

## United States Land Records - the “where” and “when” of your ancestors’ lives

**State-land States:** land records are found in the individual states or at county offices.

-Thirteen Colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia.

-States created out of original colonies: Maine, Vermont, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Washington DC.

-Countries added to U.S.: Texas, Hawaii

**Public Land States:** the remaining 30 states. All lands originally owned by the Federal government. Land records from federal government to individuals found at Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

<http://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>

### ACTS OF CONGRESS

Land Ordinance of 1785: lands northwest of the Ohio River. Lands ceded from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Virginia. In 1788 first patent issued.

Cash Entry Act of 1820: lands sold for \$2 per acre

Homestead Act of 1862: lands transferred to entryman after 5 years of residence and land improvements.

### DEFINITIONS:

Grantor: transferor; seller; granting title to land

Grantee: receiver; buyer

Deed: transfers land from grantor to grantee. Usually filed in county recorder’s office.

General Land Office (GLO): Federal office where entryman applied for land. 362 offices in Public Land states.

Entryman: land buyer

Plat Book: bound volume of survey maps, beginning in 1810. One township is six miles square.

Tract Book: journal, by land location, showing individual’s name, file number, date of purchase or application, type of sale or Act of Congress.

Land Entry Case File: contain application, receipts, petitions, witness statements, correspondence, naturalization record if required. Organized by state, land office, case file number.

Patent: same as a deed. Used to transfer ownership of land from a sovereign (U.S.A.) to an individual.

Military Warrants: From 1788 to 1855 the United States granted military bounty land warrants as a reward for military service. These warrants were issued in various denominations and based upon the rank and length of service.

Legal Land Description: written description of land property

Metes-and-Bounds: description of land using physical features and directions and distances

Public Land Survey System: rectangular survey system. Includes Initial Point, Principal Meridian, Base Line, Township (north-south), Range (east-west), Sections (1-36), aliquot parts (40 acres), lots (greater than or less than 40 acres).

### RESOURCES

<http://glorerecords.blm.gov/reference/default.aspx>

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United_States_Land_and_Property)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_Land\\_Survey\\_System](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Land_Survey_System)

The Handybook for Genealogists, by Everton Publishers: counties within states – when created, from which county created.