, the annual report of 1895 makes the rear-guard statement "public land surveys must continue for some years, at least, with numerous resurveys sooner or later" (US GLO Annual Report 1895, 60). By 1896, much of the public domain (80%, excluding Alaska) had been surveyed, at least at some preliminary level. Twelve of the thirty public land states and territories, again excluding Alaska, were completely surveyed, and of the remaining eighteen, three were more than 90% complete, ten were more than 50% complete, and the remainder were close to 25% or more surveyed. Alaska was an extreme outlier with less than 1%



Figure 15. *United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Railroads, Canals and Other Details* (US GLO 1896). Courtesy of the Map Collection at the University of Chicago Library.

surveyed (US GLO Annual Report 1896, 197–198). Many of the less surveyed states were states with treacherous and less than desirable terrain that was not conducive to occupation via individuals taking advantage of homestead acts. The unsurveyed areas are scattered, and maps would no longer be showing large annual additions to zones of surveyed lands. The map's primary mission of communicating about the extent of surveying may have run out.

Additionally, sales of public lands, another General Land Office bailiwick, had diminished greatly and no longer played a substantial part in the nation's revenues and receipts. Public land sales were a significant, but not dominant, source of revenue early in the United States' history. Their zenith was in 1836, when revenue from public land sales made up over 32% of the nation's entire receipts. The financial importance declined until the early 1850s with a secondary peak of nearly 15% of the year's revenue in 1853. By 1896, public land sales were making up only 0.3% of the annual revenue and never exceeded 1.6% after 1896 (Wallis 2006).

Just in itself, the logic of the map could have justified some new direction. Moving outward from the GLO, the main audience for these maps lay in Congress. In this period, half of the print run was dedicated to the House of Representatives and another quarter to the Senate. Over the decades, the GLO made the map bigger and bigger, perhaps in part to occupy a more prominent place on the walls of congressional offices. The move to a big, bold patriotic message might have been related to an urge to maintain prominence in this select location. In addition, the GLO had a rival for congressional appropriations. The upstart Geological Survey, and its charismatic leader John Wesley Powell, claimed attention for programs of topographic mapping with wider application than the legal process and products of land surveying.

Leaving the interagency conflict aside, the GLO was located in a larger society where the issue of westward expansion was quite prominent. Frederick Jackson Turner had presented his "Frontier Thesis" in 1893 at a session of the American Historical Association during the Chicago Exposition of that year. Turner (1894) struck a chord outside the world of scholarship, with much debate and publicity. Much of the scholarship about the era points to this moment as a pivot towards a more imperial view of the country's role in the world.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the globe was carved up by imperial powers. The United States had occupied its swath

of North America from east to west, Russia had expanded from the Urals eastward to the Pacific Ocean, Latin America was firmly in the spheres of influence of European powers, and Africa had been carved up amongst the European powers at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. This map, prominently displaying United States title to its territory, could be seen as a statement of place and prominence in the global theater, declaring the United States equal to other nations with imperial aspirations.

The obvious, massive error on the 1896 and 1897 map is the inclusion of the Pacific Northwest as part of the Province of Louisiana. This may have happened because of a misunderstanding about the mandate for Lewis and Clark's voyage to travel through the Louisiana Purchase and, beyond the territory of the purchase, onward to the Pacific Ocean. Some earlier maps produced by the GLO and Census Bureau had portrayed Oregon in this way; perhaps the error was not seen as an error at the time. Smaller missteps include the border in Minnesota between the original territory of the thirteen states and Louisiana, which should have swooped northwest through North Dakota to exclude the Red River of the North drainage from Louisiana. The very complex situation of West Florida is ignored as are overlapping territorial boundaries occurring in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Additionally, the map treats all of the eastern seaboard (except Florida) as part of the original territory. This is incorrect for northern Maine's boundary with New Brunswick, established in 1842.

The presidential election of 1896 saw a change from Democrat to Republican administration. The position of commissioner of the General Land Office was, as ever, a political appointment made by the president, since it had considerable opportunities to hire and contract in dispersed locations. With the election of William McKinley, Binger Hermann was appointed commissioner of the General Land Office in March 1897.

Hermann, who had immigrated to Oregon Territory as a teenager with his parents, quickly turned his attention to the largest error in his agency's recently published national map, writing a monograph entitled *The Louisiana Purchase and Our Title West of the Rocky Mountains* to address

an error which I conceive exists upon the map of the United States as published under the direction of my predecessor, and which goes forth with the official indorsement of the Department. The error to which I refer is in the representation that the

cession of Louisiana from France in 1803 comprised territory west of the Rocky Mountains, now known as Oregon, Washington, Idaho and portions of Montana and Wyoming. Believing that such domain was derived by the United States based on the right of discovery, exploration and occupancy by our own people, together with the cession from Spain, by treaty of February 22, 1819, of such adverse rights as that nation claimed to possess, I have assumed the liberty of representing these facts on the new edition of the United States map soon to be published by the Department. (Hermann 1898, 11)

Hermann's eighty-seven page monograph, which includes a pair of sketch reductions of pre-eighteenth-century maps as its only historic cartographic background (Figure 16), reviews the course of territorial ownership and control, beginning with early attempts to define the Province of Louisiana; territorial actions of Spain, France and Great Britain; followed by acquisition of the territory by the United States; a short discussion of natural resources and economic value; and a concluding examination of annexation's role in the United States with specific attention paid to Hawaii.

Documents cited include treaties, correspondence, early maps, and commercial publications. Hermann's monograph was written to support his recommendation to correct the map when it was next republished. Interestingly, both Hermann's July 1898 letter of transmittal and the response received from Cornelius Bliss, secretary of the interior, appear to only specifically reference the error contained on the 1897 map; there is no indication that the prior year's map initiated the error. Bliss gave permission for corrections to be made on the next map published "upon careful consideration of the matter, as so ably presented by [Hermann]" (Hermann 1898, 9). The monograph included a tipped in, very small scale, simple map showing Hermann's corrected depiction of territorial growth, at least where the Pacific Northwest is concerned (Figure 17).

In his report, Hermann did not acknowledge a long history of sporadic misrepresentation of the territory included in the Louisiana Purchase. The "error" on the 1897 (and 1896) map was not so much an error but an oversimplification of a very complex situation.

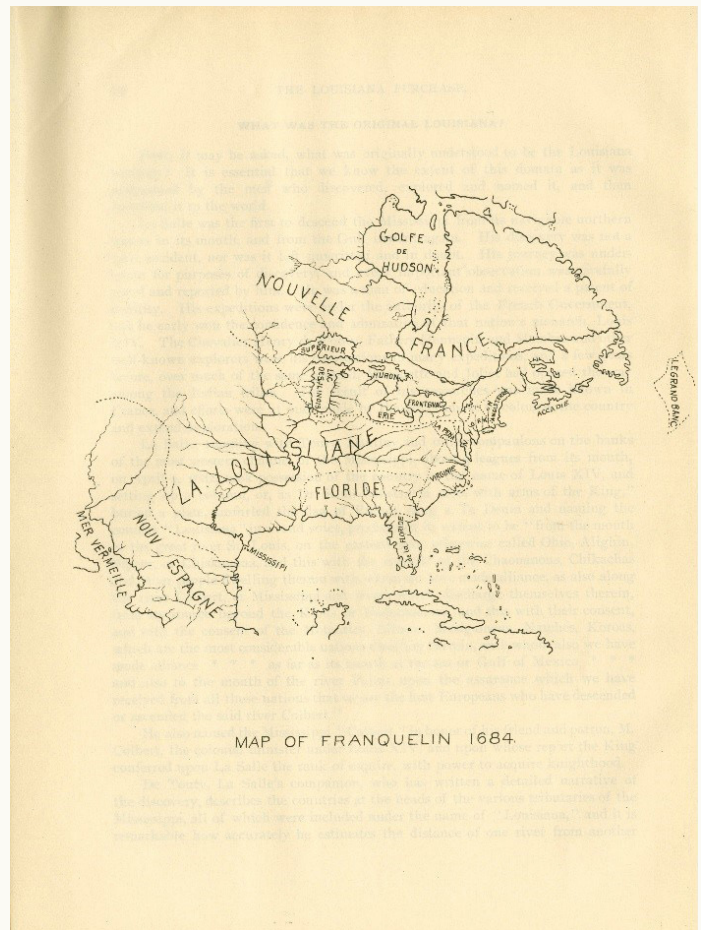


Figure 16. Map of Franquelin 1684 and Part of Map by Herman Moll, English Geographer, Published in London About the Year 1710 (Hermann 1898a & b). Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



Figure 17. Territorial growth of the United States (Hermann 1898c). Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

AFTER 1897

THE 1898 MAP CORRECTION corrected only the Pacific Northwest (Figure 18). The Red River of the North, northern Maine, and West Florida remain unacknowledged. The story is still overly simple: territory was acquired only once in unambiguous manner; territories abut but do not overlap. Although the graphic portion of the story has been somewhat cleaned up, the text on the Pacific Northwest is highly abridged, sanitized, or incomplete. There is no mention of treaties of 1819, 1828, or 1846, all of which were key in establishing international boundaries, or of the confusion in previous federal narratives.

While the United States had bought Louisiana from France, it had previously been ceded by France to Spain and then returned. The imprecise boundaries in the purchase had to confront the reality of other claims. The Spanish provinces of Tejas and Santa Fe included territory in the Mississippi basin. The treaties of 1819 and 1828 with Spain and Mexico had confirmed these boundaries.



Figure 18. United States and Territories, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Railroads, Canals and Other Details (US GLO 1898). Courtesy of the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries.

The simple graphical account of United States territorial acquisitions focused on the conterminous United States appeared—with slight changes and overlain on the representation of public land surveys—on all subsequent versions of the map, and distant territories were added and removed as political change occurred. These political changes occurred rapidly, beginning with annexation of Hawaii in 1898 and the outcome of the Spanish-American War in the same year. Changes to the map followed on quickly as an overseas empire accumulated.

The commissioner's report for fiscal year 1900 states "Owing to the delay incidental to the inclusion of the recently acquired insular possessions as insets, the map of the United States for 1899. . . was not completed during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1899. It is now in the hands of the contractors, however, and will soon be ready for distribution" (US GLO Annual Report 1900, 278). Those insular possessions included the Philippine Islands, the Tutuila Group of the Samoan Islands, Guam,

the Hawaiian Islands, and "Porto Rico" [*sic*], plus an inset "Index map showing relative position of Alaska and recently acquired islands to the United States" (Figure 19). Far from hiding an empire (as Immerwahr [2019] contends), the new possessions were displayed in prominence, at vastly differing scales.

The United States had become an empire. It is interesting to note that Cuba has reappeared, and although it is neither boxed nor marked with a cession date, it would be easy to mistake Cuba for one of the insular possessions alluded to in the new title of the map: *United States, Territories and Insular Possessions*. The design of the 1899 map, with insets showing extra-continental territories along with a small map showing the geographical relationship between the continental United States and its territories, became the standard layout for the remainder of the map's production.

In 1903, an inset appeared showing the Panama Canal Zone. The annual commissioner's report for that year



Figure 19. *United States, Territories and Insular Possessions, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Rail Roads, Canals and Other Details* (US GLO 1899). Courtesy of Murray Hudson — Antique Maps, Globes, Books & Prints.

indicated only that the plates for the annual map of the United States were updated and the map produced:

The most important work of this division is technical in character and embraces the compilation of maps of the United States and insular possessions, and of the various States and Territories in which public land is located. These compilations demand the careful computations of the mathematician and the highest skill of the draftsman. An engraved copperplate base for the maps of the United States and insular possessions, now completed and owned by the Interior Department, insures an uniformity, accuracy, and workmanship not heretofore reached in the publication of these important maps. (US GLO Annual Report 1903, 26)

The then commissioner of the General Land Office, William A. Richards (appointed January 1903), who had experience as a surveyor, clearly placed importance on the production and distribution of the annual national map. His report for fiscal year 1904 indicated problems in production and delivery, for reasons outside of the printer's control.

The completion and delivery of the 1902 United States map was prevented, after the receipt of only 200 copies, by the Baltimore fire, and on March 1, 1904, the lithographers were advised of their release from further liability under the contract. By act of Congress approved March 28, 1904, the unexpended balance under this contract was made available for the 1904 edition. Steps were immediately taken to hasten the completion of the



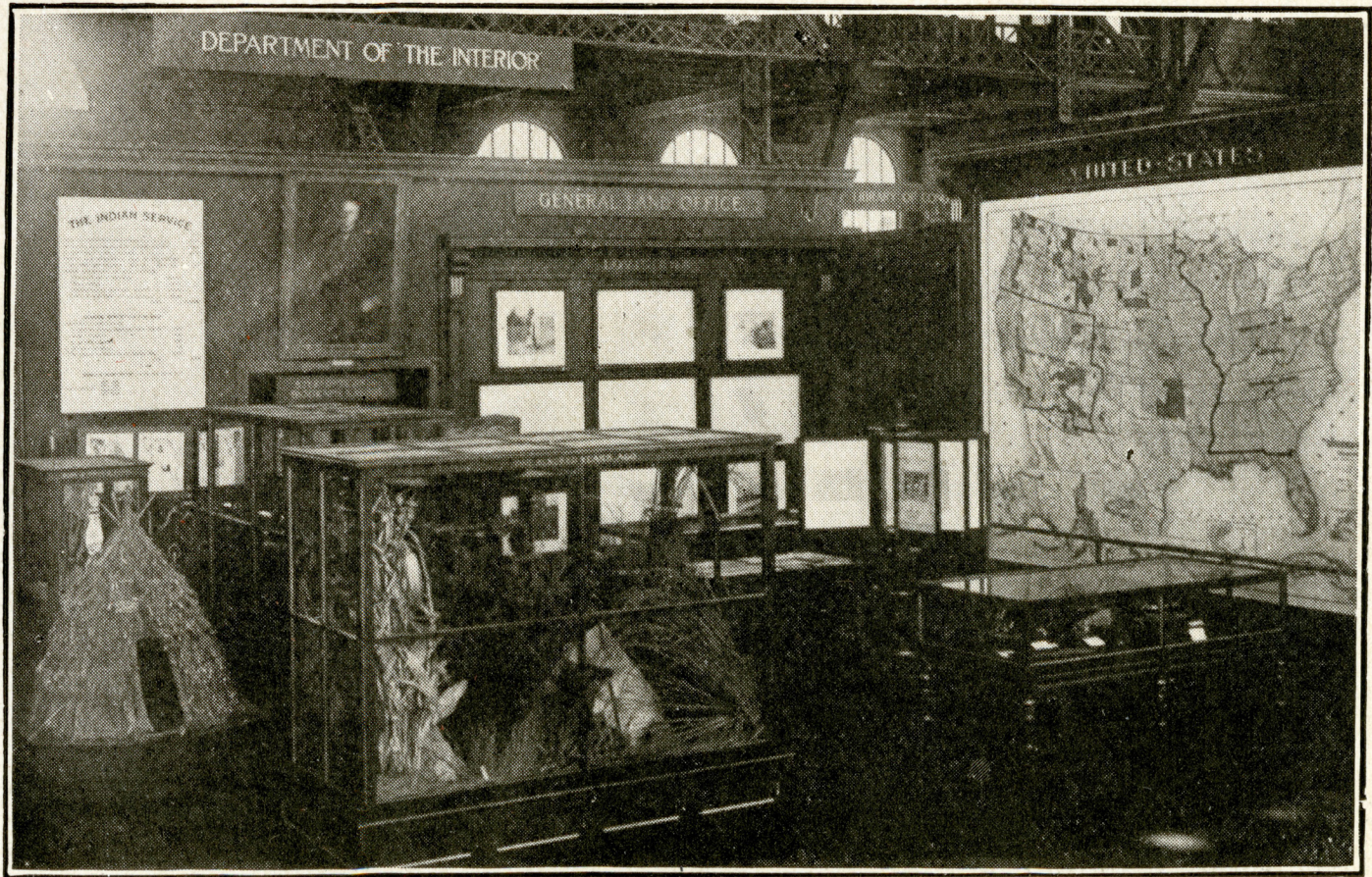
Figure 20. *United States, Including Territories and Insular Possessions, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Railroads, Canals, National Parks and Other Details (US GLO 1904).* Courtesy of the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Libraries.

1903 edition, and about 3,000 copies of this map have been received up to June 30, 1904. (US GLO Annual Report 1904, 210)

The fire referenced, the Great Baltimore Fire, occurred on February 7 and 8, 1904.

The report goes on to describe the anticipated production and delivery schedule for the 1904 edition (Figure 20).

The work of bringing the copperplate base of the United States map up to date for the 1904 edition is being pushed as rapidly as may be. Contract for lithographing 63,000 copies of the 1904 map, more or less, has been entered into with a Philadelphia firm, which has expressed its readiness to take up the work promptly, as soon as transfers are delivered to it, which will be in a few weeks. The contract for printing this edition provides that within five weeks after order is received to print, the first 10,000 copies are to be delivered; that four weeks shall be allowed for the delivery of



GENERAL LAND OFFICE EXHIBIT.

Here was shown a large map, twelve by sixteen feet, showing the original thirteen States and the various acquisitions of territory since the founding of the Republic; surveying instruments, documents relating to land grants and typical homesteads of settlers on public lands.

Figure 21. Photograph of General Land Office Exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition/St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 (Bennitt and Stockbridge 1905, 335). Courtesy of the University Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

the second and that each succeeding 10,000 copies, and that the entire edition is to be completed within twenty-five weeks after the work of printing is begun.

By the 1904 map, the story of continental territorial acquisitions has become more complex, with overlapping acquisitions boundaries. The boundary for the Red River of the North has been corrected so that the region is not part of Louisiana. The Mississippi watershed boundary meanders through Texas, showing that the treaties with Spain had granted land to Mexico that were part of the Louisiana claim. As with all maps in this series, the northern portion of the Mississippi watershed north of the 49th parallel is

omitted. Yet still, the story of northern Maine is not represented. West Florida has been changed so that only the Florida Panhandle was acquired from Spain in 1819, again still simplifying a much more complex situation. The text regarding the Pacific Northwest is also greatly simplified to “Oregon Territory: American Title established in 1844.”

This was not the only nationwide map created by the General Land Office during 1904. The office also created a set of five maps showing territorial acquisitions and a 20-sheet map of the United States (Figure 21), which was 3.64m × 4.85m (12 × 16 feet) when mounted, for the office's exhibit at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition

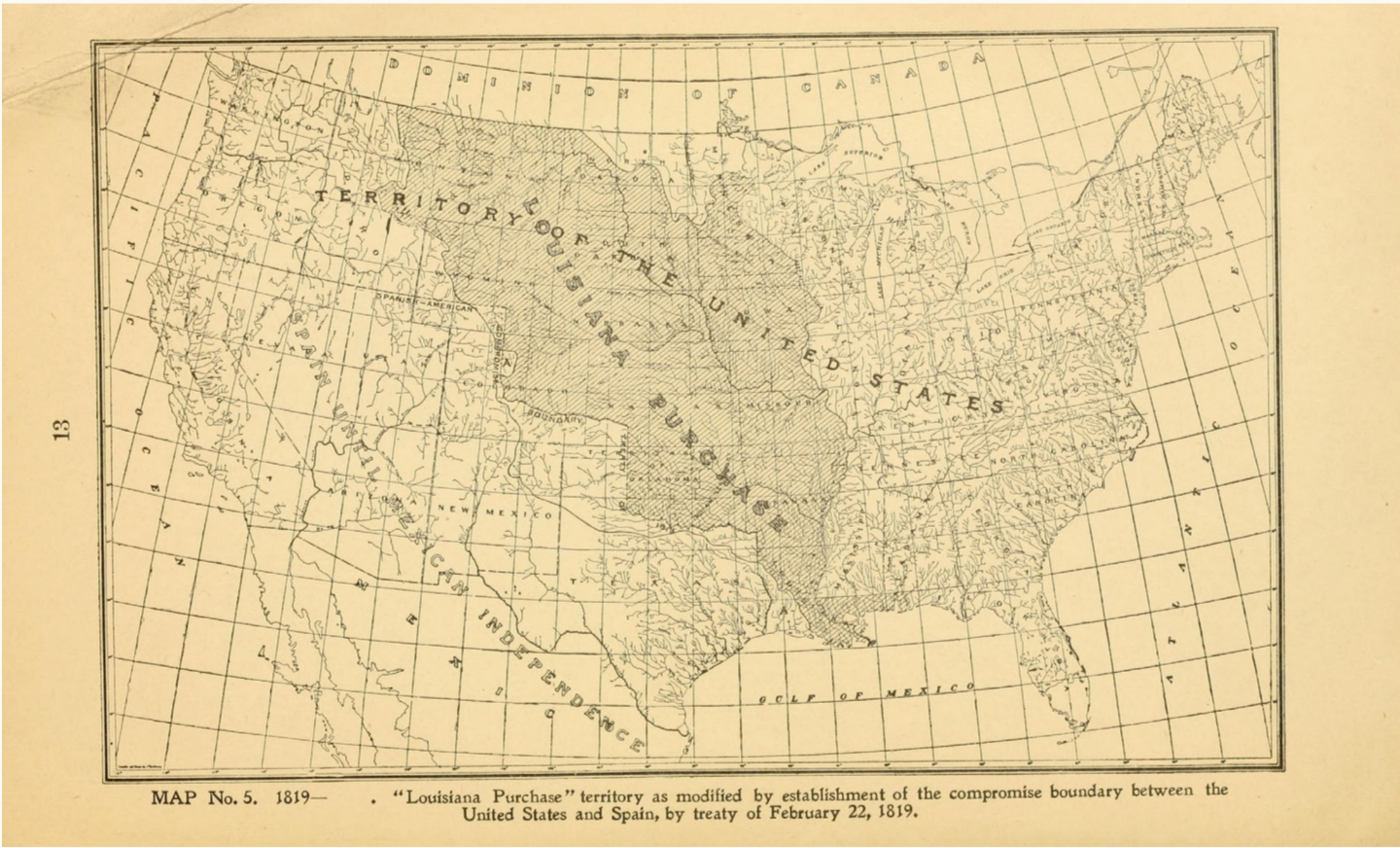
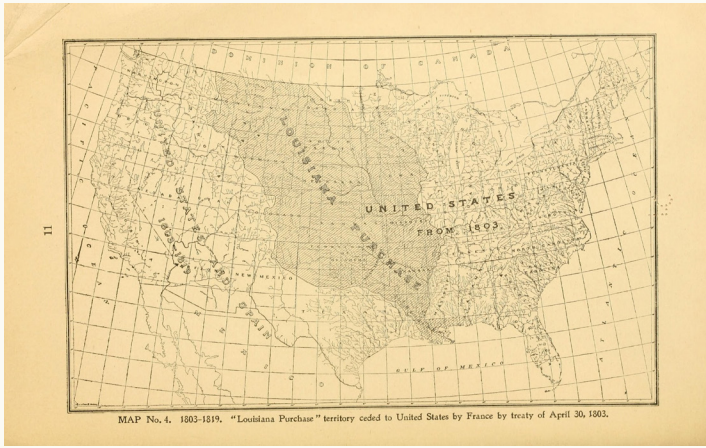
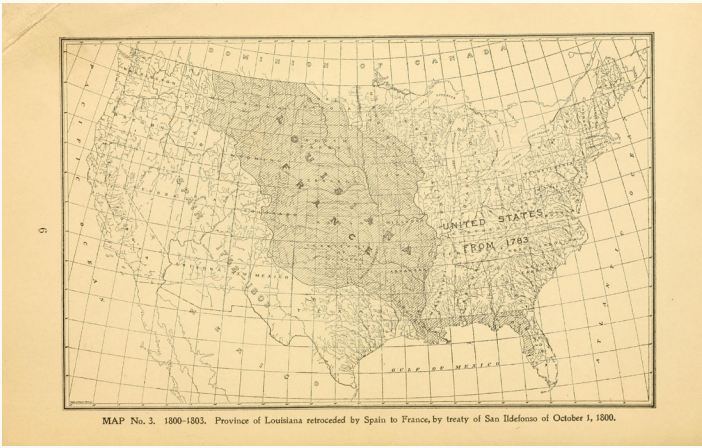
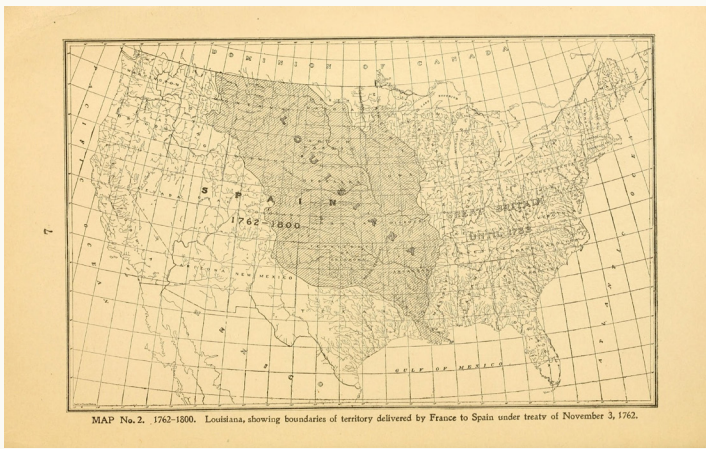
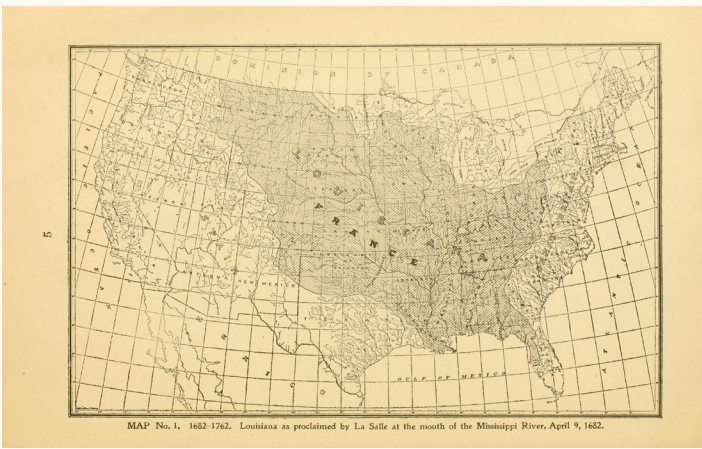


Figure 22. Five maps showing the Province of Louisiana/Louisiana Purchase between 1682 and 1819. From *Historical Sketch of "Louisiana" and the Louisiana Purchase* (US GLO 1904a). Courtesy of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

(St. Louis World's Fair). The five maps were reproduced in a pamphlet published in 1904 by the General Land Office, *Historical Sketch of "Louisiana" and the Louisiana Purchase with Illustrative Maps reproduced from the Exhibit of the General Land Office, Department of the Interior* (US GLO 1904; Figure 22).

These maps, along with additional maps that brought the chronological coverage into the early twentieth century, were later reproduced with extensive historical text—text which appears to be mostly the same as in the 1904 pamphlet—in an often-republished monograph by Frank Bond, who served as chief of the General Land Office's Drafting Division as well as the office's chief clerk.

Interestingly, Hermann's 1898 monograph correcting the 1896 and 1897 editions of the national map was extensively quoted in a commercial publication which was published contemporaneously with the fair, Murat Halstead's (1904) *Pictorial History of the Louisiana Purchase and the World's Fair in St. Louis*.

It is not entirely clear where all of the 63,000 copies of the 1904 map went, but it seems logical that the exhibition provided a platform to disseminate them widely. For the next five years, GLO printed 25,000 copies each year, a huge number of wall maps for official offices and perhaps also for schools.

Between 1904 and 1906, there was a substantial change in the center of the map. Oklahoma was on the path to being admitted to the United States as a state in 1907. The 1906 map already reflects the changes that would be made through the 1907 Oklahoma Enabling Act. The border between Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory has been removed, and the soon-to-be former Indian Territory is no longer predominantly shown as Indian reservations. The only reservation indicated is the Osage reservation directly below the territory's northern border.

The layout of boxed insular possessions marching along the bottom trailed by Cuba remained the format of the annual map, with surveys continuing to fill in the township grid, for the remainder of its production life with small changes. The 1915 edition of the map included a revised version of the Panama Canal Zone inset map that shows a much more detailed view of the region's surface water than previous versions and removing proposed routes for the canal leaving only the completed route (Figure 23).

The commissioner in 1915, Clay Tallman, wrote that the copper plates for the 1916 edition were being revised and that "that part of Mexico appearing on the map will be revised and other new features will be added" (US GLO Annual Report 1915, 28). "New features" might have been referencing the list of guano islands that was first included on the 1916 map but removed in 1930 or 1931. Guano was important to the increasingly chemicalized agriculture of the United States. The list is an indication of the United States' global positioning on the pre-World War One world stage. Interestingly, the far-flung guano islands themselves are never graphically represented on the large map of the United States, except on the very small inset map showing the United States with its territories. Creating a large map showing the United State with its territories would have minimized the continental United States and its representation of power and place. Still, the spread of empire was not at all hidden.

PRINT RUNS AND COSTS

Tallman's report for the year ending June 30, 1917 indicated that the copper plates being prepared for the 1918 map would include an inset of the Virgin Islands, formerly the Danish West Indies, which had been acquired from Denmark by purchase on January 17 and formally possessed on March 31, 1917 (US GLO Annual Report 1917, 27). The actual issue of the 1918 edition was delayed. The map had been printed by the lithographer within the usual timeframe but because of restrictions placed on the use of flour by the Food Administration—flour being a component in the adhesive used to mount the maps on canvas—and difficulties in obtaining labor, the delivery of the map to Congress was delayed (US GLO Annual Report 1918, 28).

Reading the annual reports of the commissioners of the General Land Office, it is obvious that the number of copies of the national map printed each year fluctuated greatly. In 1919, Tallman complained about the lack of funding allocated to map production.

One of the most important functions of the office is exercised in the preparation of the annual issue of the United States map by which much of the field work of the office for the preceding year is graphically recorded and made accessible to the general public. Each year, the progress of public-land surveys, establishment of new national

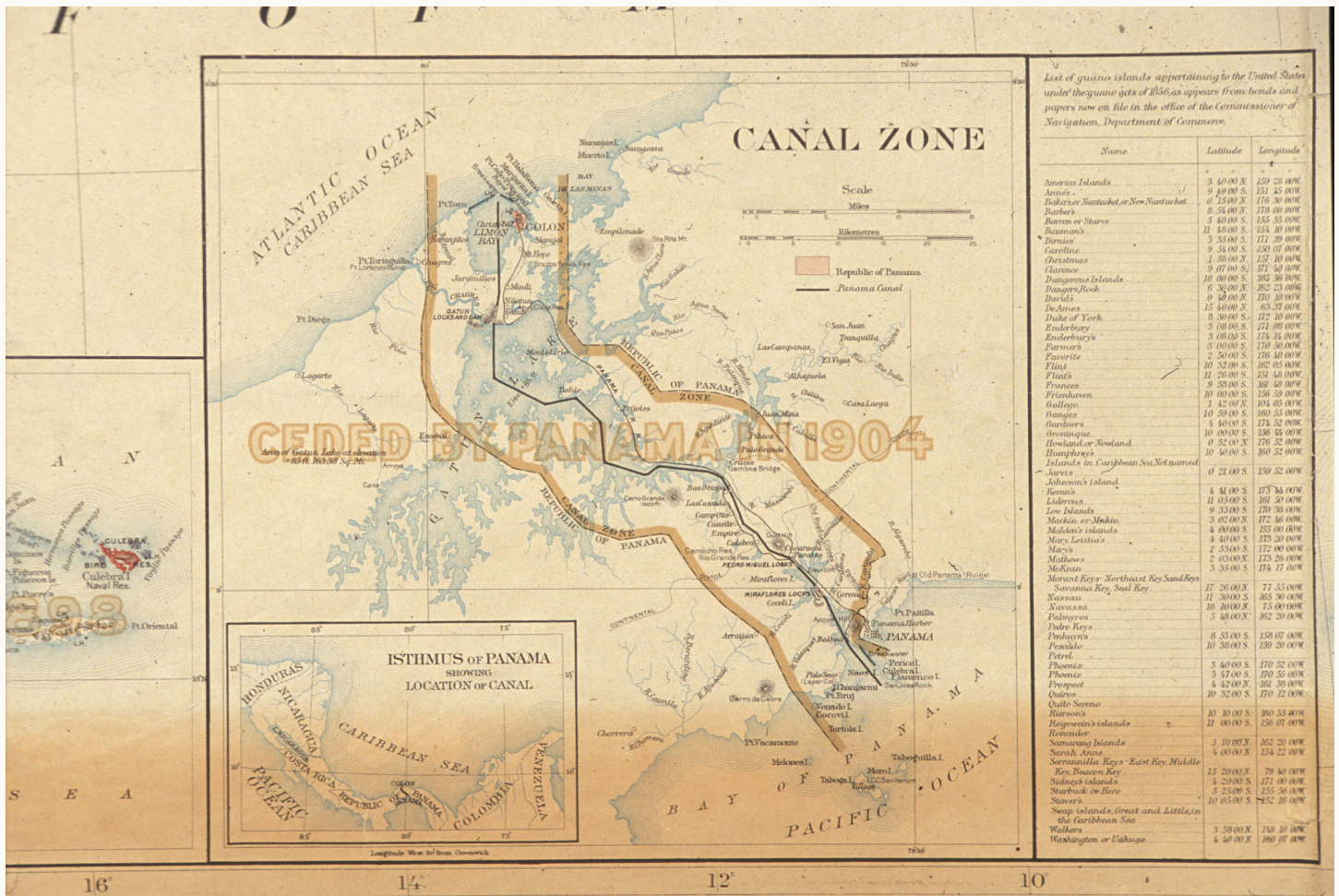


Figure 23. Canal Zone. From *United States, Including Territories and Insular Possessions, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, Indian, Military and Forest Reservations, Railroads, Canals, National Parks and Other Details* (US GLO 1916). Courtesy of the American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Libraries.

parcs and réserves, changements dans les frontières de réserves existantes, emplacements de sièges de comtés, nouvelles lignes de chemins de fer, ainsi que des villes et des villes qui ont acquis une importance substantielle au cours de l'année, sont fidèlement notés en plus des caractéristiques générales de la carte. L'édition de 1919 de la carte des États-Unis n'a été tirée qu'à 8 519 exemplaires, tandis que celle de 1918 en avait tirés 15 000, la différence étant due à un coût accru, en raison de l'investissement avancé pour le travail, le tissu, le papier, et d'autres matériaux. Le coût de l'édition de 1918 était de \$1.04 et celui de l'édition de 1919 de \$1.90 par carte.

Le nombre d'exemplaires n'a pas permis dans l'un ou l'autre cas de fournir le nombre habituel au Sénat et à la Chambre des Représentants et au Commissaire du Bureau général des terres—7 200, 14 400, et 500, respectivement.

The demand for this map is increasing, especially for Government uses; a larger appropriation is desired to provide the required number for Congress and the Commissioner's use. (US GLO Annual Report 1919, 31)

At the time he wrote, the long-established budget for "Maps of the United States" was \$20,000. It had been at that amount since 1910 and would stay at that level until 1924 when funding began to be decreased.

Examining GLO annual reports, Senate and House executive reports, and *the Digest of Appropriations for the Support of the Government of the United States* (US Department of the Treasury 1880–1940), the appropriation "For connected and separate United States and other maps prepared in this office" often stayed at the same level for as many as 12 or 14 years, regardless of changes in costs of production

or difficulties in obtaining needed production materials (Figure 24).

The number printed varied widely. Only 5,400 copies of the 1921 map could be printed for the allocated \$20,000 (US GLO Annual Report 1921, 21); in 1904 that level of funding supported a contract for 63,000 copies (US GLO Annual Report 1904, 210).

CHANGING SYMBOLISM AND THE FINAL MAP

The 1930 annual report, submitted by Commissioner Charles C. Moore, describes the 1929 version of the map as “[differing] from previous publications in that the different acquisitions of territory are shown in solid colors” (Figure 25; US GLO Annual Report 1930, 9).

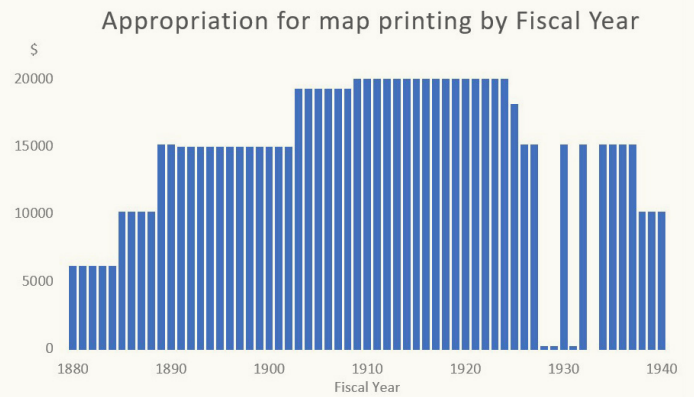


Figure 24. Chart of appropriations for “Maps of the United States” in General Land Office budgets, 1880–1943.



Figure 25. United States, Including Territories and Insular Possessions, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, National Parks and Monuments, Indian, Military, Bird and Game Reservations, National Forests, Railroads, Canals, and Other Details (US GLO 1929). Courtesy of Harvard Map Collection, Harvard Library.

The colors are somewhat transparent to demonstrate the ambiguity over the boundary of the Mississippi watershed and the treaties with Spain and Mexico, as well as allow for identifying smaller areas such as Indian reservations and federal land holdings. The public surveys component has again diminished in prominence, yet it continues to appear. Additionally, there are three areas obviously blank in the layer of territorial acquisition colors: the Red River of the North (Minnesota and Dakotas), the western portion of the state of Louisiana, and a sliver in the Colorado basin east of the northern extension of the Texas claim. There is no acquisition explanation; the stories of these areas are simply untold.

In the era immediately before the beginning of the Second World War and the United States's eventual entry in the conflict, it appears that a national map of the United States was funded biennially, 1934/35, 1936/37, 1938/39, and 1940/41. 1941 was the last map published until

after the war. In 1946, the GLO was merged with the Grazing Service, under the new name "Bureau of Land Management." *Surveying and Mapping's* new publications list greeted the 1953 printing (Figure 26) with "After a lapse of some 14 years (mostly war years), the Bureau of Land Management has issued a new edition of the map of the *United States including Territories and Insular Possessions*" (Ristow 1953, 368).

This would be the last time that the map was produced by the Government Land Office's successor agency. The Philippine Islands inset has been removed, as the Philippines had gained full independence from the United States in 1946. The Alaska inset has moved toward the right, creating enough space so that the Aleutian Islands are no longer truncated or boxed as an inset within an inset. A subjective, visual change has also happened. On previous editions, the boundary line of the original territory and the boundary lines of the acquired territories



Figure 26. *United States, Including Territories and Insular Possessions, Showing the Extent of Public Surveys, National Parks, National Forests, Indian Reservations, National Wildlife Refuges, and Reclamation Projects* (US Bureau of Land Management 1953). Courtesy of the Map Library, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

seemed to have the same weight. On this map, the acquired territory boundaries appear lighter, of less importance. The line symbol has been changed. As on the 1929 map, the Red River of the North is shown as part of neither the original territory nor the Louisiana Purchase. Maine's story is still untold; west Florida remains simplified. Cuba hangs in ambiguity as background but aligned with the possessions.

In 1964 and 1965, the United States Geological Survey, "in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management," published *United States of America: Showing the Extent of Public Land Surveys, Remaining Public Land, Historical Boundaries, National Forests, Indian Reservations, Wildlife*

Refuges, National Parks and Monuments. The title essentially reiterates the contents of the legend and a break in authorship. Listing "extent of public surveys" and "remaining public lands" as the first and second content elements is certainly a nod to the map's antecedents, but the visual hierarchy does not reflect the title. The depiction of "historical boundaries" is done through boldly colored text and line work. State boundaries, remaining public lands, and national forests grab attention. The depiction of public land surveys has faded into the background, and the United States Geological Survey asserts its mandate in producing maps of and for the nation. Powell's agency had won the long-standing battle.

CONCLUSION

THE COMPLEX HISTORY of territorial expansion has different significance at different periods in United States history. The maps of the General Land Office series manifest that transformation, choosing to hide certain details and to proclaim others. Map and territory get entangled. The footprints of the GLO tell one "official" story as it emerged. It is a story written in a positive direction only. Areas conceded to Canada are not included in the narrative; some acquired areas are never explained. The content of the maps changed as the focus of the society shifted. As many scholars have noted, this history totally fails to record the shrinking domain of the native peoples who held perfectly valid title to their traditional lands. To some extent, this was the express mandate of GLO. Surveys were only conducted once lands had passed out of Indian ownership and occupation.

In this complex story, a large and notable shift occurred—when the agency actually rejected its own map. This kind of action is unusual, and therefore worthy to revisit. Commissioner Hermann cuts an unusual figure in the operations of a rather prosaic organization. His long and detailed review of the Oregon Country, from the vantage point of an original settler, rejected the unsubstantiated story about Louisiana extending to the Pacific; Oregon Territory was treated as a distinct historical entity. A complex history was condensed into an unambiguous non-overlapping set of polygons.

The subsequent maps in the series show the shifting tides of the American empire, what were called Insular Possessions during the period. The story depicted on GLO maps stayed close to the actions as they occurred. The annual production cycle provided enough resolution to detect these shifts and the return of some ambiguity about the acquisitions. While in some sense of retrospect, the United States continues to focus its cartographic image on what are now 48 contiguous states, there was a period in which each "insular" possession was clearly proclaimed in annual maps. The empire was far from hidden in those days. Immerwahr's (2019) argument about a "hidden empire" is not apparent from this series, as it ends in 1953 with all elements fully accounted for, though at massively divergent scales in their insets.

When the series began, the process of surveying and selling the public domain was one of the principal activities of the United States federal government. This process left its mark across the country with the almost square layout now called the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). This rectilinear form, with its curious little deviations, has simply become an infrastructure, little noticed. Similarly, the story of territorial acquisitions no longer occupies the position in national discourse that it did in the nineteenth century.

Full and additional images can be viewed at: www.ideals.illinois.edu/items/116868.

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AUTHORS’ NOTE

In this article, we have chosen to retain the usage in the period documents that refer to “Indians,” “Indian tribes,” and similar wording for the native peoples who were displaced in the expansion of the United States. We did not want to import current terminologies to cover up the events of the past.

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