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Georgia Land Lots

Why are there different size land lots in Georgia? This is a question I am most frequently asks, and thought perhaps you may also have some interest in a bit of Georgia history. When Georgia became one of the United States, the local economy was basically agricultural. Farms were generally near streams and rivers to facilitate transportation. There were few roads and much of the land was still under Indian control. Georgia acquired control of the last Indian land in 1830, known as original Cherokee Counties.

The state had millions of acres on its hands, which was not settled, producing and contributing to the economy. It was recognized that all areas of the state did not have the same agricultural capability. The land was evaluated from the premise that a given area must contain sufficient acreage to provide a workable farm unit capable of sustaining a farm family.

In the south end of the state, the land was found to be quite sandy and deemed to be least productive. It was felt that it would take about 490 acres to provide sufficient crop, grazing and timber for one family. Thus the land lots were laid out 70 Chains Square, (A Chain is 66 feet). To the west and north, the land was of better tilth and judged that only 250 acres was needed per family. These lots were laid out 50 Chains Square. Land that had greater potential was evaluated at 202 1/2 acres per family and was laid out 45 Chains Square. In original Rabun County, however, we also find 490 acre and 250-acre land lots. The larger lots were laid out in the rough, rocky area while the 250-acre lots are found in the main valley and routes leading to North Carolina.

The Legislature stated that the lots would be laid out in cardinal direction. This is true for most of the land areas, but a few areas were laid out otherwise. The area between the Oconee and Okmulgee Rivers was laid where the bearings of the lot lines run NORTH 45 Degrees East and NORTH 45 Degrees WEST.

Another variation is found in the area south of the Chattahoochee River at Hall, Gwinnett, and Walton Counties, where the lot lines were run NORTH 60 degrees EAST and NORTH 30 degrees WEST. The N 60 E lines run more or less parallel to the Chattahoochee. Between the Okmulgee and Oconee, the N 45 W lines run approximately parallel with the two rivers. Another limited area of skewed lots is found in Habersham and Stephens County area.

With the sighing of the last Indian Treaty in 1830, Original Cherokee County becomes State Land. The State Legislature set up the design for the survey into lots, stating that they were to be 40 chains square and containing 160 acres each. In 1832, gold was discovered in Aurora and the legislature felt that the land was too

valuable and that the potentially gold producing land should be limited. As the results of a study, the legislature designated a considerable portion of Cherokee County, primarily just west and along the Chattahoochee River, to be laid in 40 acre lots, 20 chains square, which became known as the "gold lots".

The Original Colonist obtained the eastern third of the state from the Indians, survey and plotted by metes and bounds. This is the area allotted by The State Legislature called the HEAD RIGHTS section. The Head Rights Grant contained 200 acres plus an additional 50 acres for each member of a settler's entourage. It was not uncommon for a settler to have several people, including slaves within his support and staff, thus explaining why the Grant was referred to as "Head Rights".

Thank you,

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