

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CHARLES D. WALCOTT, DIRECTOR

T H E
AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, THE
STATES, AND THE TERRITORIES

BY

HENRY GANNETT



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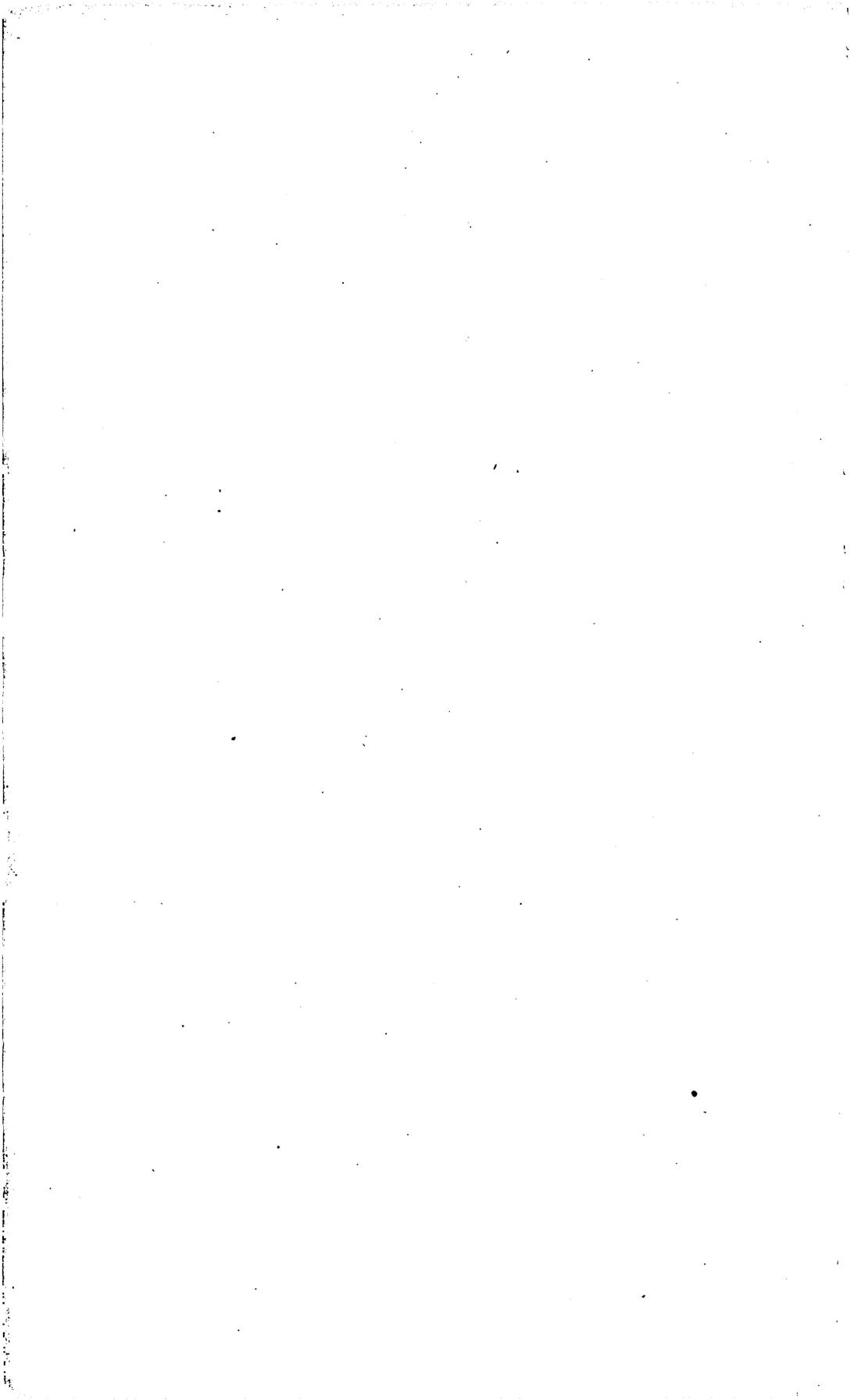
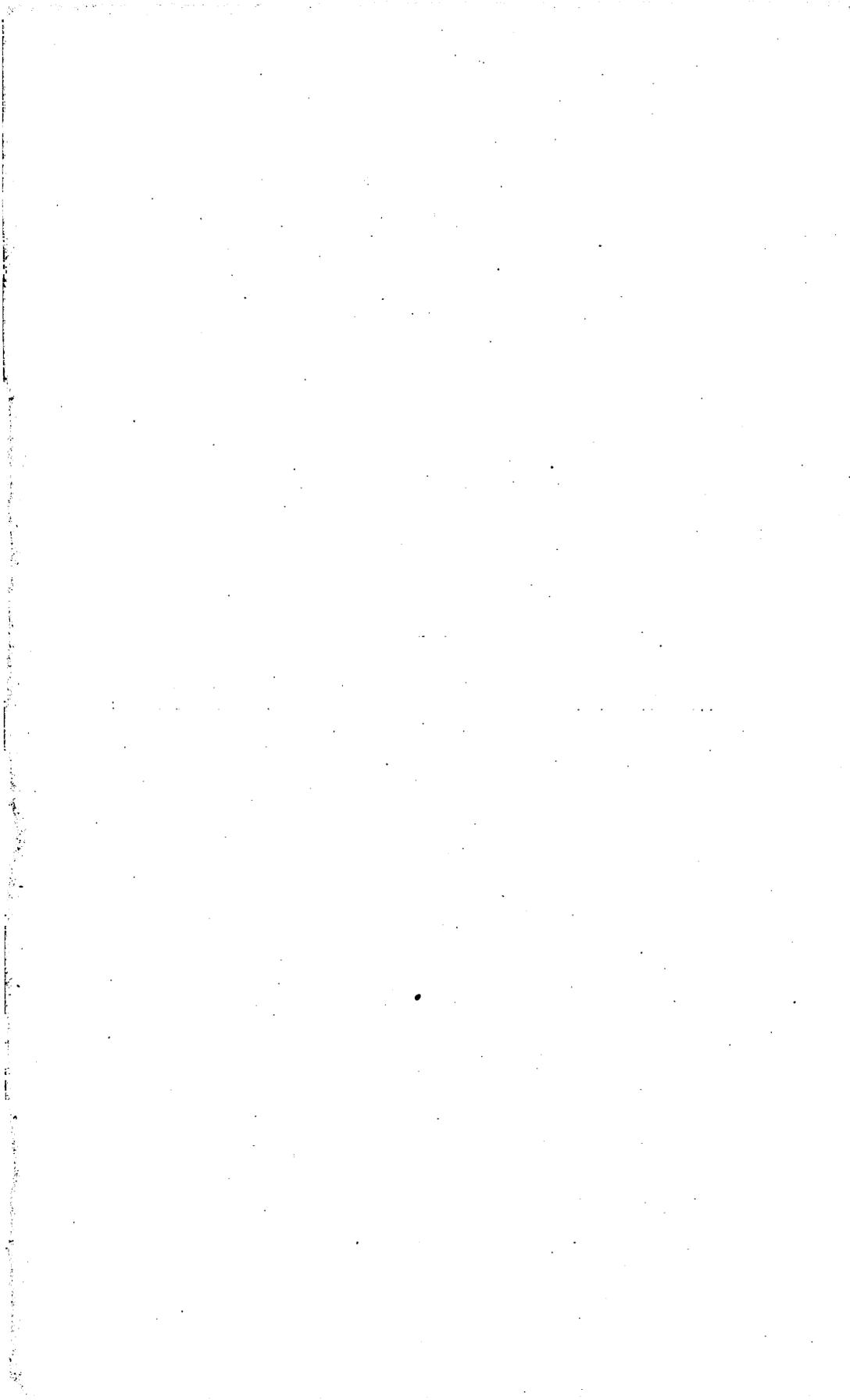


ILLUSTRATION.

PLATE I. Map of the United States, defining the adopted limits of the gross
area

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MAP OF THE UNITED STATES, DEFINING THE ADOPTED LIMITS OF THE GROSS AREA

JULIUS BIEN & CO. LITH. N.Y.

Scale
100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 miles

THE AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, THE STATES, AND THE TERRITORIES.

By HENRY GANNETT.

In 1881 the Census Office published in an extra bulletin tables showing the areas of the United States and of the several States and Territories. The measurements and computations upon which these tables were based were made with care, according to methods described in the bulletin, and the results probably represented the areas as closely as they could be determined from the maps and charts of that time. In 1899 the General Land Office printed similar tables, which were also prepared with great care and thoroughness.

The tables presented in these two publications differ from each other. Most of the differences are trifling, amounting to only a few square miles or a small fraction of 1 per cent, being well within the limits of error of the planimeter and of the maps used. Some of them, however, are considerable, and a few are explained by the fact that more recent maps, which changed the position of boundaries between States, had been used by the Land Office, and its measurement was, therefore, more nearly correct. Other discrepancies arose from differences in determining the coast lines; as an example of this, the Land Office measurement of the State of Washington included half of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, while that of the Census Office did not, involving a difference in area of 1,500 square miles.

Realizing the desirability of the Government issuing but one statement of areas of the States and Territories, the offices concerned, through their representatives, Mr. Frank Bond, chief draftsman of the General Land Office, Mr. C. S. Sloane, geographer of the Census Office, and myself, representing the Geological Survey, have been at work for several months in the endeavor to come to an agreement on these figures, and in the course of our discussion many new measurements have been made from the most recent and best maps. An agreement has been reached, the results of which are set forth in the accompanying table.

By this adjustment the area of the United States proper is increased over the Census Office figures by 1,188 square miles, or about three one-hundredths of 1 per cent.

The question, "What constitutes the area of the United States?" is by no means a simple one. Jurisdiction extends to a line 3 nautical miles from the shore, but this strip of sea can not properly be regarded as a part of the country. Supposing our country to be restricted to the sea and lake coast, there remains a question regarding the bays and estuaries. To what extent should the coast line be followed strictly, and where should we begin to jump across the indentations made by the sea? In this matter one can only follow his own judgment, making in each case as natural a decision as possible, as no definite criterion can be established. This applies also to those States bordering the sea and the Great Lakes.

The method of measurement may be characterized in a few words. The areas of all square degrees included entirely within a State or the United States are taken from tables of such areas. Where a square degree is crossed by a boundary line, so that only part of it is included, both the part included and that excluded are measured from the best maps by planimeter, and the correctness of the measurement is tested by comparing their sum with the tabular area of the square degree.

The entire boundary of the United States has now been mapped or charted with accuracy, so that, aside from uncertainties due to the interpretation of the coast line, there can be little or no question as to the correctness of the measurement of the country as a whole. The situation as regards the individual States is not so satisfactory, however, although the boundaries of most of them are now well mapped. Certain States are bounded by parallels and meridians, and the ascertainment of their areas is merely a matter of reference to tables of areas of square degrees, assuming that the boundary lines were accurately run and marked in accordance with the statute. The boundaries of a few of the States, however, have not been accurately mapped, and it is probable that changes will be made in the computed areas of these States.

The area of Alaska, measured in this office from the large Coast Survey chart, is subject to considerable modification in the future as the position of the coast line becomes better known.

The area given for the Philippine Islands is that determined by the Coast Survey of that archipelago, prepared at the instance of the Philippine Census and published in that report. It also is subject to modification as accurate charts of the archipelago are made.

The areas of Hawaii and Porto Rico are probably subject to only slight change, as the charts from which they were measured are quite accurate.

The areas given for the other small possessions of the United States—Guam, Samoa, and the Panama Canal strip—will probably be changed in the future as their limits become more correctly defined.

Areas, in square miles, of the States and Territories.

State or Territory.	Land surface.	Water surface.	Total area.
Alabama	51, 279	719	51, 998
Arizona	113, 840	116	113, 956
Arkansas	52, 525	810	53, 335
California	156, 092	2, 205	158, 297
Colorado	103, 658	290	103, 948
Connecticut	4, 820	145	4, 965
Delaware	1, 965	405	2, 370
District of Columbia	60	10	70
Florida	54, 861	3, 805	58, 666
Georgia	58, 725	540	59, 265
Idaho	83, 779	534	84, 313
Illinois	56, 002	663	56, 665
Indiana	35, 885	469	36, 354
Indian Territory	30, 790	419	31, 209
Iowa	55, 586	561	56, 147
Kansas	81, 774	384	82, 158
Kentucky	40, 181	417	40, 598
Louisiana	45, 409	3, 097	48, 506
Maine	29, 895	3, 145	33, 040
Maryland	9, 941	2, 386	12, 327
Massachusetts	8, 039	227	8, 266
Michigan	57, 480	500	57, 980
Minnesota	80, 858	3, 824	84, 682
Mississippi	46, 362	503	46, 865
Missouri	68, 727	693	69, 420
Montana	145, 776	796	146, 572
Nebraska	76, 808	712	77, 520
Nevada	109, 821	869	110, 690
New Hampshire	9, 031	310	9, 341
New Jersey	7, 514	710	8, 224
New Mexico	122, 503	131	122, 634
New York	47, 654	1, 550	49, 204
North Carolina	48, 740	3, 686	52, 426
North Dakota	70, 183	654	70, 837
Ohio	40, 740	300	41, 040
Oklahoma Territory	38, 624	224	38, 848

Areas, in square miles, of the States and Territories—Continued.

State or Territory.	Land surface.	Water surface.	Total area.
Oregon.....	95,607	1,092	96,699
Pennsylvania.....	44,832	294	45,126
Rhode Island.....	1,067	181	1,248
South Carolina.....	30,495	494	30,989
South Dakota.....	76,868	747	77,615
Tennessee.....	41,687	335	42,022
Texas.....	262,398	3,498	265,896
Utah.....	82,184	2,806	84,990
Vermont.....	9,124	440	9,564
Virginia.....	40,262	2,365	42,627
Washington.....	66,836	2,291	69,127
West Virginia.....	24,022	148	24,170
Wisconsin.....	55,256	810	56,066
Wyoming.....	97,594	320	97,914
	2,974,159	52,630	3,026,789
Alaska.....			590,884
Guam.....			210
Hawaii.....			6,449
Panama Canal Zone.....			474
Philippine Islands.....			115,026
Porto Rico.....			3,435
Tutuila Group, Samoa.....			77
Total.....			3,743,344

Owing to their location adjoining the Great Lakes, the States enumerated below contain approximately an additional number of square miles as follows:

Illinois.....	1,674 square miles of Lake Michigan.
Indiana.....	230 square miles of Lake Michigan.
Michigan.....	16,653 square miles of Lake Superior.
	12,922 square miles of Lake Michigan.
	9,925 square miles of Lake Huron.
	460 square miles of Lakes St. Clair and Erie.
Minnesota.....	2,514 square miles of Lake Superior.
New York.....	3,140 square miles of Lakes Ontario and Erie.
Ohio.....	3,443 square miles of Lake Erie.
Pennsylvania.....	891 square miles of Lake Erie.
Wisconsin.....	2,378 square miles of Lake Superior.
	7,500 square miles of Lake Michigan.

In addition to the water areas noted above, California claims jurisdiction over all Pacific waters lying within 3 English miles of her coast; Oregon claims jurisdiction over a similar strip of the Pacific Ocean 1 marine league in width between latitude 42° N. and the mouth of the Columbia River; and Texas claims jurisdiction over a strip of Gulf water 3 leagues in width, adjacent to her coast between the Rio Grande and the Sabine River.