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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Original State Land Plats Now Available On-Line

Springfield — Secretary of State Jesse White, in his official capacity as state archivist, today announced that the original land plats of Illinois townships are now available over the Internet.

"These township plats will be a boon to professional surveyors who need precise legal descriptions of property," White said. "They will also be of interest to geographers, engineers, archeologists, conservationists, historians, genealogists-to anyone who wishes to see how a certain tract of land looked when European settlers first arrived in Illinois."

From 1804 to 1891, the federal government conducted surveys of the lands of Illinois for the purposes of eventually selling the land. Surveyors then hand drew plats, or maps, of the land. The 3,478 plats, divided up by township, provide graphic detailed depictions of the land in Illinois as it appeared at the time of its original sale, before it was farmed, mined or otherwise changed by development.

Researchers with Internet access may now go on-line to view and print the plats. The Federal Township Plats of Illinois may be found on the Secretary of State Archives' Web site at <http://landplats.ilsos.net>. CDs containing the plats for each of Illinois' 102 counties will soon be available for purchase.

The Federal Township Plats can be used in conjunction with the [Illinois Public Domain Land Tract Sales database](#) on the Secretary of State Archives' Web site. This database, which receives hundreds of thousands of hits a year, includes information about approximately 550,000 original purchases of federal public domain lands in Illinois. With the digitized plats now available on the Internet, researchers interested in

particular purchases can actually see a geographic representation of the land in question.

According to White, surveyors and imaging professionals were consulted throughout the project's planning and their recommendations helped shape the project.

The project was funded through a Library Services and Technology Act grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

For more information about the land plats, please contact Barbara Heflin at (217) 782-3645.