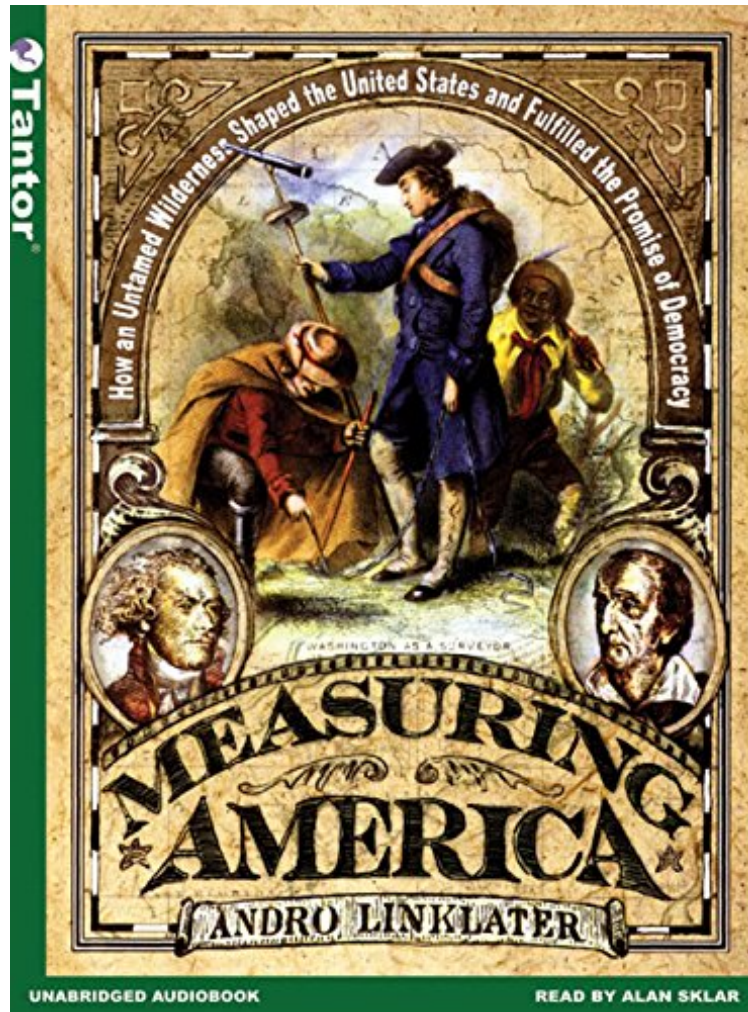


(Mobile pdf) Measuring America: How the United States Was Shaped by the Greatest Land Sale in History

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

Andro Linklater

ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#6722076 in Books 2003-10-01 Formats: Audiobook, CD, Unabridged Original language: English PDF # 10  
6.40 x .90 x 6.70l, .76 Running time: 9 Hours Binding: Audio CD | File size: 27.Mb

**Andro Linklater : Measuring America: How the United States Was Shaped by the Greatest Land Sale in History** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Measuring America: How the United States Was Shaped by the Greatest Land Sale in History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great story about the US Customary system of units and ...By Ted L. FunkGreat story about the US Customary system of units and how the nation was surveyed for sale. An important piece of our history that seldom gets told. Linklater is a great storyteller.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How did we get our land descriptions?By RaggedladyLoved this book when I read it some years ago. I must have given it away, and was glad to find it now! It defines how we went from measuring land from tree to river, etc.

lots of history done very interestingly. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The History of How America Expanded From the Eyes of Its Surveyors By Capt J. D. Obenberger This is a phenomenal read for any thinking person with a general knowledge of American History and an interest in technology, politics, and science. It is the story of the measurement of the continental US - starting with the application of the instruments and techniques of Europe to the mountains, forests, swamps and plains of the American Republic - and of the development of American technology and standards to meet the needs - and the story of this land measurement overlaying and contending with the existing land measurement systems of the other colonizers. It is a story of personal heroism of the explorers and surveyors in marking out a continent and transforming the wilderness into cities and farms, the story of greed and claim jumping, the story of how the law learned to cope with all of the issues. Seldom is a book interesting both as to science and technology and history and people at the same time, but this work is fascinating on every page. I've never seen anything like it other than Boorstein's The Discoverers.

"This expertly written and eminently enjoyable chronicle is highly recommended for history and history of science collections." -Library Journal "Make room on the library shelf for the never-before-told saga of the survey that converted the vast wilderness west of the Ohio River into a commodity marked out for government sale." -Booklist, Starred Review How we ultimately gained the American Customary System-the last traditional system in the world-and how Gunter's chain indelibly imprinted its dimensions on the land, on cities, and on our culture from coast to coast is both an exciting human and intellectual drama and one of the great untold stories in American history. Sagely argued and beautifully written, Measuring America offers readers nothing less than the opportunity to see America's history-and our democracy-in a brilliant new light.

From Publishers Weekly American democracy was less a product of revolutionary war and constitutional ferment than it was of a particular way of measuring land, argues British historian Linklater in his delightful new study. Private ownership of land was a new concept in England in the 17th century, one that was grounded (so to speak) in the developing science of surveying, in particular, Edmund Gunter's simple new surveying system of squares and grids. But the idea that land could "be owned as a house or a bed or a pig was owned" was central to the new United States. Thomas Jefferson and others contended that property belonged to those who could purchase it and labor upon it. Thus, when the land west of the Ohio River was purchased by the United States, a new wave of settlers headed there with the intention of owning their own patch of land. Before the land could be sold, however, it had to be measured in roughly equal plots, and the surveyors used Gunter's method of drawing the boundaries of land in square miles. Linklater's detailed chronicle of the physical development of early America demonstrates the ways that the desire to own private property grew out of the individualism of the frontier and shaped the peculiarly American notion that the individual's right to property is both a foundation and a guarantee of democracy. 35 bw illus. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Why do we use gallons, feet, and dollars and cents? How were these measurements created? Why do we not use the metric system, and why do so many cities and states have grids visible from the ground and the air? To answer those questions and more, British historian Linklater brings to life the creator of the system we use today, a rector named Edmund Gunter, along with a host of major personalities (Washington and Jefferson) and unknown or forgotten players (geographer Thomas Hutchins and geodesist Ferdinand Hassler). These figures play out against Linklater's elegantly drawn backdrops-national and international history, politics, economics, and business-to reveal how we came to measure as we do. Linklater also shows how as the United States expanded from the original Colonies to the West Coast over its first 100 years, our choice of measurement became part of the American psyche and legal system and also affected society. This expertly written and eminently enjoyable chronicle is highly recommended for history and history of science collections. Michael D. Cramer, Schwarz BioSciences, RTP, NC Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist \*Starred\* Make room on the library shelf for the never-before-told saga of the survey that converted the vast wilderness west of the Ohio River into a commodity marked out for government sale. In chronicling this saga, Linklater brings to life a host of compelling personalities--Edmund Gunter, the indifferent rector who gave American surveyors a revolutionary new measuring chain; Thomas Hutchins, the national geographer whose character of perfect integrity could not hide his miserable ineptitude; Ferdinand Hassler, the government appointee so monomaniacal for accuracy that he brushed snuff into his eyes to stimulate optical acuity; Joseph Dombey, the unlucky martyr who died in a Montserrat prison while trying to bring metric measures to America. But above the fascinating personalities loom huge political and economic issues. With spare lucidity, Linklater probes the conflicting pressures in the process that turned unmapped tribal lands into a plotted grid of properties for purchase, bringing much-needed revenue into the federal coffers but also setting loose a frenzy of land speculation. At the heart of this overheated process, Thomas Jefferson deployed his multifaceted genius against the greed of the speculators, heroically striving to make the unprecedented land sale foster the freedoms of democracy and the cause of progressive reform. But in Jefferson's failure to guide America away from Gunter's traditional four-based measures toward a more rational decimal system, Linklater limns one of history's great missed opportunities. At a time when America finds itself a foot-and-pound island in a metric sea, the fascinating story of this missed

opportunity holds considerable relevance for America's commercial future. Bryce Christensen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved