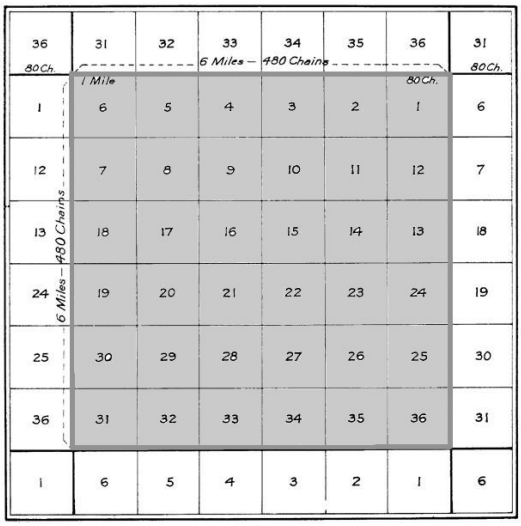
The US Public Lands Survey System

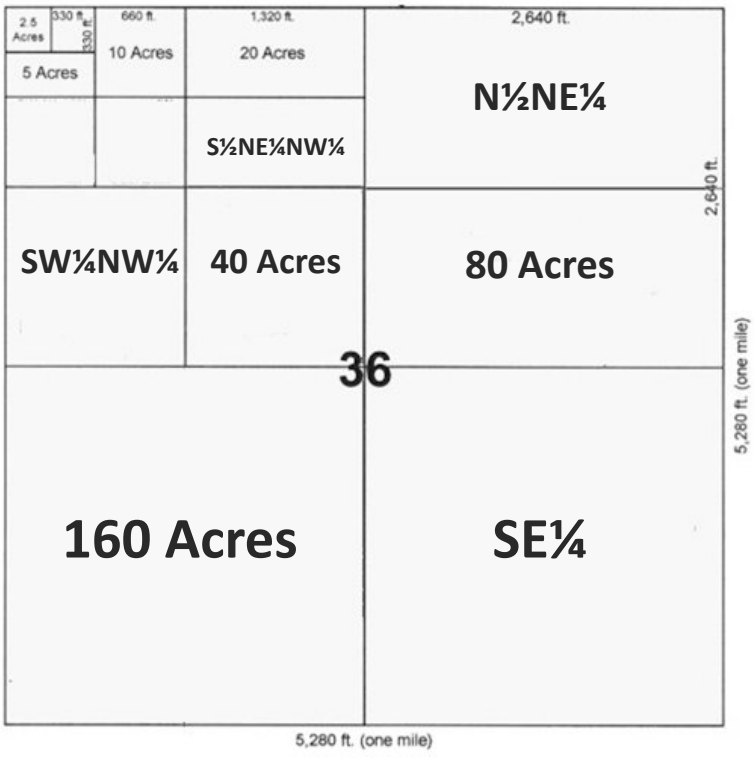
The Rectangular Survey System is the primary means of surveying land throughout most of the United States. This system provides for units of land 36 miles square—commonly referred to as townships—bound by base lines running east to west, and meridians running north to south. At 37 locations throughout the US, these base lines and meridians intersect, forming the basis for identifying the precise location of almost any parcel of land.

A vertical column of townships running parallel to a meridian is commonly referred to as a range. The term township refers to not only a 6 square mile parcel of land, but also a horizontal row of townships running parallel to a base line.



Townships are further divided into 36 sections—each being one mile square—numbered 1 through 36 beginning in the northeast corner and proceeding west and then east in a snake-like pattern.

Each section contains 640 acres.



Sections are subdivided into quarters containing 160 acres, referenced by their location: NE¼, NW¼, SW¼, SE¼.

These quarters can be subdivided into 40-acre quarter-quarters, which in turn can be further subdivided into 10-acre parcels of land, and finally 2.5-acre parcels.

Surveying errors, the curvature of the earth and other irregularities are accounted for by fractional or government lots - quarter-quarters along the north and west boundaries of a township which do not contain the standard 40-acres.