Record research can help you find corners!
GLO is the General Land Office, who contracted surveys from 1812 to 1910, conducted surveys from 1910 on, and became part of the Bureau of Land Management in 1946.
Surveying is the art and science of measuring the land. Research falls under the art aspect.
There are many ways to search GLOrecords.
Clicking on the “approved/accepted” header will arrange surveys chronologically.
Create a pdf or other format, then download.
Except in the northernmost part, the North-South lines show no bearings because they are understood to be cardinal North. However, on these and the East-West lines are angles with the abbreviation va. or var. which stands for variation, the same as magnetic declination.
The field note index is often indicated by an “A” after the page number.
The survey follows a particular order. It is important to get the notes going into and out of each corner.

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Note: You can download your field note images directly by clicking one of the icons above.
The prescribed order of township subdivisional lines survey.
Remonumentation notes and connecting sheets usually do not have an associated date and are found at the end of a chronological list.
Remonumentation notes (no plat).
More recent surveys/resurveys near end of list.
Connecting sheets show mineral surveys in a section; may include unpatented claims; later claims (after early 1900s will not be shown.)
Ties from mineral surveys to rectangular corners and USLMs are shown.
USLMs can help locate several claims.
USLM Columbus
LSR=Land Status Records (master title plat and historical index)
Historical Index is a tabular record of the graphical record of the MTP
Spanish land grant takes up most of this township and section lines are not extended into the grant. Note the Related Documents tab.
Note the patent numbers in italics versus the unpatented claims with only mineral survey numbers
Related document tab brings up patents. Only some have images. (left column). For additional patent images, note names and date of patent and go to CDI tab.
CDI tab has more patent images as well as other documents.
Note that the mineral survey number is not readily apparent.
An important feature of a patent, especially a mineral patent, is the expressly excepting and excluding clause.
The Colorado State office of the BLM has the most extensive public room records.
An index to microfilm fiche. Note volumes, pages contract or group No., approval/acceptance date, and surveyor. Mineral surveys each have their own sleeve of microfiche. Volumes of rectangular surveys have individual sleeves and may list group numbers. If microfiche are illegible, rolls of microfilm are available.
One map (perhaps inaccurate) of Colorado’s mineral survey land districts.
A better map of the mineral survey land districts. Until December 1886, Colorado used a system of seven mineral survey land districts. In 1886, the seven were unified into one for the entire state and the first mineral survey under the unified system was Mineral Survey No. 4501.
Index grid used by Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).
Local Plats

Many counties are switching to or enhancing their online access with providers such as thecountyrecorder.com.
Ownership research is essential, not only to keep out of harm’s way, but also to connect with landowners who may have spent generations on the land and may have local survey knowledge.
The U.S. Forest Service’s GIS version of a master title plat, showing ownership and rights of way.
Sometimes there are discrepancies between the ALP and the MTP. Note “His Highness” lode along sec. line between secs. 12 and 13 on MTP.
The original mineral survey plat.
The amended survey plat. Note addition of “His Highness” lode.
Online quad index map available at USGS.
Old maps are available through “Prospector” but you need a library card. Pluses (+) on old maps can be an invaluable tell.
The triplicate or dirty plat was the predecessor to the Master Title Plat; it was used in land offices to track land actions such as patents and Rights of Way.
A land Entry Case File is basically a file of documents relating to a particular patent. Sometimes they are helpful and sometimes not.
An old mineral survey in the hills east of Crestone, Colorado.
Cor. No. 1, M.S. No. 543, Pelican lode.
Binger Hermann GLO Commissioner 1897-1903
Binger era claims put the Pelican lode several hundred feet easterly of where it turned out to be.
Actual location of the claims but dependent resurvey.
Following the Binger Hermann era, mineral surveyors were directed to provide corner descriptions to all found corners in the survey notes under the heading “Report.”
Note the unpatented claims in sec. 1 of the MTP. These had ties to each other and ultimately ties to corners on the range line.
Corner of secs. 1, 6, 7, and 12, found using unpatented mineral claim ties.
Colorado Department of Transportation often investigates monumentation along a highway project such as repaving or widening. These can be useful if you are looking in the neighborhood.
Original railroad plats (sheets) can be hard to locate (railroad museum), but can give corner locations. Use bridges (BR) for stationing.
Old field books are gold. This one was from the county surveyor and provided by the utility/water department. Denver Water has an archive room of old field books.