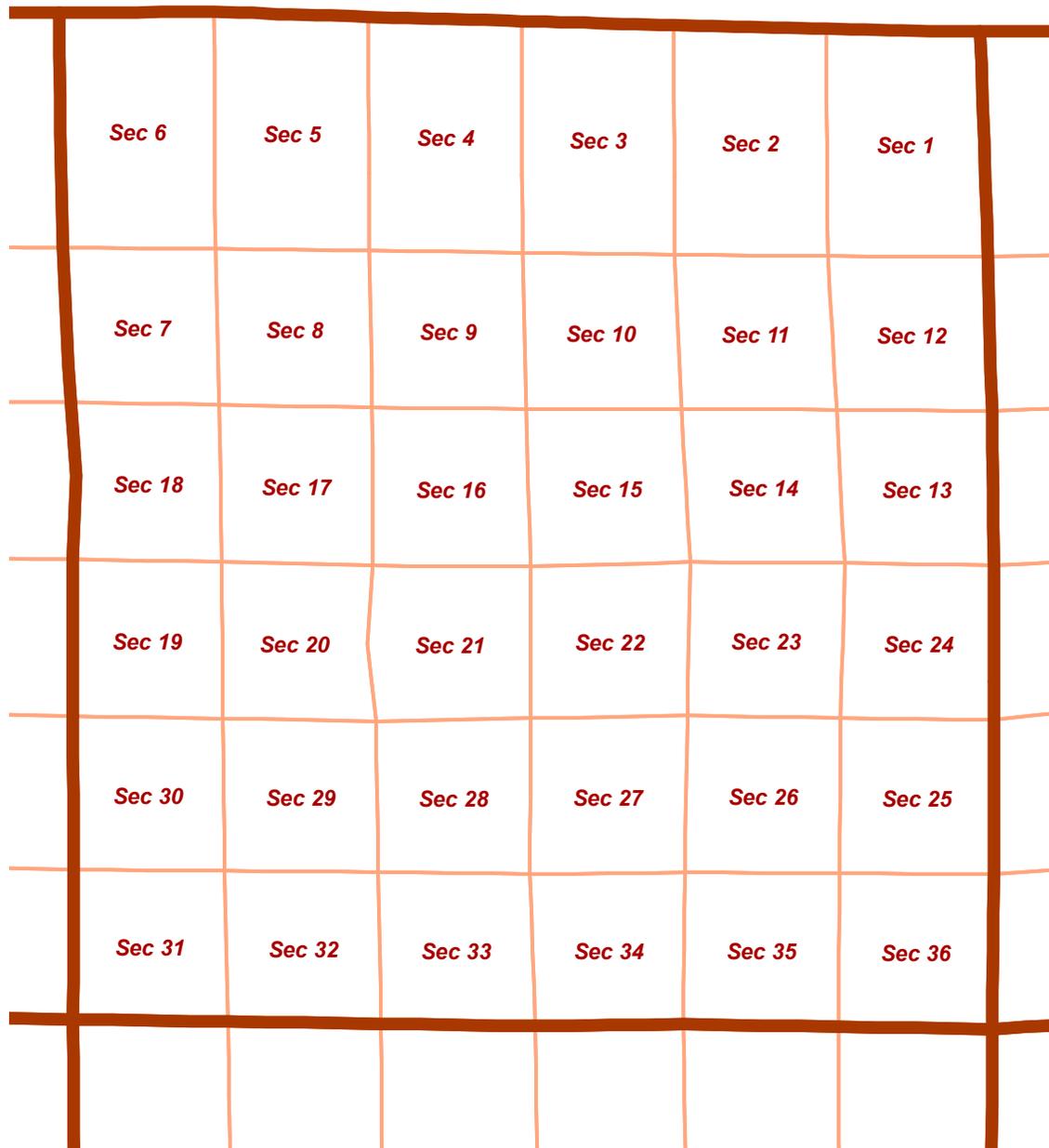


Sections within a township

Public Land Survey System



In U.S. land surveying under the Public Land Survey System, a section is an area nominally one square mile, containing 640 acres, with 36 sections making up one township on a rectangular grid. Townships are the horizontal rows and ranges are the vertical rows in the PLSS.

Due to such things as survey errors, poor instrumentation, difficult terrain, it is common for actual sections to differ from the PLSS ideal one square mile. The distortions and errors were, by design, distributed to the northern and western edges of each township. As a result the sections in these areas diverge the most from the ideal shape and size. In addition there was a need to regularly adjust the entire township grid to account for distortions caused by the curvature of the Earth and the convergence of meridians toward the poles. In places where the grid was corrected, or where two grids based on different principal meridians came together, section shapes are often highly warped.

*More information on the Public Land Survey System
may be found on <http://nationalatlas.gov>*