

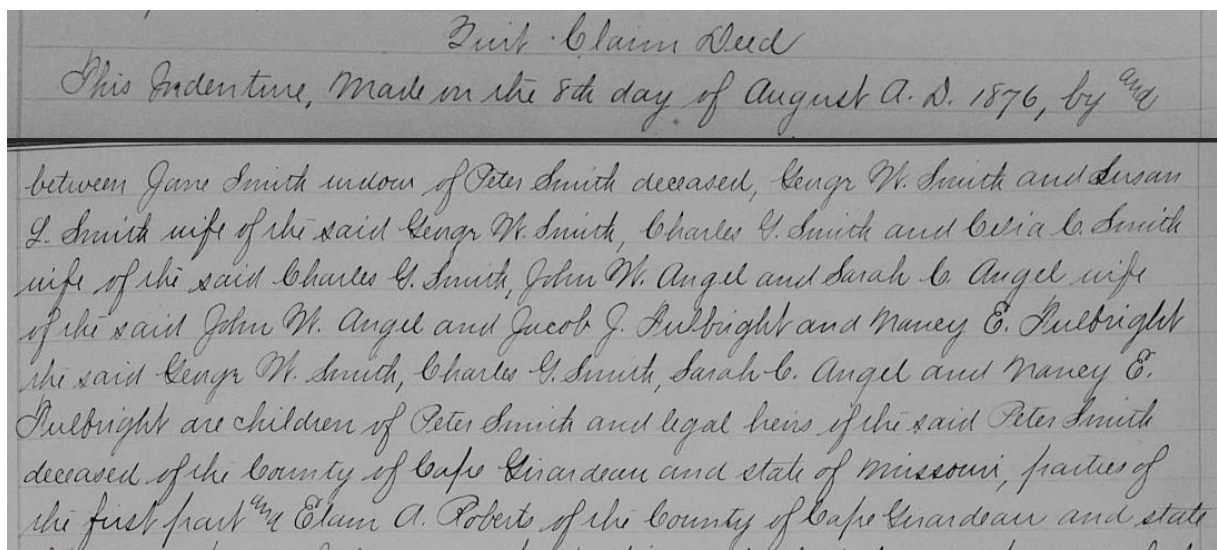
# “This Indenture Made This...”

## Finding Ancestors in Deeds

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Would you like to find something like this relating to an ancestor?



### Deed Records Research

- Why are deed records important?
- How is a deed structured?
- How and where do you find deeds?
- How do you record what you find?

### Importance of Land Records

- In many locales, may provide a more complete list of individuals than census (after 1800, over 80% of men owned land)
- Provide more detailed and complete information than tax lists or court records
- Supplement probate records
- May be the best proof of relationships
- May be the only records prior to 1850 that mention wife's name
- Provide name of wife and her dower status
- Names of children/heirs
- Past place of residence
- Current place of residence (also if grantor has moved)
- Date(s) of residence
- Economic status
- Literacy of ancestors (with caution)
- Excellent way to identify friends, associates, and neighbors (the FAN)

<sup>1</sup> FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSR1-9JB6?i=494&cat=210588>) : Viewed 29 June 2019), digital film 008318097, images 495-496, Cape Girardeau County, Mo., Deed Book 21: 62-64, quit claim deed, Heirs of Peter Smith to Elam Roberts, 8 August 1876.

### **How to Find if an Ancestor Owned Land**

- If they lived in an area for an extended period
- Plat map
- Tax lists
- Census
- Patents ([www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov) )
- Online/books
- If they owned land, they had to have gotten title in some way, and they had to eventually dispose of it in some way

### **Title Transfers**

- When a landowner:
  - Died
  - Defaulted
  - Lost the land by court action
- The title had to be transferred to heirs or purchasers
- These are called “Deeds”

### **Types of Deeds**

- |                   |                  |                        |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • Warranty        | • Quit Claim     | • Powers of Attorney   |
| • Sheriff’s       | • Commissioners’ | • Apprenticeships      |
| • Mortgage        | • Other          | • Delinquent Tax Lists |
| • Deed of Trust   | • Bonds          | • Wills                |
| • Partition       | • Plats/Surveys  |                        |
| • Administrator’s | • Dower Release  |                        |

### **Parts of a Deed**

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Transaction Date     | • Signatures               |
| • Grantor(s)           | • Witness(es)              |
| • Grantees(s)          | • Official’s Name          |
| • Consideration Paid   | • Release of Dower         |
| • Property Description | • Recording or Filing Date |
| • Type of Deed         |                            |

### **Finding Deeds**

- Web search <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/county/croll.asp>
- Abstracts Book (lead to original)
- Online – Digital Copies
- Microfilm Copy - Missouri County Records on Microfilm:
- Onsite Visit to Original Books
- FamilySearch (with cautions)

### **Finding Digitized originals using FamilySearch**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Create an account if you do not have one   | 5. Click the blue search button  |
| 2. Sign in  | 6. You will have a list of categories for films in the Family History Library Collection |
| 3. Click on “Search,” then click on “Catalog”   | 7. Click on “Land and Property”  |
| 4. In the “Place” search box, enter the county in this format: United States, [state], [county] | 8. Usually, the next category to click upon is “Deed Records.....”                       |

9. You will see indices, and deed books, with either a reel icon, a camera icon, or a camera with a key above it
  - a. The reel means the film has not yet been digitized
  - b. The camera means you can access the digital film
  - c. The camera with a key over it means you can only access the digital content at a Family History Library branch or partner library

### **Deed Indices Can Vary Widely**

- Most have separate Grantor & Grantee Indices, some combine them
- Simple alphabetic – first letter of last name
- Similar, but also group by first letter of first name
- Campbell System
- Russell System
- All sorts of others (See Rose book)
- Find your name(s) in the index and record on spreadsheet or in columns by hand

### **Bringing it Home**

- Abstract
- Photocopy
- Digital Photos
- Make sure book, page(s), names, and any other information for citing are on the copy or file
- FamilySearch source citation

### **What if the courthouse burned?**

- First, make sure the records were lost!
- If it burned after the 1930s, may have been microfilmed
- Re-recorded deeds
- Title and abstract businesses
- Newspaper notices of sales, probate, etc.
- Local historical/genealogical societies

### **Hints for Researching**

- Know where to find the records
- Indices
- Direct (Grantor)
- Indirect (Grantee)
- Clues
- Witnesses
- Other localities mentioned
- Marginal notes
- Plat the land using the legal description
- Chain of Title
- Check date of execution and date of recording or filing
- Look for the neighbors and how the person acquired the land

### **Some Special Cautions!**

- Sheriff's deeds
- Beware of County Boundary Changes!
- Know old routes to county seats
- Recorded deeds are COPIES of original records. Rarely, original deeds may be in loose papers in courthouses or local repositories
- Transaction date and recording date may be over 100 years apart, or some deeds may NEVER have been recorded

## Further Reading and Additional Resources

- Beahan, Gary W. *Missouri's Public Domain: United States Land Sales, 1818-1922*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Records Management and Archives Services, 1980.
- Dollarhide, William Dollarhide and William Thorndale. *Map guide to the U. S. federal censuses*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988. [Shows county boundaries at 10-year census intervals. Good for determining possible locations for land records for your ancestor.]
- Goodrum, Michelle Roos. *Digging for Ancestors: An In-Depth Guide to Land Records*. Utica, Ohio: The In-Depth Genealogist, 2013.
- Hast, Adele and John H. Long. *Historical atlas and chronology of county boundaries, 1788-1980*. Volume 4. Iowa and Missouri. Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography, The Newberry Library. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall & Co., 1984. [Best printed resource for Missouri county boundary changes. [Online: <http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/>]
- Hatcher, Patricia Law. *Locating Your Roots: Discover Your Ancestors Using Land Records*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2016.
- Hone, E. Wade. *Land and property research in the United States*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Ancestry, Inc., 2008.
- Luebking, Sandra H. "Research in land and tax records," In Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra H. Luebking, editors, *The source: A guidebook of American genealogy*. 3rd edition. Salt Lake City, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2006.
- Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "Analyzing Deeds for Useful Clues." *OnBoard: Newsletter of the Board for Certification of Genealogists* 1 (January 1995): 8. Digital edition at *BCG: Board for Certification of Genealogists* (<http://bcgcertification.org/skillbuilding-analyzing-deeds-for-useful-clues/> : 2017).
- Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 2017.
- Rose, Christine. *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*. San Jose, CA: CR Publications, 2006.
- Salmon, Marylynn. *Women and the Law of Property in Early America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

### Additional Web Sites

<http://www.directlinesoftware.com/deeds.htm> - Retracing the Trails of Your Ancestors Using Deed Records by William Dollarhide [excellent general summary on how to use land records in genealogy]

<https://genfiles.com/articles/deeds/> - Bob's Genealogy Filing Cabinet

<http://www.cyndislist.com/land> - List of valuable links for land and property research.

[https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_Index\\_Systems](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Index_Systems) -Various indexing systems used for records, including deeds.

History Geo - <https://www.historygeo.com/> - Uses General Land Office land patents to map land ownership (the same company that does the Family Maps at the county level). Numerous features, searchable by surname and links with original patents. Also includes an antiques maps collection.

Glossary of Common Land and Property Terms - <https://www.thoughtco.com/common-land-and-property-terms-glossary-1422112>