



Excerpts from:

**The History
of the
Michigan Society of Registered Land Surveyors
February 22, 1941 — February 19, 1993
and the
Michigan Society of Professional Surveyors
February 19, 1993 — January 1996**

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Historian**

For about two years the Greater Washington Area Historical Society of Washington, Michigan, had been planning a dedication to the early home site of William Austin Burt which now is a part of the Stony Creek, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Park in Macomb County. On a bright, sunny Sunday afternoon, September 21, 1986, the memorial plaque was unveiled and dedicated by a modest group representing the Historical Society, MSRLS, MSRLS Southeast Chapter, the Metropark Authority, the Burt family and the public. Patrick Benton spoke to the group and John S. Burt, great, great, great grandson of William A. Burt, unveiled the marker.

WILLIAM AUSTIN BURT

America's first patented typewriter was constructed by William Austin Burt in 1829 in a workshop located on this site. It was also here that Burt built the solar compass, patented in 1836, which was a prototype for those used today. Burt's compass became an indispensable instrument for surveying because it used the sun instead of magnetic north as a fixed reference and was therefore unaffected by the magnetic fields of iron ore deposits. Burt also received a patent for an Equatorial Sextant. Among Burt's other accomplishments were the establishment of the northern point of the Michigan principal meridian in 1840; the discovery of the Marquette iron ore range in 1884 and the establishment of the northern portion of the Michigan-Wisconsin boundary in 1847. In 1852, he assisted in surveying the route for the Soo Canal.



September 21, 1986:
John, Dick, & Jim Burt
unveil the new William
A. Burt marker in Stony
Creek Metropark, Macomb
County, MI near the
boat ramp on land owned
by William A. Burt in 1822.



The book "They Left
Their Mark" is
debuted at MSRLS
Convention
Feb. 2, 1987.
125 copies are sold.

In December, 1985, a committee was appointed to develop criteria for awarding honors to Surveyors of the Past and Surveyor of the Year. The plan was to develop the program and submit nominations during 1986 and award the honor at the Annual Meeting for the first time in 1987. So it was, at this time in the Fall of 1986 that the Saginaw Valley Chapter nominated William Austin Burt for the first award of Surveyor of the Past. Because of his obvious

qualification, his name was not submitted for committee review and he was unanimously nominated by the Board.

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We got a little ahead of our chronological sequence of occurrences. If you recall, the Annual Meeting of 1988 was to be the first presentation of awards to Surveyor of the Past and Surveyor of the Year. It was mentioned that William Austin Burt was nominated for Surveyor of the Past and John S. Burt (great, great, great grandson of William A. Burt) was present at the Annual Meeting on behalf of the family. Paul B. Lapham was nominated and received the first Surveyor of the Year award to be given by the Society. No one was more surprised than Paul.

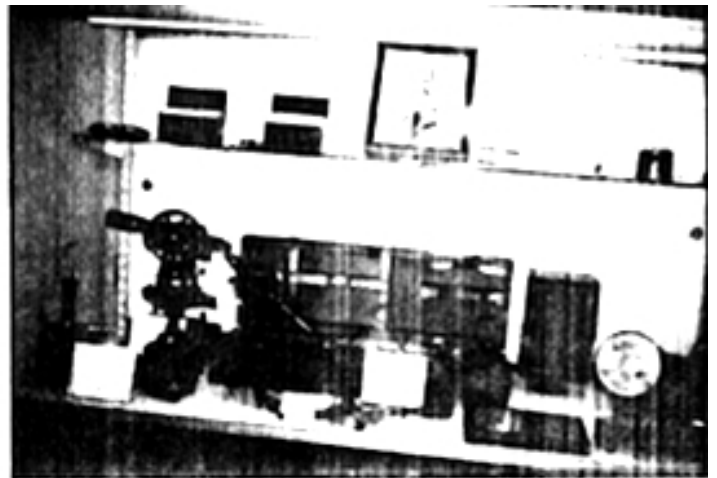
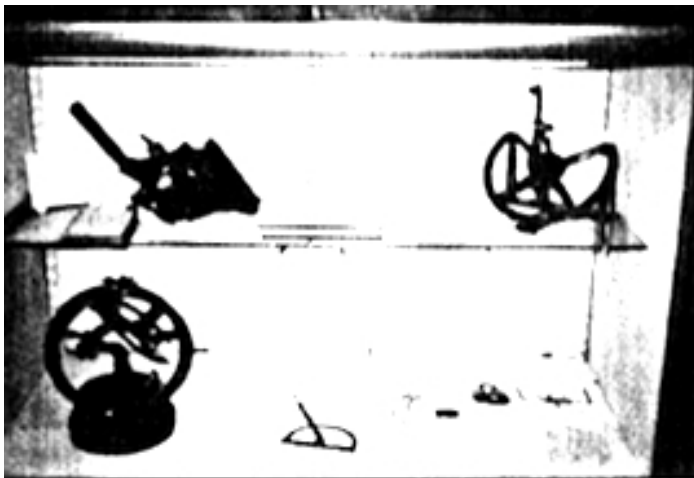


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John Burt received the first Surveyor of the Past award on behalf of William Austin Burt, Annual MSRLS Meeting 1988

On display were artifacts contributed by the great, great, great, grandchildren of William Austin Burt, deputy U.S. Surveyor. Included in the collection were drawing instruments used by Burt, the personal solar compass he used in the survey of the Michigan iron range, a sundial which was located in Burt's home in Washington Township, Macomb County, Michigan and an equatorial sextant designed by Burt.

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Parts of Burt and Berry collections



In February, 2001 John Burt donated the only known daguerreotype of William A. Burt to the MSPS museum.

In September the Iron Ore Industry, the Upper Peninsula and anyone else who wished to, including the surveyors of Michigan celebrated the Sesquicentennial of the discovery of iron ore in the U.P. It was during the original government survey of the Upper Peninsula that William Austin Burt, a renowned early government surveyor discovered iron ore in the mountains of the U.P. It was this discovery that led to one of the more important industries in the U.P. for many years. It was the interference of the magnetic qualities of iron ore with the magnetic compass that led William Austin Burt to invent and patent the solar compass for use in future surveys.

The reenactment surveyors for the Museum Foundation, including Craig Amey, Jack Bueche, Bill Miller, Jack Owens, and Steve Szyszkoski, demonstrated an early survey for

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September 10, 1994:
At the Sesquicentennial
Celebration of William A.
Burt's discovery of iron ore
in the UP of Michigan.



MSRLS reenactment surveyors,
including Jack Owens, on left,
demonstrate how to operate a
Burt Solar Compass to several
members of the Burt family.

approximately 100 people on September 22, 1994. They demonstrated the Burt Solar Compass and other equipment from the early era along with normal camp activities of the time. The demonstrators probably had the most fun of all present answering questions and acting out their roles. The group really enjoys putting on such demonstrations.

For the celebration, there were about twenty Burt family members visiting with the group. One of the highlights of the celebration was the awarding of a special recognition to John S. Burt, a great, great, great, grandson of the original William A. Burt, for the original discovery. The award was made at a dinner in the ice rink in Negaunee by MSPS President, John Matonich, Jr.

The Society encouraged as much participation from State surveyors as possible. The Society held a Board meeting in Marquette during the time of the celebration. The Board also offered to pay for banquet tickets to any state surveyors wishing to attend. At their meeting the Board also agreed to hold at least one meeting per year in the Upper Peninsula there after. Thirty members and wives of MSPS members attended the event. More than 400 people in all attended the banquet.

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Special
Recognition
John S. Burt
For your
Accomplishments
In promoting
Surveying
In Michigan



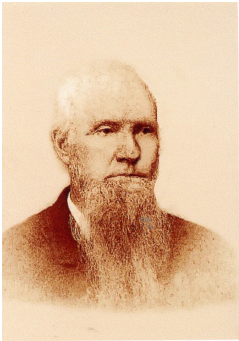
Jim, John & Dick Burt

30 members of the
Burt family attended
the Banquet.



It was exciting news, when earlier in the year, it was announced that an original living witness tree had been found and identified in Roscommon.

Larry Cavanagh and the Mid-Michigan Chapter made preparation to celebrate and dedicate the discovery on August 17, 1995 at Wallace Park in Roscommon. A stone marker was created which stated:



"On June 14, 1852 William Burt, U.S. Surveyor, set a cedar post at the quarter corner of Sections 5 and 6, T.24N.,R.2W. He noted an eight inch diameter yellow pine S75W, 95 links. That pine still stands...a silent witness to original surveys of Michigan. Michigan Society of Professional Surveyors, Mid-Michigan Chapter 1995".

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Added Historically Significant Event:

In February 2000, the Michigan Society of Professional Surveyors recommended a joint venture with the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors to repair the damaged Mile Post Zero marker, at the beginning of the Wisconsin-Michigan boundary survey originally run by William A. Burt in 1847. US National Forest surveyor Pat Leemon coordinated the historical event on August 18, 2001. He invited William Austin Burt's direct descendant John Burt, and Ojibwa Tribal Chief Richard McGeshick, Sr. to unveil the new monument during a special ceremony. The beginning point of Burt's Michigan-Wisconsin survey is now a concrete-filled stainless steel pipe casing capped with a bronze marker. A highlight of the event featured several MSPS re-enactment surveyors, including Jack Bueche (who portrayed William A. Burt) and Jack Owens, who demonstrated the proper use of pioneer survey equipment.

