

United States Land and Property Records

Considering the entire spectrum of American genealogy Land & Property Records have probably helped solve more difficult problems than any other single record.

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Class content

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Local Land Records

- Usually kept at County Courthouses
- Many have been microfilmed
- Available through Family Search libraries or centers
- Some are beginning to be digitized
- See Family Search Historical Records
- Check County Websites

Land Terms

- Grantor = Seller
- Grantee = Buyer
- Grantor's Index = Seller's Index
- Grantee's Index = Buyer's Index
- Indenture = A Deed to which 2 or more persons are parties, & which these enter into reciprocal & corresponding grants or obligations toward each other.
- Warranty Deed = One which contains a covenant from the grantor to warrant and defend title to the grantee and his heirs.
- Quit Claim Deed = A deed that is intended to pass title, interest, or claim which the grantor may have in the premises, but not professing that such title is valid, nor containing any warranty or covenants for title.

Parts of a Deed

- Date Created & Date Recorded
- Name of Grantor(s)
- Name of Grantee
- Legal Land Description
- Signature of Grantors
- Witnesses
- Dower

Example

- Indenture Fanny Davis to Barnett Taliaferro & Betsy Davis
- Consideration, love and affection for her children
- Land description, metes and bounds in Fauquier County, Virginia
- Grantor's signature or mark

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- Witnesses may be relatives

Finding a Deed at Family Search

- Hover on Search & Click Records
- Scroll below the map & click "Browse All Published Collections"
- Click "United States of America" on the left
- Choose a state from the list on the left
- Scroll in "Historical Record Collections" on the right
- Look for Land Records (usually the years covered by the collection will appear in the name of the collection)
 - Browse Images (appears in column near the right)
- The Collection will open after clicking the title
- Read the article at "Learn More," to help you understand the content of the collection
- Return to the collection and click "Browse through 8,129,310 images"
- Choose the desired county
- Use Grantee & Grantor Indexes
 - First one, later the other
- Deeds Were Microfilmed, Then Digitized
 - Scroll to the name of your grantor or grantee
 - Record the book and page number of the deed
- Return to the County Collection and Choose Deed Book
- Scroll to the Page in the Deed Book
- Save and Transcribe the Deed

Example

- St. Lawrence County, NY... between John Gould of Michigan & Joel Gould of St. Lawrence County, New York
- (Consideration) Eighty Dollars
- Land willed to Mariette Gould by her Father, Eli Roberts

Finding Deeds Microfilmed at Family Search but not Digitized

- Hover on "Search" and Click, "Catalog"
- Type in the place search box
 - The state and the name of the county (do not include the word "county.")
- Click to "Search" button
- Select "Land and Property"
- Choose Deeds with the Time Period & a Government Office as Author
- Order the Microfilm of the Index first
- Use the Index as Illustrated Earlier with Digitized Land Records

Example

- Clayton County, Iowa Territory
 - John Gould to Asa W. Gifford - consideration, \$639 - compare legal description
 - Same day Asa W. Gifford sold same land to Joel M. Gould of Hopkinton, St. Lawrence County, New York - consideration, \$639

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- Asa's wife, Polly Gifford Relinquished her Dower (her right to the property)
 - Interviewed privately
 - Was not forced by her husband to give up her right

Land Patent = Land from the Federal Government

- Managed by the Bureau of Land Management
- Patents found at <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>
- Treasures may be Found in Land Entry Case Files
- At <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>
 - Click, "Search Documents"
 - Enter the name of the State and the name of the Ancestor
 - Review the Data
 - Click, "Patent Image" and Print it

Information to Order Land Entry File

- Name of entryman (ancestor)
- Type of file (cash)
- State
- Land Office
- Certificate Number (Document No.)

(The Information is Located on the Patent Details Tab)

The Case File may be ordered from the National Archives

- <http://www.archives.gov/>
- Click, "Shop Online." (on the right)
- Choose, "Order Reproductions."
- Again choose, "Order Reproductions."

Example

- Letters in the Case Entry File for Jeremiah Gould

Rectangular Survey System

- North - South Line is the Principle Meridian
- East - West Line in the Base Line
- Townships exist North and South of the Base Line
- Ranges exist East and West of the Principle Meridian
- 6 mile Squares, Known as Townships are described by the distance from the Point of Origin (the Intersection of the Principle Meridian and the Base Line)
- Townships Are Divided Into 36 One Mile Square Sections
- Townships Can Be Divided Into Halves, Quarters, Etc.

There are 31 Principle Meridians in the United States

Generally the Public Domain or Federal Land States Exist West of the Appalachian Mountains

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State Land States Exist East of the Appalachians

- Their Records are kept by the States
- They Use the Metes and Bounds System to Describe Land

Metes and Bounds Survey System

- Measured and Described Using Angles and Distances
- Natural Features of the Land (Trees, Streams, Rocks, Roads, Neighbors Land)
- Measurement are Expressed in Chains, Poles, Rods, Degrees, Etc.

Example of the James Foley Estate Division

- Land Plat Using the Metes and Bounds System to Describe the Land
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Important Points to Remember

- Don't Stop With Abstracts
- Find the "Original"(an image copy)
- Transcribe the deed
- Witnesses may be relatives
- Legal land description can help determine relatives
- Account for all of the land
- Compare to other types of records

Use the Family Search Wiki to Access Articles About Using Land Records

- United States Land and Property