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Cost of surveying the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to House resolution dated the 21st instant, information relative to the cost of surveying the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians in the Indian Territory.

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COST OF SURVEYING THE LANDS OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED
TRIBES.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

Pursuant to House resolution dated the 21st instant, information relative to the cost of surveying the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians in the Indian Territory.

JANUARY 25, 1895.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 24, 1895.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the following resolution of the House of Representatives, dated 21st instant, relative to the cost of survey of the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be requested to communicate to the House an estimate of the amount of money it will require to survey the lands of the Cherokee Indians, the Choctaw Indians, the Creek Indians, and the Seminole Indians, and to reestablish the section corners of the lands of the Chickasaw Indians, all in the Indian Territory, and that a separate estimate be made for the survey of the lands of each tribe.

In response thereto I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of a report of this date from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, containing the desired information.

Very respectfully,

HOKE SMITH, *Secretary.*

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., January 24, 1895.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by reference from the Department, January 22, 1895, for early report of House resolution dated January 21, 1895, as follows:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be requested to communicate to the House an estimate of the amount of money it will require to survey the lands of the

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Cherokee Indians, the Choctaw Indians, the Creek Indians, and the Seminole Indians, and to reestablish the section corners of the lands of the Chickasaw Indians, all in the Indian Territory, and that a separate estimate be made for the survey of the lands of each tribe.

In reply I have to state that this office, in response to Department letter of August 30, 1894, furnished with letter dated September 6, 1894, an estimate showing approximately the cost of the survey of the lands occupied by the Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole tribes.

From said letter I quote as follows:

(1) *The Choctaw lands.*—The area of the lands occupied by this tribe is estimated at 6,688,000 acres. The official map shows that a portion of the Choctaw lands are mountainous, and it is probable that a portion of the country is heavily timbered, hence for a part of the work it will be necessary to pay the intermediate rates allowed by law for [the survey of public lands which are mountainous, heavily timbered, or covered with dense undergrowth, viz, \$13 per mile for standard and meander lines, \$11 for township, and \$7 for section lines. This office has not sufficient data to enable it to determine definitely what portions of the lands are mountainous and heavily timbered, but the estimate here given for the survey of the Choctaw lands is based upon the assumption that one-third of the lands will be surveyable at the intermediate rates above named, and the remainder at the minimum rates of \$9 per mile for standard and meander lines, \$7 for township, and \$5 for section lines.

ESTIMATE.

For survey in the field.....	\$134, 650
For office work	33, 440
For field examination of surveys	13, 465

Total cost Choctaw lands 181, 555

(2) *The Cherokee lands.*—The area of the Cherokee lands is estimated at 5,031,351 acres.

The estimated cost of surveying these lands is as follows, assuming that one-fifth of the area will be surveyable at the intermediate rates above mentioned:

For survey in the field.....	\$96, 200
For office work	25, 156
Examination in the field.....	9, 620

Total cost Cherokee lands..... 130, 976

(3) *The Creek lands.*—The area of the Creek lands is estimated at 3,040,495 acres. The estimated cost of surveying these lands is as follows, again assuming that one-fifth of the area will be surveyable at the intermediate rates allowed by law:

For survey in the field	\$58, 134
For office work.....	15, 202
Examination in the field	5, 813

Total cost, Creek lands..... 79, 149

(4) *The Seminole lands.*—The area of the tract of country owned and occupied by the Seminoles, 375,000 acres. The estimated cost of surveying and sectionizing these lands, assuming that one-fifth of the area will be surveyable at intermediate rates, is as follows:

For field work.....	\$7, 170
For office work.....	1, 875
For examination in the field.....	718

Total cost, Seminole lands..... 9, 763

The area of the lands of the Chickasaw tribe of Indians is 4,650,935 acres.

These lands were surveyed and subdivided into 160-acre tracts under contracts dated July 25, 1870, made with Theodore H. Barrett and Ehad N. Darling, United States surveyors. The plats and field notes of said surveys are now on file, and, according to the footings upon the

contract book in this office, the total cost of the surveys was \$268,301.87 for field and office work, no examination in the field having been made.

The resolution calls for an estimate of the cost of reestablishing the section corners upon the Chickasaw lands, but does not seem to contemplate the restoration of all the lines of the previous survey, which would include the lines subdividing the sections into 160-acre tracts, and vastly increase the expense.

A proper resurvey of the Chickasaw lands in accordance with the public land system of surveys would involve the reestablishment of all the standard, township, and section lines, and the meandering of the streams, and assuming that it is the intent of the resolution to call for an estimate for such a resurvey, I submit the estimate given below, adopting the method of computation employed in making the estimates of cost of survey of the lands of the other tribes.

Assuming that one-fifth of the area will be surveyable at the intermediate rates and four-fifths at the minimum rates now allowed by law, I estimate the cost of a resurvey of the Chickasaw lands as follows:

For survey in the field	\$88, 926
For office work.....	23, 255
For examination in the field.....	8, 892
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Total	121, 073

The foregoing estimates for work in the field are based upon the estimated cost of survey per acre at the minimum and intermediate rates now provided by law for the survey of the public lands.

The estimates for office work are at the rate of 5 mills per acre, that being the rate usually adopted in this office in preparing estimates of cost of such work, and the estimates are intended to include the preparation of the official plats in triplicate and transcripts of the field notes in duplicate.

The estimates for examination in the field are at the rate of 10 per cent of the cost of the field work, that being the lowest rate consistent with a thorough test of the character of the work performed by the surveyors.

In regard to the foregoing estimates I would state that as the extent to which it would be necessary to meander streams (under the rule requiring all streams of three-chains right-angled width to be meandered) is not known, the cost of meandering was not taken into consideration. The meandering of streams would necessarily increase the aggregate of the above estimates; but possibly this cost would be more than offset by an overestimate of the areas assumed to require the intermediate rates for survey. On the other hand, it may be that the area requiring intermediate rates is underestimated.

The House resolution is herewith returned.

Very respectfully,

S. W. LAMOREUX,
Commissioner.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.