

## Researching Local Land Records

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### A. What are local land records?

This topic includes many document types recorded at the local level, often involving multiple parties.

1. Deed or Indenture - transfer of property, usually land
  - a. One party to another
  - b. Multiple parties
    - o sometimes fractional portions or percentages
2. Mortgage or Deed of Trust - money owed for property
3. Easement, Right of Way - e.g. roadway
4. Patent, Homestead - transfer from government agency
5. Affidavits - e.g. joint tenant, heirship
6. Estate Distribution - court document showing distribution to heirs
7. Eminent Domain or Condemnation - for public projects e.g. dams, highways and many more

### B. When are local land records filed?

1. Records begin with the establishment of a local entity, such as county or town
2. If boundary lines changed:
  - a. Check records in parent county
  - b. Check for transcribed records in newly formed county
3. Check the following sources for general information:
  - a. Ancestry's *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*, print & online version  
California example: [http://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=California\\_County\\_Resources](http://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=California_County_Resources)
    - o county formation dates
  - b. *FamilySearch Wiki*  
Georgia example: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Georgia,\\_United\\_States\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Georgia,_United_States_Genealogy)
    - o boundary changes
    - o clickable map to county info
  - c. *Google* search for area of interest, e.g. "deeds williamson county texas"  
Texas example: <http://eagle.wilco.org/williamsonweb/> 'Armstrong James'
  - d. Research guides or books, e.g. *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer*<sup>11</sup>

### C. Where can you research local land records? Examples:

1. Onsite, in person
  - a. Office where the records were originally filed, e.g. Santa Cruz Recorder, Ocean St.
  - b. Local archives with original records, e.g. Santa Clara County Archives, by appointment  
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/archives/about/location-hours/Pages/Location-and-Hours.aspx>
  - c. Local archives with microfilm records, e.g. King County Archives, WA > link to 'Indexes...'
    - o <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/records-licensing/archives/research-guides/recordings.aspx>
2. Online, search catalogs of local libraries to find books
  - a. Abstracted records, e.g. *Charles County, Maryland, land records, 1743-1752*<sup>12</sup>
3. Online, search for collections at state and local archives
  - a. Boone County, Arkansas: <http://archives.arkansas.gov/research/search-records.aspx>
4. Online, government sites, indexes and some images
  - a. Shelby County, Tennessee: database/images from 1812 <http://register.shelby.tn.us/index.php>
  - b. Maricopa County, Arizona: database/images, 1871-1946, 1947-present  
<https://recorder.maricopa.gov/recdocdata/>

<sup>1</sup> Book available at SCPL downtown, N.Y. 142

<sup>2</sup> SCPL downtown, Mary 55 (Miami Beach, Fla : T.L.C Genealogy, 1993)

D. What kind of information can you find in local land records?

Examples with a computer index/database and images:

1. Deed, Maricopa County, Arizona (online index & images @ official's site)

First, search database for name, year 1872 <https://recorder.maricopa.gov/recdocdata/>

- then select document from results list & view

- a. wife's name
- b. date
- c. where they were living at the time
- d. amount of sale
- e. property description
- f. other

2. Affidavit of Heirship, Shelby County, Tennessee (online index and images @ official's site)

First, search database for name <http://register.shelby.tn.us/index.php>

- then select name from results list

- then select document from results list & view

- a. wife's name
- b. date of death
- c. names of children
- d. where they were living at the time
- e. property description

The following examples do not have an online database; instead look at the handwritten index.

3. Deed, Irwin County, Georgia (online @ *FamilySearch.org*)

<https://www.familysearch.org/catalog/search>

First, locate index in Card Catalog i.e. 'Georgia, Irwin' > 'Land and property'

- search the Grantor index by alpha section (may need to go page by page)

- note the book and page numbers of interest (see numbers in the crease of book)

- find the book and page and view document

- a. relationship
- b. type of property (hint: not real property)
- c. where the property was located
- d. date of document
- e. date of recording (different/later)
- f. other (name not as indexed)

4. Deed, Rutland County, Vermont (index online @ *FamilySearch.org*)

First, locate index in Card Catalog (link above) i.e. 'Vermont, Rutland' > 'Land and property'

- search the Grantor index by the alpha section (may need to go page by page)

- locate book and page

- order document and view (received from Vermont state archives)

- a. relationship
- b. where grantors were living at the time
- c. where the property was located
- d. date of document (later)

5. Indenture, Santa Clara County, California (onsite @ Recorder's office)

First, search Deed Grantor index on *Digital Reel* @ computer station in public area

- locate book and page

- go to Book, find page and view

- a. relationship
- b. former name and married name of woman
- c. name of husband

