

**§ 343. Correction of errors in allotments and patents**

In all cases where it shall appear that a double allotment of land has been wrongfully or erroneously made by the Secretary of the Interior to any Indian by an assumed name or otherwise, or where a mistake has been made in the description of the land inserted in any patent, said Secretary is authorized and directed, during the time that the United States may hold the title to the land in trust for any such Indian, and for which a conditional patent may have been issued, to rectify and correct such mistakes and cancel any patent which may have been thus erroneously and wrongfully issued whenever in his opinion the same ought to be canceled for error in the issue thereof, and if possession of the original patent cannot be obtained, such cancellation shall be effective if made upon the records of the Bureau of Land Management; and no proclamation shall be necessary to open to settlement the lands to which such an erroneous allotment patent has been canceled, provided such lands would otherwise be subject to entry: *And provided*, That such lands shall not be open to settlement for sixty days after such cancellation: *And further provided*, That no conditional patent that has been or that may be executed in favor of any Indian allottee, excepting in cases hereinbefore authorized, and excepting in cases where the conditional patent is relinquished by the patentee or his heirs to take another allotment, shall be subject to cancellation without authority of Congress.

(Jan. 26, 1895, ch. 50, 28 Stat. 641; Apr. 23, 1904, ch. 1489, 33 Stat. 297; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, § 403, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7876, 60 Stat. 1100.)

**Executive Documents**

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 in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

"Bureau of Land Management" substituted in text for "General Land Office" on authority of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, set out in the Appendix to Title 5.

**§ 344. Cancellation of allotment of unsuitable land**

If any Indian of a tribe whose surplus lands have been ceded or opened to disposal has received an allotment embracing lands unsuitable for allotment purposes, such allotment may be canceled and other unappropriated, unoccupied, and unreserved land of equal area, within the ceded portions of the reservation upon which such Indian belongs, allotted to him upon the same terms and with the same restrictions as the original allotment, and lands described in any such canceled allotment shall be disposed of as other ceded lands of such reservation. This provision shall not apply to the lands formerly comprising Indian Territory. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to prescribe rules and regulations to carry this law into effect.

(Mar. 3, 1909, ch. 263, 35 Stat. 784.)

**§ 344a. Repealed. Act Nov. 24, 1942, ch. 640, § 4, 56 Stat. 1022**

Section, act June 25, 1910, ch. 431, § 12, 36 Stat. 858, authorized Secretary of the Interior to investigate the allotment in the name of a deceased Indian and to recommend to Congress the cancellation of such Indian's patent if he died without heirs.

**§ 345. Actions for allotments**

All persons who are in whole or in part of Indian blood or descent who are entitled to an allotment of land under any law of Congress, or who claim to be so entitled to land under any allotment Act or under any grant made by Congress, or who claim to have been unlawfully denied or excluded from any allotment or any parcel of land to which they claim to be lawfully entitled by virtue of any Act of Congress, may commence and prosecute or defend any action, suit, or proceeding in relation to their right thereto in the proper district court of the United States; and said district courts are given jurisdiction to try and determine any action, suit, or proceeding arising within their respective jurisdictions involving the right of any person, in whole or in part of Indian blood or descent, to any allotment of land under any law or treaty (and in said suit the parties thereto shall be the claimant as plaintiff and the United States as party defendant); and the judgment or decree of any such court in favor of any claimant to an allotment of land shall have the same effect, when properly certified to the Secretary of the Interior, as if such allotment had been allowed and approved by him, but this provision shall not apply to any lands now held by either of the Five Civilized Tribes, nor to any of the lands within the Quapaw Indian Agency: *Provided*, That the right of appeal shall be allowed to either party as in other cases.

(Aug. 15, 1894, ch. 290, § 1, 28 Stat. 305; Feb. 6, 1901, ch. 217, § 1, 31 Stat. 760; Mar. 3, 1911, ch. 231, § 291, 36 Stat. 1167.)

**Editorial Notes**

CODIFICATION

Act Mar. 3, 1911, conferred the powers and duties of the former circuit courts upon the district courts.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

REPEAL OF SECTION AS TO OSAGE INDIANS

Act June 28, 1906, ch. 3572, § 1, 34 Stat. 540, provided in part that: "the provisions of the Act of Congress of August fifteenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-four, Twenty-eighth Statutes at Large, page three hundred and five [this section], granting persons of Indian blood who have been denied allotments the right to appeal to the courts, are hereby repealed as far as the same relate to the Osage Indians; and the tribal lands and tribal funds of said tribe shall be equally divided among the members of said tribe as hereinafter provided."

**§ 346. Proceedings in actions for allotments**

The plaintiff shall cause a copy of his petition filed under section 345 of this title, to be served upon the United States attorney in the district wherein suit is brought, and shall mail a copy of same, by registered letter, to the Attorney General of the United States, and shall thereupon

cause to be filed with the clerk of the court wherein suit is instituted an affidavit of such service and the mailing of such letter. It shall be the duty of the United States attorney upon whom service of petition is made as aforesaid to appear and defend the interests of the Government in the suit, and within sixty days after the service of petition upon him, unless the time should be extended by order of the court made in the case to file a plea, answer, or demurrer on the part of the Government, and to file a notice of any counterclaim, set-off, claim for damages, or other demand or defense whatsoever of the Government in the premises: *Provided*, That should the United States attorney neglect or refuse to file the plea, answer, demurrer, or defense, as required, the plaintiff may proceed with the case under such rules as the court may adopt in the premises; but the plaintiff shall not have judgment or decree for his claim, or any part thereof, unless he shall establish the same by proof satisfactory to the court.

(Feb. 6, 1901, ch. 217, § 2, 31 Stat. 760; June 25, 1948, ch. 646, § 1, 62 Stat. 909.)

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### CHANGE OF NAME

“United States attorney” substituted in text for “district attorney of the United States” on authority of act June 25, 1948. See section 541 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

#### § 347. Limitations of actions for lands patented in severalty under treaties

In all actions brought in any State court or United States court by any patentee, his heirs, grantees, or any person claiming under such patentee, for the possession or rents or profits of lands patented in severalty to the members of any tribe of Indians under any treaty between it and the United States of America, where a deed has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior to the land sought to be recovered, the statutes of limitations of the States in which said land is situate shall be held to apply, and it shall be a complete defense to such action that the same has not been brought within the time prescribed by the statutes of said State the same as if such action had been brought for the recovery of land patented to others than members of any tribe of Indians.

(May 31, 1902, ch. 946, § 1, 32 Stat. 284.)

#### § 348. Patents to be held in trust; descent and partition

Upon the approval of the allotments provided for in this act by the Secretary of the Interior, he shall cause patents to issue therefor in the name of the allottees, which patents shall be of the legal effect, and declare that the United States does and will hold the land thus allotted, for the period of twenty-five years, in trust for the sole use and benefit of the Indian to whom such allotment shall have been made, or, in case of his decease, of his heirs according to the laws of the State or Territory where such land is located, and that at the expiration of said period the United States will convey the same by patent to said Indian, or his heirs as aforesaid, in

fee, discharged of said trust and free of all charge or incumbrance whatsoever: *Provided*, That the President of the United States may in any case in his discretion extend the period. And if any conveyance shall be made of the lands set apart and allotted as herein provided, or any contract made touching the same, before the expiration of the time above mentioned, such conveyance or contract shall be absolutely null and void: *Provided*, That, subject to section 8(b) of the American Indian Probate Reform Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-374; 118 Stat. 1810), the rules of intestate succession under the Indian Land Consolidation Act (25 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) (including a tribal probate code approved under that Act or regulations promulgated under that Act) shall apply to that land for which patents have been executed and delivered: *And provided further*, That at any time after lands have been allotted to all the Indians of any tribe as herein provided, or sooner if in the opinion of the President it shall be for the best interests of said tribe, it shall be lawful for the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate with such Indian tribe for the purchase and release by said tribe, in conformity with the treaty or statute under which such reservation is held, of such portions of its reservation not allotted as such tribe shall, from time to time, consent to sell, on such terms and conditions as shall be considered just and equitable between the United States and said tribe of Indians, which purchase shall not be complete until ratified by Congress, and the form and manner of executing such release shall also be prescribed by Congress: *Provided, however*, That all lands adapted to agriculture, with or without irrigation so sold or released to the United States by any Indian tribe shall be held by the United States for the sole purpose of securing homes to actual settlers and shall be disposed of by the United States to actual and bona fide settlers only in tracts not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres to any one person, on such terms as Congress shall prescribe, subject to grants which Congress may make in aid of education: *And provided further*, That no patents shall issue therefor except to the person so taking the same as and for a homestead, or his heirs, and after the expiration of five years' occupancy thereof as such homestead; and any conveyance of said lands so taken as a homestead, or any contract touching the same, or lien thereon, created prior to the date of such patent, shall be null and void. And the sums agreed to be paid by the United States as purchase money for any portion of any such reservation shall be held in the Treasury of the United States for the sole use of the tribe or tribes of Indians; to whom such reservations belonged; and the same, with interest thereon at 3 per centum per annum, shall be at all times subject to appropriation by Congress for the education and civilization of such tribe or tribes of Indians or the members thereof. The patents aforesaid shall be recorded in the Bureau of Land Management, and afterwards delivered, free of charge, to the allottee entitled thereto. And if any religious society or other organization was occupying on February 8, 1887, any of the public lands to which this act is applicable, for religious or educational work among the Indians, the Secretary of the Interior