



10 Things to Know About Deed Research

Complete copies of deeds showing the transfers between generations of the family are required with each registration. Ohio Department of Agriculture staff will check the deeds to ensure consistency of the property description, and also look for an unbroken chain of title within your family.

Have fun! Although deed research may seem challenging, this project can provide a fascinating personal history lesson for your family.

- 1) Contact the county recorder's office to tell them you want to research your farm's deed history. Ask if there is a day of the week and time of day that might be better suited for your work.
- 2) Take a copy of your current deed with you, if possible. Not only will you have the land description in front of you, but many recent deeds reference the prior deed close to the bottom of the document. This information gives you a specific instrument, book and page number to find the prior deed document.
- 3) Familiarize yourself with two terms used in deeds:
Grantee, the person purchasing the property; and
Grantor, the person selling the property.
- 4) In the recorder's office:
 - Locate the Index Books (recorder's staff can point these out to you). There are typically listings for both grantor and grantee.
 - Ask the recorder's staff how you can get deed copies made (you may need to make your own copies, or some offices require you to fill out a slip of paper with the deed book and volume information which you give to the recorder's staff for completion).
 - Some counties offer geographic indexing, which can help you focus on a specific area of the county (look at the deed description of your farm to determine the region – the section, township and range).
 - If geographic indexing isn't available, all regions of the county are listed together alphabetically (by last name) by year of transfer and by grantee or grantor status.
- 5) *If there is a prior deed reference on the current deed*, locate that book volume and page to find the prior deed. Is there another prior deed reference at the bottom of this deed?
- 6) *If there isn't a prior deed reference*: Look at the **grantor's** name on the last deed you located, then search for this same name under the **grantee's** index book for the year you believe the farm was sold to him/her. You may need to go through several index books to locate the name.
- 7) Once you find the **grantee's** name, look at the land information (section, township, range, acreage) beside the name to see if this might be the same property. If it is a likely match, pull the deed book volume referenced on the line, and compare the land description. If it matches, you will want a copy made of this deed.
- 8) Continue going backward in time, checking for the last **grantor** name in the **grantee** index books.
- 9) Stop when you find the deed where the farm is first purchased by one of your family members. Take note of the date on the deed; **this is the year your farm was established**.
- 10) Make sure you get all pages of each deed copied, including the signature page.