

## The Meridian

The next feature of a rightly constructed map, and one which is by no means simply decorative but of very great practical importance, is the meridian. A true meridian is a necessary adjunct of all rightly constructed maps, as it is directionally their common line of comparison, and without it no just notion of the situation of the territory represented by the map, or of the bearings of its lines, can be obtained. It is, in fact, one of the co-ordinates to which reference is made for the solution of all problems of position on the drawing, and as such is entitled to consideration. This line should therefore be a somewhat conspicuous object, and the object of its existence demands that it should not be so obscured by ornament as to defeat its use as a sharp, clear line of reference for all north and south lines. Nevertheless, the draughtsman is warranted in giving to its construction more than a hasty or careless consideration. It is usual to ornament the northern end of this meridian with some neatly drawn and characteristic device such as an arrow head, a fleur-de-lis, the head of a medieval lance, etc. At its southern extremity is sometimes placed the feather end of an arrow or a crescent. Near the middle of the line may be drawn an east and west line, or four or eight pointed star, or radiating lines marking convenient points of graduation of the circle. It is well, also, to draw the magnetic meridian at the time of the survey, through the middle point of the true meridian, and mark the declination. This magnetic meridian should be less ornamental than the true one, and when both are used it is generally agreed to draw a complete arrow head on the latter, while the magnetic line is subordinated by giving it only half a head, drawing on the right or left hand side, as the declination is east or west.

The construction of a meridian affords considerable opportunity for the display of skill and taste in the draughtsman. It may easily be made an attractive, simple and elegant feature, reflecting the intelligence and spirit of an accomplished workman; or, by its awkward design and slovenly execution, shake one's confidence in the mental capacity of one upon whom we should have a right to rely. Perhaps it would not be inappropriate to say that the meridian line should be sufficiently long, on most maps, to serve conveniently the purpose of transferring its direction to other parts of the drawing by means of triangle and straight-edge. The arrow head at the vertex should be a sharply pointed figure, entirely different from the obtuse, nondescript object which too often offends the eye in that position. And, to avoid all possibility of mistake, it is well to place the letter N some distance above or below the arrow point. When a star is used to give the various points of the compass, its radiating arms should be narrow and slender, with sharp points, avoiding all appearance or suggestion of dullness. In short, the entire figure should be constructed in the spirit of lightness and radiation, in harmony with its office, which is simply that of indicating direction.

- ***A Manual of Land Surveying***, Francis Hodgman, 1897

