

MORE THAN METES THE EYE: USING LAND RECORDS IN YOUR RESEARCH

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Chain of Ownership

- 1) Explorers claim in the name of the Crown
  - a) Crown makes grants to:
    - i) Companies.
    - ii) Individuals for Service.
    - iii) By sale.
    - iv) Eventually superseded Colonial Charters.
      - (1) State Lands – the 13 original colonies or states derived from them, Hawaii and Texas (Tennessee has both State and Federal Land).
        - (a) Grants for Townships.
          - (i) Initial sale or grant to an individual is in the Proprietor's Records.
          - (ii) Grants to Individual and Groups
        - (2) Federal Land (Public Domain) – land ceded to the Federal Government, or acquired by purchase or treaty.
          - (a) First private ownership
            - (i) Bounty Land Warrants.
            - (ii) Bureau of Land Management

Two Survey Systems

- 1) Metes and Bounds (State Lands)
  - a) A starting point is given (usually on a fixed landmark such as highway, river or lake

- b) A call (direction and distance) is given to next corner or waypoint.
    - i) Cardinal directions of north and south.
      - (1) Any other direction usually given as degrees east or west of north or south.
  - c) Calls are repeated around the parcel.
    - i) Can be clockwise or counter clockwise.
    - ii) If one bound follows a meander (lake, river etc.) that call is usually last and may simply give as "to the point of beginning."
    - iii) Bounds commonly will follow the topography.
- 2) Rectangular Survey (Federal or Public Domain Lands).
- a) An initial point is established
    - i) Base Line is run east and west
    - ii) Principal Meridian is run north and south.
    - iii) *Congressional Townships* by drawing a six mile grid
      - (1) Tiers are numbered north and south of Base Line
      - (2) Ranges are numbered east and west of Principal Meridian
        - (a) Each *Congressional Township* is divided into thirty six Sections (one square mile, 360 acres)
          - (i) Sections are numbered beginning in the northeast corner of the township east to west (1-6)
          - (ii) Sections 7-12 continue by numbering west to east.
            - 1. Each section is divided in quarters
              - a. Further subdivision is made by halving.

Land Platting (another whole workshop in itself).

- 1) Draws out a map of property.

- a) Tools.
  - i) Graph Paper
  - ii) Ruler
  - iii) Protractor
  - iv) or Platting soft ware
- 2) Helpful in visualizing accumulation or division or property
- 3) Can identify ownership when no deed exists by plotting surrounding properties
  - i) Can be used to physically locate property.

## Surveying Measurements

- 1 yard = 3 ft = 0.9144 meter
- 1 rod, perch, or pole = 25 links = 16.5 ft
- 4 rods = 1 chain
- 1 chain = 4 rods = 66 ft = 100 links
- 10 chains = 1 furlong
- 1 link = 1/100 of surveyor's chain = 7.92 inches
- 25 links = 1 rod = 16.5 ft
- 100 links = 1 chain = 66 ft
- 1 furlong = 10 chains = 1/8 mile = 220 yards = 660 ft = 201.168 meters
- 8 furlongs = 1 mile
- 1 mile = 80 chains = 320 rods = 1,760 yards = 5,280 ft = 1,609.344 meters
- league = 3 statute miles = 4,828.032 meters

### Where do you find Land Records?

- 1) Original Deed stays with the buyer (grantee).
- 2) Recorded in the Registry of Deeds.
  - a) In most of the country this is on a county level.
  - b) In Connecticut Rhode Island and Vermont, Land Records are recorded on the town level.
- 3) FamilySearch

4) Online

a) Massachusetts – Secretary of State

b) Connecticut - <https://connecticut-townclerks-records.com>; [recordhub.cottsystems.com](https://recordhub.cottsystems.com)

What do you find in “Land Records?”

- 1) Deeds.
- 2) Mortgages & Liens (Release/Foreclosure)
- 3) Homestead Declarations.
- 4) Sale of Chattels.
- 5) Apprenticeships and Partnerships.
- 6) Powers of Attorney.
- 7) Prenuptial Agreements (especially in the south).
- 8) Vital Records (births, marriages and deaths, divorces)
- 9) Wills and Inventories
- 10) Anything effecting property.

What do you find in an individual record (deed)?

- 1) Name(s) of the Grantor and Grantee:
  - a) May give residence, occupation and/or relationship.
- 2) Consideration:
  - a) Money paid, Love and affection.
- 3) Restrictions:
  - a) Life use.
  - b) Provide care and support of a third party.
  - c) Repayment terms in the case of a mortgage.
- 4) Legal Description:
  - a) May be by metes and bounds or rectilinear.

- b) If no new bounds are established.
  - i) May only cite abutters.
  - ii) May cite earlier deed.
  - iii) May cite probate record.
- 5) Source of Title:
- 6) Signatures:
  - a) Grantor, Witnesses and third party proving the witnesses
- 7) Date of instrument.
- 8) Date and citation of Recording.
  - a) May be years after the date of document.
  - b) May be recorded in more than one registry.
- 9) Release of Dower Rights.

#### Case Studies

Case #1 - Shows marriage(s) of grantor and grantee, residence of grantee.

Case #2 - Shows apparent desertion and not divorce.

Case #3 - Shows passage of property through probate.

Case #4 - Identifies son-in-law of grantor (lease).

Case #5 - Shows name change. (affidavit in land records)

Case #6 - Shows (probable) adoption.

Case #7 - Identifies heirs in estate (probate record filed with land records).

Case #8 - Shows non-marriage (homestead filing)