

Henry A. Wiltse, Deputy Surveyor

Henry Wiltse was a U.S. Deputy Surveyor contracted by the Surveyor General in Dubuque, Iowa. In 1847, he surveyed the Third Correction Line (which extends through Washington County) as well as many of the township lines and range lines.

The original surveys in Washington County were conducted by a deputy surveyor and his crew, working with a solar compass and a 66 foot Gunter's chain.

Below is an excerpt from a letter by Henry Wiltse to Surveyor General George W. Jones describing **harsh conditions** in the field:

During four consecutive weeks there was not a dry garment in the party, day or night. Consider a situation like the above, connected with the dreadful swamps through which we waded, and the great extent of windfalls over which we clumb [sic] and clambered; the deep and rapid creeks and rivers that we crossed, all at the highest stage of water; that we were constantly surrounded and as constantly excoriated by swarms or rather clouds of mosquitoes, and still more troublesome insects; and consider further that we were all the while confined to a line, and consequently had no choice of ground...and you can form some idea of our suffering condition.

Our principal suffering, however, grew out of exhaustion of our provisions, coarse as they were...Worn out by fatigue and hardship, and nearly destitute of clothes, they had now to make a forced march of three days for the lake in search of provisions, of which, during that three days, they had not a mouthful.

I contracted to execute this work at ten dollars per mile...but would not again, after a lifetime of experience in the field, and a great fondness for camp life, enter upon the same, or a similar survey, at any price whatever.