



Measuring America: How the United States Was Shaped By the Greatest Land Sale in History

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In 1790, America was in enormous debt, having depleted what little money and supplies the country had during its victorious fight for independence. Before the nation's greatest asset, the land west of the Ohio River, could be sold it had to be measured out and mapped. And before that could be done, a uniform set of measurements had to be chosen for the new republic out of the morass of roughly 100,000 different units that were in use in daily life.

Measuring America tells the fascinating story of how we ultimately gained the American Customary System—the last traditional system in the world—and how one man's surveying chain indelibly imprinted its dimensions on the land, on cities, and on our culture from coast to coast.

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