

Suggestions for Successful Researching in Land Records

Presentation by Suzanne Young Brayer Jan 2016

I. Why land and property records are important

- The oldest of records
- Apply to more people than any other type of written record
- Are in abundance; more complete than other types of records

II. Types of Survey Systems in the US

- Metes and Bounds
- Public Land Survey System

III. Terminology used Land Records

- Deed – document giving the holder the title to property and a description of that property
- Entry – filing of the intention to get a land grant or patent. This is the first step in the process of getting land.
- Fee Simple – ownership of land that can be inherited by any heirs. To hold in fee means to possess
- Grantee – the person receiving the grant, or buying the property
- Grantor – the person issuing the grant, or selling the property
- Homestead – filer paid a fee, but otherwise could apply for up to 160 acres of land for free. Had to reside for five years and cultivate and improve the land
- Indian Patents – 1887 law allowing for specific allotment to specific individuals of tribes
- Military – warrant for land as reward for military service. Begun after War of 1812
- Mining Claims
- Patent – transfer of title from the government to the first titleholder
- Quitclaim Deed – seller transfers property usually in the case of inheritance, marriage, or divorce
- Warranty Deed – deed which states the conveyer of property is the rightful owner and there are no claims against the property

Online Resources:

Familysearch Wiki- https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main_Page

Ancestry.com – search “Land Records” in the Card Catalog

Bureau of Land Management - www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search

The National Archives - <http://www.archives.gov/research/land/>

Further Reading:

Boyd, Gregory A., *Family Maps* Norman Oklahoma: Arphax Publishing Co.

Dollarhide, William., Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources, Third Ed.

Greenwood, Val D., *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy 3rd Ed.*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co.,Inc., 2005. Chapters 15,16

Hone, E. Wade *Land & Property Research in the United States*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry Inc, 1997

Robbins, Roy M. *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain 1776-1936*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1962