

**§ 992. Sale of erroneously designated water-covered areas in Arkansas**

The Secretary of the Interior, in his judgment and discretion, is authorized to sell, in the manner hereinafter provided in this section, any of those public lands situated in the State of Arkansas which were originally erroneously measured and shown upon the official plats as water-covered areas, and which are not lawfully appropriated by a qualified settler or entryman claiming under the public land laws.

Any citizen of the United States who in good faith under color of title or claiming as a riparian owner, prior to September 21, 1922, placed valuable improvements upon or reduced to cultivation any of the lands subject to the operation of this section, shall have a preferred right to file in the office of the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate, of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated, an application to purchase the lands thus improved by them at any time within ninety days from September 21, 1922, if the lands have been surveyed and plats filed in the United States land office; otherwise within ninety days from the filing of such plats. Every such application must be accompanied with satisfactory proof that the applicant is entitled to such preference right and that the lands which he applies to purchase are not in the legal possession of an adverse claimant.

Upon the filing of an application to purchase any lands subject to the operation of this section, together with the required proof, the Secretary of the Interior shall cause the lands described in said application to be appraised, said appraisal to be on the basis of the value of such lands at the date of appraisal, exclusive of any increased value resulting from the development or improvement thereof for agricultural purposes by the applicant or his predecessor in interest, but inclusive of the stumpage value of any timber cut or removed by the applicant or his predecessor in interest.

An applicant who applies to purchase lands under the provisions of this section, in order to be entitled to receive a patent must within thirty days from receipt of notice of appraisal by the Secretary of the Interior pay to the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate, of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated the appraised price of the lands, and thereupon a patent shall issue to said applicant for such lands as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine that such applicant is entitled to purchase under this section. The proceeds derived by the Government from the sale of lands hereunder shall be covered into the United States Treasury and applied as provided by law for the disposal of the proceeds from the sale of public lands.

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to prescribe all necessary rules and regulations for administering the provisions of this section and determining conflicting claims arising hereunder.

(Sept. 21, 1922, ch. 362, §§1-5, 42 Stat. 992; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, § 403, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7876, 60 Stat. 1100.)

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of functions of other officers, employees, and agencies of Department of the Interior, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of the Interior, with power to delegate, see Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3174, 64 Stat. 1262, set out under section 1451 of this title.

"Officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate" substituted for "register" on authority of section 403 of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, which abolished all registers of district land offices and transferred functions of register of district land office to Secretary of the Interior. See section 403 of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, set out as a note under section 1 of this title.

**§ 993. Sale of lands in Louisiana; preference rights; application for purchase; appraisal; payment for land**

The Secretary of the Interior, in his judgment and discretion, is hereby authorized to sell, in the manner hereinafter provided, in this section, any of those lands situated in the State of Louisiana which were originally erroneously measured and shown upon the official plats as water-covered areas, and which are not lawfully appropriated by a qualified settler or entryman claiming under the public land laws.

Any citizen of the United States who, or whose ancestors in title in good faith under color of title or claiming as a riparian owner, prior to February 19, 1925, placed valuable improvements upon or reduced to cultivation any of the lands subject to the operation of this section, shall have a preferred right to file in the office of the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate, of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated, an application to purchase the lands thus improved by them at any time within ninety days from February 19, 1925, if the lands have been surveyed and plats filed in the United States land office; otherwise within ninety days from official notice to such claimant of the filing of such plats. Every such application must be accompanied with satisfactory proof that the applicant is entitled to such preference right and that the lands which he applies to purchase are not in the legal possession of an adverse claimant or in the actual possession of a person or persons who have improved the property and who have attempted to enter same in compliance with the laws and regulations of the United States land office.

Upon the filing of an application to purchase any lands subject to the operation of this section, together with the required proof, the Secretary of the Interior shall cause the lands described in said application to be appraised, said appraisal to be on the basis of the value of such lands at the date of appraisal, exclusive of any increased value resulting from the development or improvement thereof for agricultural purposes by the applicant or his predecessor in interest, but inclusive of the stumpage value of any timber cut or removed by the applicant or his predecessor in interest.

An applicant who applies to purchase lands under the provisions of this section, in order to be entitled to receive a patent, must within six months from receipt of notice of appraisal by the Secretary of the Interior pay to the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate,

of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated, the appraised price of the lands, and thereupon a patent shall issue to said applicant for such lands as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine that such applicant is entitled to purchase under this section. The proceeds derived by the Government from the sale of the lands hereunder shall be covered into the United States Treasury and applied as provided by law for the disposal of the proceeds from the sale of public lands.

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to prescribe all necessary rules and regulations for administering the provisions of this section and determining conflicting claims arising hereunder.

All purchases made and patents issued under the provisions of this section shall be subject to and contain a reservation to the United States of all the coal, oil, gas, and other minerals in the lands so purchased and patented, together with the right to prospect for, mine, and remove the same.

(Feb. 19, 1925, ch. 268, §§1, 2, 43 Stat. 951, 952; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, §403, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7876, 60 Stat. 1100.)

#### TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of functions of other officers, employees, and agencies of Department of the Interior, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of the Interior, with power to delegate, see Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3174, 64 Stat. 1262, set out under section 1451 of this title.

“Officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate” substituted for “register” on authority of section 403 of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, which abolished all registers of district land offices and transferred functions of register of district land office to Secretary of the Interior. See section 403 of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, set out as a note under section 1 of this title.

#### § 994. Sale of lands in Wisconsin

The Secretary of the Interior, in his judgment and discretion, is authorized to sell, in the manner hereinafter provided in this section, any of those lands situated in the State of Wisconsin which were originally erroneously meandered and shown upon the official plats as water-covered areas, and which are not lawfully appropriated by a qualified settler or entryman claiming under the public land laws.

Any owner in good faith of land shown by the official public land surveys to be bounded in whole or in part by such erroneously meandered area, and who acquired title to such land prior to February 27, 1925, or any citizen of the United States who in good faith under color of title or claiming as a riparian owner had, prior to said date, placed valuable improvements upon or reduced to cultivation any of the lands subject to the operation of this section, shall have a preferred right to file in the office of the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate, of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated, an application to purchase the lands thus improved by them at any time within ninety days from said date if the lands have been surveyed and plats filed in the United States land office; otherwise within ninety days from the filing of such plats. Every such application must be accompanied with sat-

isfactory proof that the applicant is entitled to such preference right and that the lands which he applies to purchase are not in the legal possession of an adverse claimant under the public land laws.

In event such erroneously meandered land is bounded by two or more tracts of land held in private ownership with apparent riparian rights indicated by the official township plat of survey at date of disposal of title by the United States, the Secretary of the Interior or such officer as he may designate shall have discretionary power to cause such meandered area, when surveyed, to be divided into such tracts or lots as will permit a fair division of such meandered area among the owners of such surrounding or adjacent tracts under the provisions of this section. In administering the provisions of this section, where there shall exist a conflict of claims falling within its operation, if any claimant shall have placed valuable improvements upon the land involved, or shall have reduced the same to cultivation, then to the extent of such improvements or cultivation, such claimant shall be given preference in adjustment of such conflict: *Provided*, That no preference right of entry under this section shall be recognized for a greater area than one hundred and sixty acres, in one body, to any one applicant, whether an individual, an association, or a corporation: *Provided further*, That this section shall not be construed as in any manner abridging the existing rights of any settler or entryman under the public land laws.

Upon the filing of an application to purchase any lands subject to the operation of this section, together with the required proof, the Secretary of the Interior shall cause the lands described in said application to be appraised, said appraisal to be on the basis of the value of such lands at the date of appraisal, exclusive of any increased value resulting from the development or improvement thereof for agricultural purposes by the applicant or his predecessor in interest, but inclusive of the stumpage value of any timber cut or removed by the applicant or his predecessor in interest.

An applicant who applies to purchase lands under the provisions of this section, in order to be entitled to receive a patent, must within thirty days from receipt of notice of appraisal by the Secretary of the Interior pay to the officer, as the Secretary of the Interior may designate, of the United States land office of the district in which the lands are situated the appraisal price of the lands, and thereupon a patent shall issue to said applicant for such lands as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine that such applicant is entitled to purchase under this section. The proceeds derived by the Government from the sale of lands under this section shall be covered into the United States Treasury and applied as provided by law for the disposal of the proceeds from the sale of public lands.

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to prescribe all necessary rules and regulations for administering the provisions of this section and determining conflicting claims arising thereunder.