



Fruit of the Earth: Using Deed Records to Uncover Your Ancestors

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Research Tips & Takeaways:

- ✓ Copy the entire deed!
- ✓ Know who daughters & sisters married; search for the entire family cluster, across generations
- ✓ Find historical maps for your research locale
- ✓ Create a deed table; track land coming/going to the family
- ✓ Use to research prospective slaveholders
- ✓ Scrutinize witnesses & neighbors found in the deeds
- ✓ Correlate with other sources, esp. probate, court, vital records
- ✓ Transcribe critical deeds (free Transcript software)
- ✓ Don't neglect the social history that deeds reveal
- ✓ Inheritance often not in deeds until land is sold
- ✓ Newspapers often advertise deeds and tax sales

Common Deed Types:

- Warranty Deed
- Deed of Trust
- Gift Deed
- Quitclaim Deed
- Partition Deed

Land in The Census:

- 1850,60,70: col. 8
- 1900: col. 25, 26
- 1910: col. 26 & 27
- 1920, 30: col. 7 & 8
- 1930: col. 7 & 8
- 1940: col. 4 & 5

References:

- ✓ Rose, Christine. *Courthouse Research for Family Historians (2nd edition)*. San Jose, CA: CR Publications, 2020.
- ✓ Hatcher, Patricia Law. *Locating Your Roots: Discover Your Ancestors Using Land Records*. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 2003.
- ✓ Hone, E. Wade. *Land & Property Research in the United States*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1997.
- ✓ National Genealogical Society Course: "Working with Deeds" (\$)
- ✓ Shown-Mills, Elizabeth. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace (3rd edition)*. Balt., MD: Gen. Pub. Co., 2017.
- ✓ Transcribing: <https://bcgcertification.org/skillbuilding-transcribing-source-materials/> (Freeware: <https://www.jacobboerema.nl/en/Freeware.htm>)
- ✓ Board for Certification of Genealogists: "Skillbuilding: Analyzing Deeds for Useful Clues." <https://bcgcertification.org/skillbuilding-analyzing-deeds-for-useful-clues/>
- ✓ Blank Deed Abstract Form: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gaeggs/deed.pdf>
- ✓ Dowry, Dower Shares and Dower Rights: <https://www.genealogyblog.com/?p=20449>
- ✓ "Retracing the Trails of Your Ancestors Using Land Records" by William Dollarhide, <http://www.directlinesoftware.com/deeds.htm>
- ✓ Bureau of Land Management (for Federal Land) <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/>
- ✓ Bayley Wyatt Speech (freedman): <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/Wyat.html>
- ✓ Federal/State Land Map: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Land_and_Property#/media/File:Federal_vs._State_Land_States.png

Case Studies that Utilize Deeds:

- ✓ Nancy A. Peters, CG, CGL. "Hiram Cochran, Freedman of Abbeville County, South Carolina," *NGS Quarterly* 106 (September 2018): 165-180 (<https://bcgcertification.org/learning/skills/genealogical-work-samples/>)
- ✓ Paul K. Graham, "A Love Story Proved: The Life and Family of Laura Lavinia (Kelly) Combs of Atlanta and August, Georgia," *NGS Quarterly* 101 (December 2013): 245-266.
- ✓ Curtis Brasfield, "Tracing Slave Ancestors: Batchelor, Bradley, Branch and Wright of Desha County, Arkansas," *NGS Quarterly* 92 (March 2004): 6-30