

Land and Probate Records: No Genealogical Research is Complete Without Them

A. LeRoy Atkins
(480) 699-8051

Land and property records have helped solve more difficult problems than any other record. (See Norman E. Wright, *Building an American Pedigree*.) Thomas W. Jones said, probate records are the very best records for proving ancestry. ("Problem Solving With Probate," National Genealogical Society Conference, 16 May 2008.)

Probate - Records created to pay debt and distribute assets to heirs

Categories -

- Initiate the process
- Assess and liquidate assets of the estate
- Account for receipts and expenditures
- Conclude the estate

Examples

- Petition for Letters of Administration
- Inventory
- Bonds
- Petitions, widows, etc.
- Proof of Heirs
- Wills
- Accounts
- Receipts
- Guardianship
- Division or Partition
- Distributions, interim, and final
- and More

Specifically Defined Research Goal

Analysis and Correlation

Deeds

- Warranty
- Quit Claim
- Legal Land Description
- Plat Map

Rectangular Survey

Metes and Bounds Survey

Acquisition & Disposition Table

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Information in Deeds can lead to other jurisdictions and to other records and people

Land Patent

Case Files

Get More Value from Land and Probate Records

- Read and Understand The whole record
- Transcribe
- Consideration
- Legal Description
- Witnesses
- Compare Records
- Look at Records before and after
- Make a table of acquisitions and dispositions
- Plot the deeds
- Study the neighbors
- Broaden the search
 - More Counties
 - More Years
 - Relatives, Neighbors, Associates
 - All people in the area with your surname
- Get all of the records (don't limit your research to only one record)
- Don't read just the will
- Read every word of every account
- Correlate information
- Look for indirect evidence
- Remember the decedent might not have named all of his children in the will
- Remember to contact the courthouse

Use the Family History Library Catalog

Order and Use Microfilm at the Mesa Family Search Library

Attend all U.S. Research Courses at Mesa Family Search Library - Especially Land and Probate Classes

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