

# Beginning Land Platting

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Making a tract map may help a researcher identify a community, including neighbors, ferries, mills, cemeteries, historic houses, and many other landmarks. Although most individual researchers might not tackle the platting of a whole community, we are more likely to plat a tract of ancestor's land and include his surrounding neighbors. In fact, it might be necessary to plat a community in order to

determine where an ancestor's land might be located or from where he might have migrated.

By locating the land of an ancestor, we might gain an understanding of their lives and be able to become more involved with their community activities.

Land is described in the terms of the "metes" and "bounds" of the tract. Metes are the natural or man-made features of the land that serves at the points along the boundary lines (a white oak, Jackson's corner, Washington Road, a stake) and the boundary lines or bounds connect these points or metes. Bounds are generally given in courses (compass direction) and distance (length of lines between point) as well as by the landmarks or adjoining property owners.

With the aid of a few inexpensive tools, researchers can construct their own plats of land tracts as described in deeds, wills, court records or land grants.

TERM	ENGLISH	LAND MEASURE
Acre	43560 square feet	160 square rods
Chain	66 feet, 22 yards	100 links or 4 rods
Furlong	660 feet, 220 yards	10 chains
Link	7.92 inches	25 links=1 rod
Mile	5280 feet	80 chains, 320 rods
Perch	5.5 yards, 16.5 feet	1 rod, 1 pole, 25 links
Pole	5.5 yards, 16.5 feet	1 perch, 1 rod, 25 links
Rod	5.5 yards, 16.5 feet	1 perch, 1 pole, 25 links

## Determine Scale

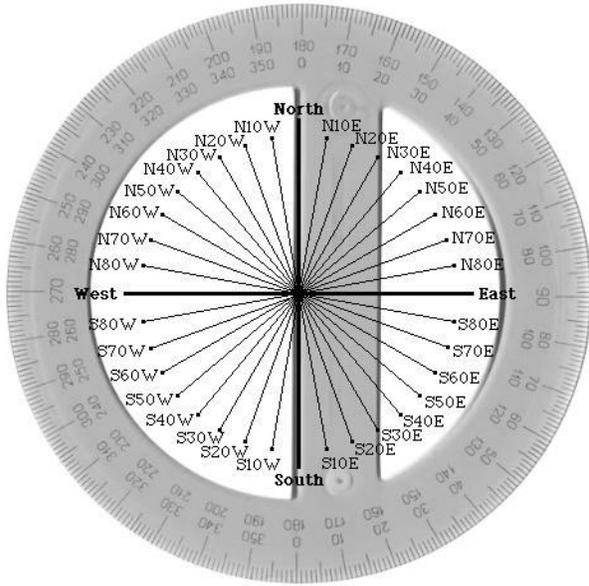
You can establish a scale to meet your specific needs, but we will be platting our tract to match the USGS 1 to 24000 scale or 1 inch [on map] equals 24000 inches [on ground.] These USGS topographic maps are also referred to a 7-1/2 minute maps. Many of the deeds we plat were measured in poles, so we will need to convert to English measurement.

1 pole = 16.5 feet  
 Scale: 1 inch = 24000 inches = 2000 feet

1 pole    2000 ft  
 ----- X ----- = 1 in = 121 poles  
 16.5 ft    1 in

By dividing the number of poles by 121, the tract can be drawn in inches at this scale.





**Step 3: Plat the tract as follows.**

Mark the beginning point for the first boundary line. Allow enough room for the tract to develop as it is drawn. The course from the beginning point is W 120 poles. Since we are using grid paper, align your ruler with Point 0 and the East-West grid (going across - N/S is up/down) and draw a line the scale distance along the ruler.

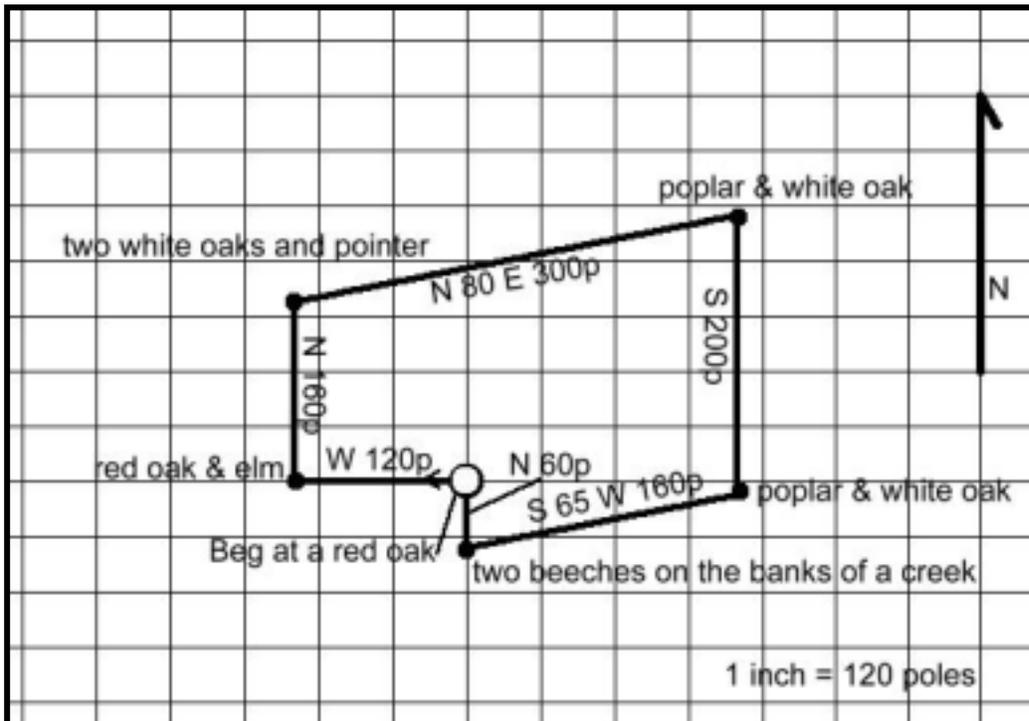
Using the new endpoint we will go N 160 poles. Draw this line the correct distance.

Now we have a compass direction which is compound. Placing your protractor with the point in the center mark, place the 180/0 degrees toward the North or top. From the endpoint, follow the line N to the

top of the protractor and then 80 degrees to the East or down the right side almost to the center. Place a mark on your paper at the 80 degree mark. Using the endpoint and the mark, draw your line the correct distance for 300 poles. Erase the mark after drawing this line.

Continue by drawing S 200 poles.

Now again using our protractor, center the endpoint and point the 180/0 degrees to the North. Follow the line S to the lower end of the protractor and then come up to the West 65 degrees and place a tick mark. Again using the tick mark and endpoint, draw a line the correct distance for 160 poles. Finish by drawing a line N 60 poles to connect to the Beginning.



## Online Resources

Tract Plotter –[www.tractplotter.com/](http://www.tractplotter.com/)  
TopoZone - [www.topozone.com/](http://www.topozone.com/)

## Topographic Map Sources:

USGS Mapping Information Page - [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)

## Select Bibliography

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Fraction	Decimal Equivalent
1/16	.0625
2/16, 1/8	.125
3/16	.1875
4/16, 1/4	.25
5/16	.3125
6/16, 3/8	.375
7/16	.4375
8/16, 1/2	.50

Fraction	Decimal Equivalent
9/16	.5625
10/16, 5/8	.625
11/16	.6875
12/16, 3/4	.75
13/16	.8125
14/16, 7/8	.875
15/16	.9375
1/32	.03125

