RESEARCH IN LAND RECORDS
By Judy Janes
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Land records are often overlooked by genealogists. It is estimated that 90 percent of white males owned land before 1850 making one of the most important genealogical sources for genealogists. Land records in America date back to the early 1600's, and barring records destruction, every name is indexed in a grantor or grantee deed index.

Land records often state kinship connections. They also place individuals in a specific place and time.   Land records offer researchers the ability to sort people and families into neighborhoods and closely related groups which may reveal more family ties.

The Family History Library has microfilmed land records throughout the U. S., and some of those are now available online at FamilySearch.org. If the digitized copies of the microfilm aren't online, rolls can be ordered from the FHL in Salt Lake City in to your local Family History Center.

William Dollarhide wrote an excellent article in 1995 about the importance of land records in genealogical research titled: *Retracing the Trails of Your Ancestors Using Deed Records.* Although dated, his discussion is as valid today as it was then.
http://www.directlinesoftware.com/deeds.htm

Rootsweb has posted a detailed overview of land records, and how to access and interpret them.
http://rwguide.rootsweb.ancestry.com/lesson29.htm

MILITARY BOUNTY LAND

The Federal Government awarded Military Bounty Land to its veterans from 1788 primarily to 1855. Some applications were received as late as 1960.
https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/US_Military_Bounty_Land_Warrants

STATE-LAND STATES & PUBLIC DOMAIN STATES

The U. S. uses two different survey methods. State-Land states use Metes and Bounds, and Public Domain States use Township and Range.

➢ Understanding Metes and Bounds System:
   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metes_and_bounds

➢ Platting Metes and Bounds Land
   http://www.genealogytools.net/deeds

➢ Deed Platter
   http://www.genealogytools.net/deeds/

   Plat Plotter
   http://platplotter.appspot.com/lib/pp_about.html#.ViXRSX6rTbh

The Federal Government began conveying public land to individuals in 1820, and continues to the present day. There are 30 Public Land states. The Bureau of Land Management has published land patents online, and in some cases the original surveys as early as 1810 can also be found. New records are added as time goes on.

➢ Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office: www.glorecords.blm.gov/default.aspx

➢ Article about the Public Land System by the U. S. Geological Survey:
http://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/a_plss.html

The Family History Library has microfilmed a large portion of original deed records in the U. S. Some of these microfilms are available online at FamilySearch.org, and others can be borrowed from Salt Lake. To begin land research check the Grantee and Grantor Deed Indexes where your family lived to locate deeds they recorded with officials. The two deed index worksheets below will help you record information you find.

➢ Grantee Deed Index Form: http://www.familytreemagazine.com/upload/images/pdf/grantees.pdf

➢ Grantor Deed Index Form: http://www.familytreemagazine.com/upload/images/pdf/grantors.pdf

Legal Terms Used in Deed Records

➢ http://www.directlinesoftware.com/legal.htm

Transcription Software Programs

Transcript 2.5.0: A program developed by Jacob Boerema of Holland. The free version has handy tools that allow easy transcription of any written document. There are free and Pro versions available. Windows or MacBook Air running Crossover.
Free version: http://www.jacobboerema.nl/Transcript/Freeware.htm

Genscriber: Documents can be transcribed in a wordprocessor style, or in a spreadsheet type grid where facts can be easily be recorded. Available for Windows or Mac computers. Free!
http://www.genscriber.com/genapps
Read a review of Genscriber by Dick Eastman:
http://blog.eogn.com/2014/12/16/genscriber-a-free-transcription-tool-for-genealogy-research

Further Reading

E. Wade Hone, *Land and Property Research in the United States* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1997)

Loretto Dennis Szucs, Sandra Hargraves Luebking, ed.. *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy.*
(Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 1998)

http://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=The_Source:_A_Guidebook_to_American_Genealogy#The_Source_Online

Linklater, Andro, *Measuring America: How an Untamed Wilderness Shaped the United States and Fulfilled the Promise of Democracy.* (U. S.: Walker Publishing, Inc., 2002)

Oberly, James W., *Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and the Public Lands before the Civil War.*
(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1990)

Land Research: FamilySearch Wiki
https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United_States,_Land_Transactions_Person_to_Person#Tip_1_._What_are_the_various_kinds_of_land_records_indexes.3F