



Helpful Definitions Related to Land Records

Fiats for Patent – Fiats for patent are the formal orders that letters patent be issued in the name of the Crown to a Grantee. The fiat document provides the required information necessary to prepare the grant. A typical fiat includes the name, address and occupation of the grantee, legal description and size of the grant, type of grant, and both fiat and final grant number.

Homestead – A tract of land acquired under the *Dominion Lands Act*. Not every farm in Saskatchewan was a homestead. For instance, any farm that was purchased outright, whether from a railroad, land company, or another settler, is not considered to be a homestead.

Homesteader – A person who acquired a tract of land under the *Dominion Lands Act*. People often use the terms “settler” and “homesteader” interchangeably; however, “homesteader” specifically refers to an individual who acquired a piece of land under the terms of the *Dominion Lands Act*.

Meridian – One of the geographic lines joining the north and south poles at right angles to the equator. It is designated by degrees of longitude. In the western Canada Dominion land survey system, the meridian at 97°, 27', 28.4" west longitude (just west of Winnipeg) is designated as the prime or first meridian.

Métis Scrip – Scrip, either as land or money, was offered to Métis families to compensate them for loss of their Indigenous title and for grievances that led to the 1885 Resistance. To qualify for scrip that was offered in 1885, the applicants had to prove they were living in the North-West Territories prior to 15 July 1870. Those who applied for scrip from 1886 - 1902 or in 1906 had to prove they were living in the North-West Territories prior to 31 December 1885. The land scrip entitlement was for 240 acres that had to be selected from land that had been allocated as homestead land. Frequently this land was a long distance from where the grantees were living so they sold their scrip, often for less money than it was worth, to land speculators.

Patent – The instrument by which the Dominion government conveyed the legal title to public land. In other words, when a homesteader obtained the patent to his or her homestead, they had title or full ownership of that homestead.

Range – In a legal land description, "range" refers to a strip of land running between consecutive range lines (which run north and south) which are placed approximately six miles apart.

Range Lines - Survey lines running north and south and placed approximately six miles apart.

Soldier Grants – These grants of 160 acres were for soldiers who served in First World War (1914-1918). There were no fees, but the soldiers had to comply with the homestead regulations. This requirement was waived in 1915.

South African Scrip – Veterans from Canada who had served as soldiers or nurses in the Boer War in South Africa (1899 - 1902) were eligible for land scrip entitling them to 320 acres without fees provided they complied with the homestead regulations. This land grant, also known as a Volunteer Bounty Land Grant, was often not settled by the veterans, but was sold to others.

Township (1) – An area of roughly six miles square containing 36 sections. A township is created by the intersection of range and township lines.

Township (2) – In a legal land description, "township" refers to a strip of land between consecutive township lines (which run east and west) which are placed approximately six miles apart.

Township Lines - Survey lines running east and west and placed approximately six miles apart.

Township Plans – These legal survey plans were prepared and printed in Ottawa for the area in what is now Saskatchewan starting in the 1870s, and they bear a reproduction of the signature of the Surveyor General. These plans were utilized in regulating the granting of homesteads and other grants under the *Dominion Lands Act*. While certain of these plans contain information on existing settlements, no information is provided on individual settlers. Information is given on the various subdivisions, water areas, vegetation, soil quality, roads and trails. An analysis of successive editions (re-surveys) may show change in land use over time.

Township Registers – These registers were the Department of the Interior's (and the provincial government's after 1930) principal index to disposals of Dominion lands. The registers are organized by meridian and range, and within the volume by township, section, and quarter section. A complete set, in original form, is available at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan . Entries are dated from the early 1880s to the 1980s. Notations for each transaction include date of entry (application for grant), name of grantee or assignee, date of patent, and notations if applications were cancelled.