

Navigating Our Nation's Federal Records

Federal Land Records: Bounty Land, Land Entry Files, and Homesteading

Melanie McComb
NEHGS Genealogist

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

 **American Ancestors.**
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Meet today's presenter



Melanie McComb
Genealogist

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OVERVIEW

- **Presentation** (60 mins.)
 - Federal and State Bounty Land
 - Land Entry Case Files
 - Homesteading
- **Q&A** (30 mins.)

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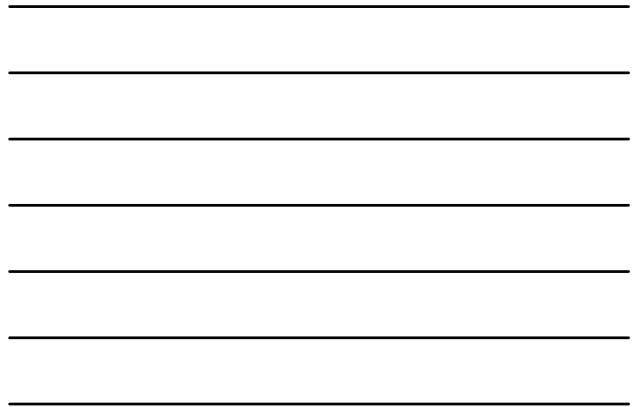
Overview

- Federal and State Bounty Land Warrants
 - Eligibility and Process
 - Finding That Paper
 - The Land
 - War of 1812 Bounty Land
 - Later Bounty Land Acts
- Land Entry Case Files
 - Using the Bureau of Land Management GLO Web Site
 - Locating Tract Books on FamilySearch
 - Requesting Land Entry Case Files from the National Archives
- Homesteading
 - Did Your Ancestor Have a Homestead?
 - Locating Homestead Records on Ancestry
 - Black Homesteaders
 - Strategies for Using Land Entry Case Files

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Federal Bounty Land Warrants

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To enlistees in the Continental Army:

That Congress make provision for **granting lands**, in the following proportions: to the officers and soldiers who shall so engage in the service, and continue therein to the close of the war, or until discharged by Congress, and to the representatives of such officers and soldiers as shall be slain by the enemy

Congressional Act of 16 September 1776

Then the Land



THE THIRTEEN ORIGINAL STATES, 1783

- LOC, Robertson, “The thirteen original states, 1783,” 1898

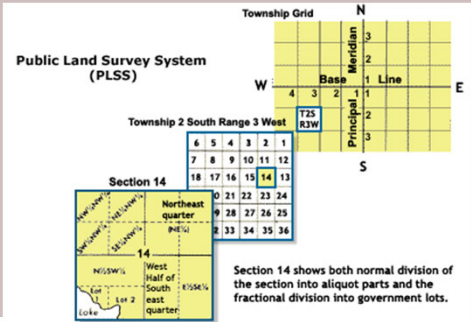
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Acts Authorizing Bounty Land Warrants

- Bounty Land Acts 1788, 1803, 1806, 1850, 1855.
 - These acts awarded land for service
 - 1788 allowed soldiers to sell/assign their award to someone else
 - Information about land received under these acts often combined in Revolutionary War pension files, if applicable

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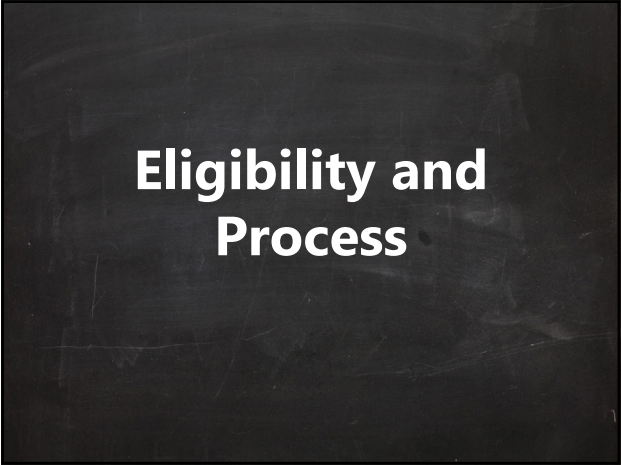
New Survey System



Public Land Survey System (PLSS)

Section 14 shows both normal division of the section into aliquot parts and the fractional division into government lots.

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Did Your Ancestor Serve?

| BIRTH YEARS | BATTLE YEARS | WAR |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1726-1767 | 1775-1783 | REV WAR |
| 1762-1799 | 1812-1815 | WAR 1812 |
| 1796-1831 | 1846-1848 | MEX WAR |
| 1811-1848 | 1861-1865 | CIVIL WAR |
| 1848-1881 | 1898 | SPANISH/AMERICAN |

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Eligibility

- **Unit:** Continental line
- **Rank:** Soldier or non-commissioned officer
- **Duration:** Minimum three years of service
- **Assignment Allowed:** No (changed in 1788)
- **State Application Allowed:** Yes

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Amount by Rank

| Rank | Amount |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Colonel | 500 acres |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 450 acres |
| Major | 400 acres |
| Captain | 300 acres |
| Lieutenant | 200 acres |
| Ensign | 150 acres |
| Private | 100 acres |
| Resolution: 16 September 1776 | |

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Process Generated Paper

- Steps

Application

Warrant

Survey

Patent

Possession

- Federal Agencies
 - Secretary of War reviewed applications and issued warrants
 - Treasury Department supervised selection of land and issued patents
- State Agencies
 - Unique to state

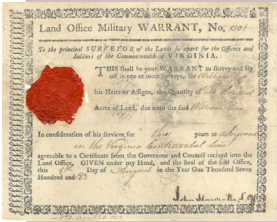
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Application

- Serviceman submitted affidavits from commanding officers or fellow soldiers
- Submitted discharge papers
- If soldier died during service, heirs could file with documentation that they were legal heirs of the deceased

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Warrant Authorizing a Survey

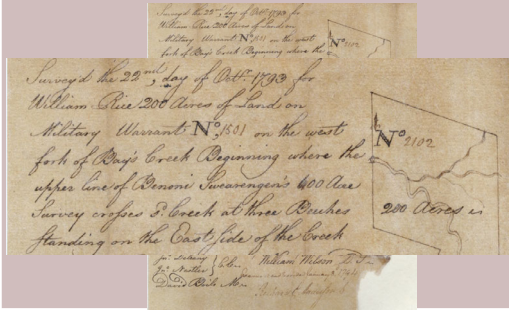


- Warrants issued – date of issuance, name and rank of veteran, state from which he enlisted
- Usually the state picked the land; Virginia allowed the soldier to choose

Virginia Warrant for William Rice 1783, land in Kentucky

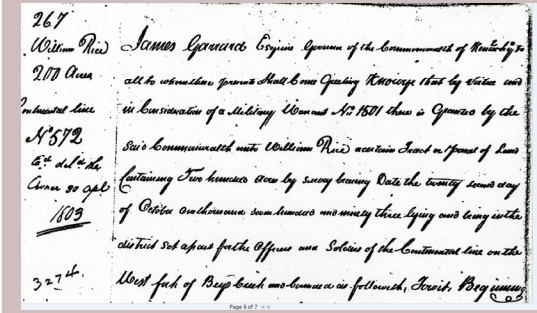
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Survey - 1793



20

Patent - 1803



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Assignment

- If soldier with a warrant could not take up residence, he sold the warrant for cash
- Rules varied by state and over time
- Federal warrants could be assigned beginning in 1788

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Finding that Paper

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Disaster – 14,000+ Records Lost



Print published 14 Oct 1814 by G. Thompson showing Washington, DC under attack

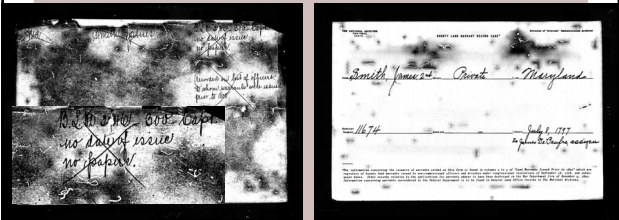
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Finding Federal Applications and Warrants

- Destroyed bounty application files have been replaced by cards
 - Name of veteran, rank, unit, warrant number, numbers of acres granted, date issued, assignee
- National Archives (NARA)
 - **Applications:** M804 Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files 1800-1900
 - **Warrants:** M829 Revolutionary War Bounty Land Warrants Used in the U.S. Military District of Ohio and Related Papers

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Example



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The Land

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Finding Your Patriot

Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck, *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants Awarded by State Governments* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996)

Morse, John. Mass. Sergeant. 10 Sep. 1832. 200 acres to heirs.

Bockstruck's book is on Ancestry as "Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants"

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ancestry

HomeTreesSearchDNAHelpExtras

Here an Expert

Search > Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal

Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants

Search

Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)

Last Name

Year

Location

Any Event

Keyword

Chapter

Page Number

Search

Clear search

Browse this collection

Table of Contents

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Georgia

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

New York

North Carolina

Pennsylvania

South Carolina

Virginia

Virginia-Indiana

Alabama

www.ancestry.com

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Family TreeSearchMemoriesIndexingActivities

Family TreeGenealogiesCatalogBooksWiki

BACK TO SEARCH RESULTS

PRINTCatalog Print List (0)

Massachusetts, land deeds, 1791-1884

Format:Manuscript/Manuscript on Digital Images

Language:English

Publication:Salt Lake City, Utah : Digitized by FamilySearch International, 2009

Notes

Digital images of originals housed at the Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.

View this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations

Subjects

Locality Subjects

United States, Massachusetts - Land and property

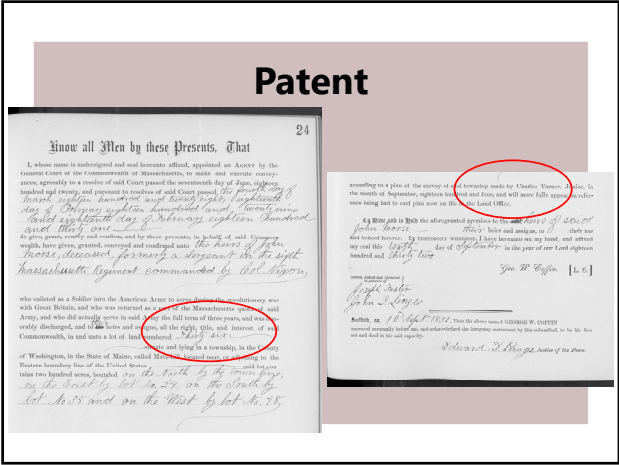
Film/Digital Notes

| Note | Location | Collection/Shelf | Film DGS | Format |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|--------|
| Land deeds, revolutionary war soldiers, Massachusetts, Mars Hill, book 1, 1829-1884 | Granite Mountain Record Vault | United States & Canada Digital | 5656090 | |
| Land office, land deeds, Massachusetts, Bangor, Hamden, Herman, Newburn, book 1. | Granite Mountain | United States & | | |

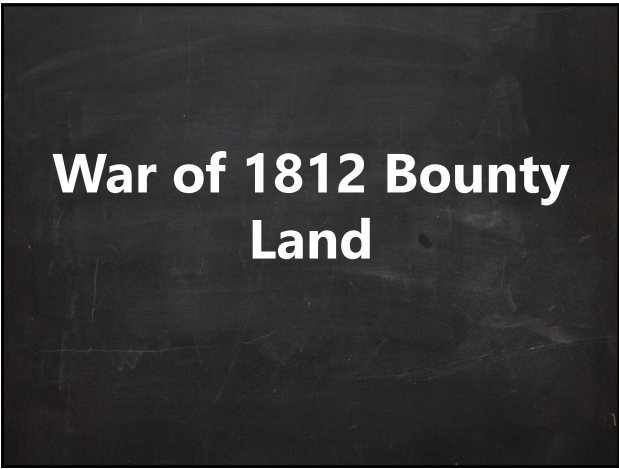
Family Search – "Massachusetts, land deeds, 1791-1884"

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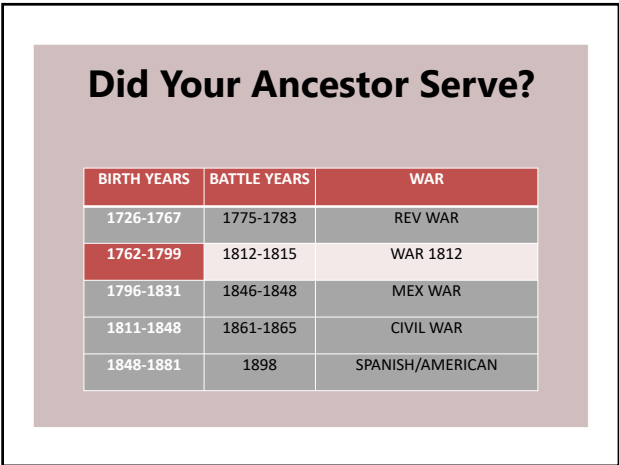
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War of 1812 Bounty Land

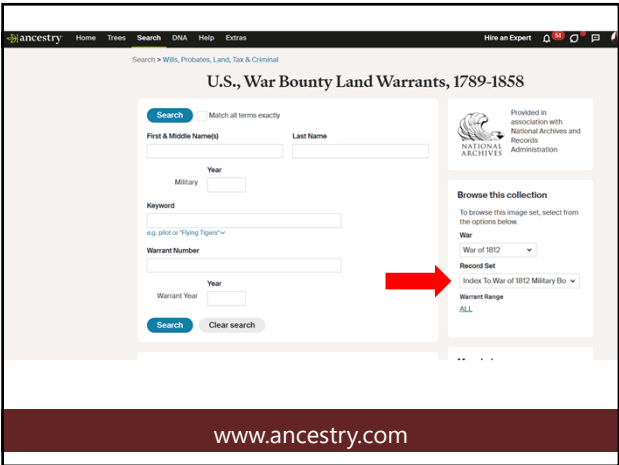
- Located in present day states of Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri (Michigan was planned but not fulfilled)
- First and Second Acts: 24 December 1811 and 11 January 1812 for 160 acres for soldiers and non-commissioned officers
- Act of 10 December 1814
 - Provisions for soldiers enlisting after 1814
 - 320 acres of land

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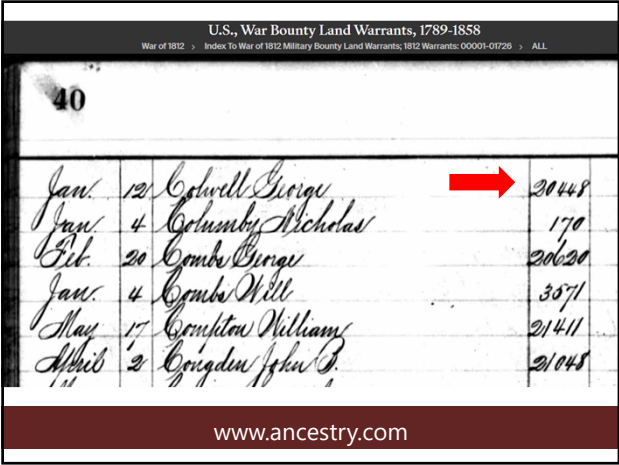
Finding the 1812 Warrant

- NARA Publication
 - War of 1812 Military Bounty Land Warrants, 1815-1858 (M848, 14 rolls)
- Ancestry Database: “U.S., War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858” (includes M848 and M829 – Ohio Warrants)
- Fold3 Database: “War of 1812 Military Bounty Land Warrants, 1815”

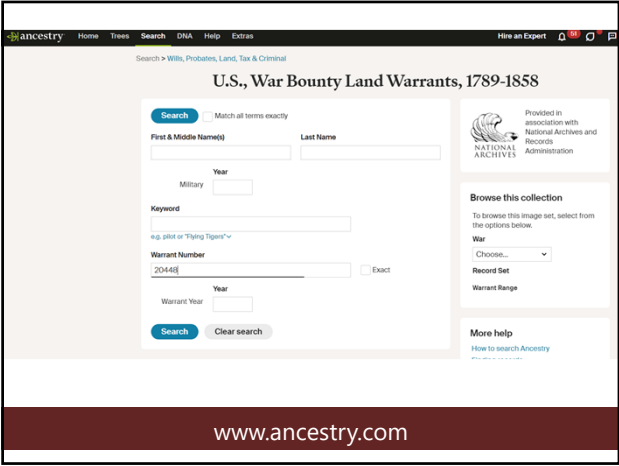
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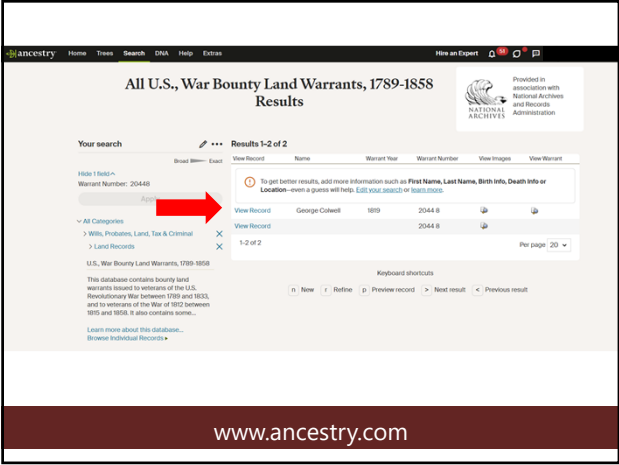
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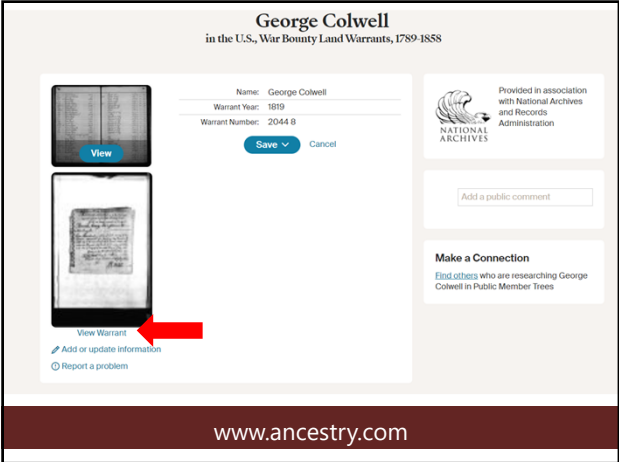
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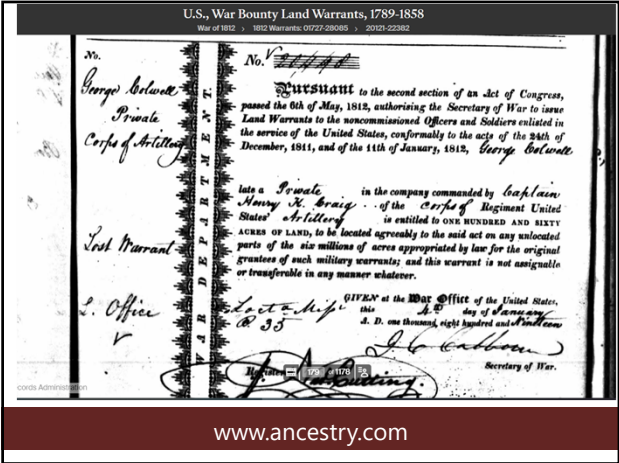
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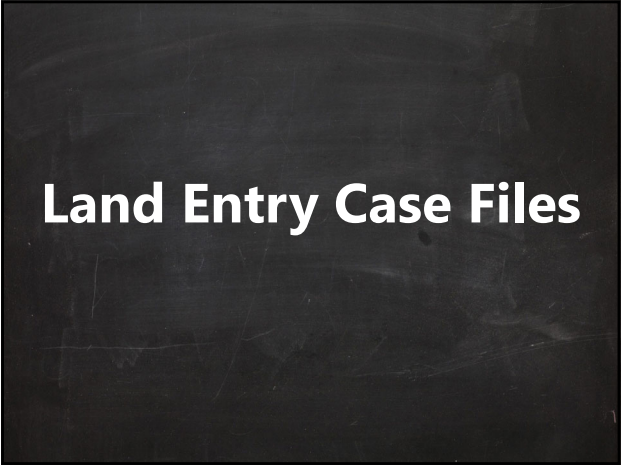
Later Bounty Land Acts

- 27 July 1842 – Could use 1812 warrant for land outside of the three areas set aside
- 11 February 1847 – for one year's service in Mexican War, 160 acres
- 28 September 1850 – War of 1812 and Indian Wars
 - Nine months of service – 160 acres
 - Four months of service – 80 acres
 - One month of service – 40 acres
- 22 March 1852 – Removes restriction on assignment for all warrants
- 3 March 1855 – Extended land benefits to groups previously not covered, including Native Americans.

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What is a land entry case file?

- These are records that document the transfer of public lands from the U.S. government to private ownership
- The National Archives holds over 10 million land entry case files that cover 30 public land states!

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Which States Were Not Included as Public Land?

- Original 13 colonies
 - Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia
- Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia

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What Types of Land Entry Case Files Exist?

- Military Bounty Land Warrants
- Pre-1908 General Land Entry Files
- Post-1908 General Land Entry Files

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Military Bounty Land Warrants

- Filed by the year of the congressional act that authorized the warrant, number of acres granted, and warrant number

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Records Before July 1908

- Organized by state, land office, type of entry (ex. Credit, cash, homestead, timber, and mineral), and final certificate number
- Large portions of these files are NOT organized by name
- Seven States Index (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, and Utah)
- Includes Canceled or Relinquished Land Entries

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Records After July 1908

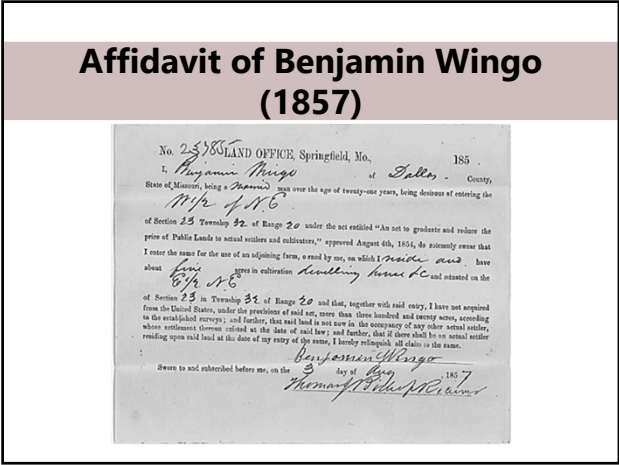
- Regardless of state or type, organized in one large series by a serial patent number
- The National Archives holds name indices that include the patent number through the mid 1950's.
- The Bureau of Land Management district office would need to be contacted for records after mid-1950's

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Cash Entry Files

- Most land entries after the Cash Act of 1820 was passed and before the Homestead Act of 1862 were direct cash purchases
- The purchaser did not have to be a citizen, provide proof of residency, or improvements on the land.
- In the 1830's and 1840's, preemption laws required proof that the entryman met specific requirements

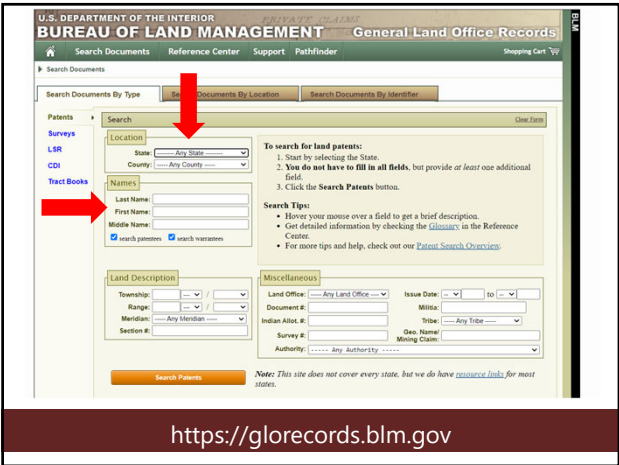
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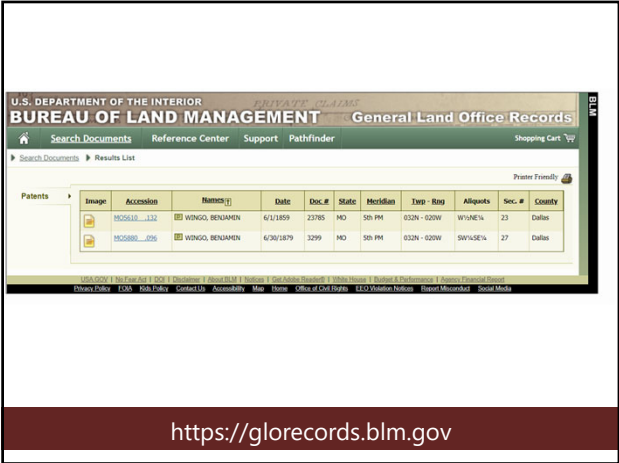
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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

General Land Office Records

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Results List

Patent Details

Accession No: MO5610...132

Document Type: State Volume Patent

State: Missouri

Issue Date: 6/1/1859

Cancelled: No

Patent Details

Patent Image

Related Documents

Add Certified Copy To Cart

More on information on [certified copies](#). (You can decide later whether or not to purchase the documents in your cart.)

MO5610...132

1 / 1

91%

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Print

132

granted

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

6/1/59

3-3-735

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas Benjamin Wings of Sullivan County Missouri,

has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States, a Certificate of THE REGISTER OF THE LAND

OFFICE at *Springfield* whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said

Benjamin Wings according to the provisions of the

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov>

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Patent Details

Patent Image

Related Documents

Below are documents matching the following *land description* from the current document: MO 5th Pm Township 32.0N Range 20.0W Section 23

Patents

Surveys

LSR

CDI

Tract Books

| Image | Accession | Patent | Date | Doc. # | State | Meridian | Twp - Rng | Aliquots | Sec. # | County |
|-------|--------------|--------------------|------------|--------|-------|----------|-------------|------------|--------|--------|
| | MO5610...132 | CLARK, SAMUEL R | 5/15/1857 | 18600 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | NW1/4NW1/4 | 23 | Dallas |
| | MO5610...132 | CLARK, SAMUEL R | 3/1/1860 | 27175 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | NE1/4NW1/4 | 23 | Dallas |
| | MO5610...132 | CLAYTON, DAVID M | 7/1/1859 | 37267 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | W1/2SE1/4 | 23 | Dallas |
| | MO5610...132 | DAVIS, ELEANOR E | 10/30/1857 | 16765 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | E1/2SW1/4 | 23 | Dallas |
| | MO5610...132 | PORTNER, EFEL D | 7/9/1895 | 10082 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | NW1/4NW1/4 | 26 | Dallas |
| | MO5610...132 | REAVES, BENJAMIN E | 6/1/1859 | 23785 | MO | 5th PM | 022N - 020W | W1/2NE1/4 | 23 | Dallas |

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Surveys

LSR

CDI

Tract Books

| Survey | Accession | State | Meridian | Twp - Rng | Boundaries / Subdivisional | County | Field Notes |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------|-------------|
| Original Survey | 6/1/1859 | MO | 5th PM | 032.0N - 020.0W | Subdivisional | Dallas | |
| Supplemental Plat | MO5610...132 | MO | 5th PM | 032.0N - 020.0W | --- | --- | |

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General Land Office Records

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Survey Details

Survey Plat Details

Plat Image

Related Documents

DM ID: 44209

Survey Type: Original Survey

State: Missouri

Survey Office: St. Louis, Missouri

Survey Type Other:

Fractional: No

Acres: 2377.68

Mining District:

Group No:

Min. Surv. Index:

Survey No:

County: Dallas

Field Notes:

Land Description

Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

Survey Activities

Activity Type

Date

Description

Survey Commenced

10-1-1845

Richard J. Holliday (Deputy Surveyor)

Contracts Issued (M)

4-2-1845

Plat Information: Microfilm Duplicate

DM ID: 44144

Duplicate Status: Microfilm Duplicate

Supplemental: No

Survey Based Supplemental: No

Parent Plat: Child Plat

Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov>

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DM ID: 44209

Survey Type: Original Survey

State: Missouri

Survey Plat Details

Plat Image

Related Documents

Sheet: 1 Microfilm Duplicate

Survey Plat Details

Plat Image

Related Documents

DM ID: 44209

Survey Type: Original Survey

State: Missouri

Survey Office: St. Louis, Missouri

Survey Type Other:

Fractional: No

Acres: 2377.68

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Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

Map

State-Meridian

Trp - Rng

Boundaries

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov>

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Locating Tract Books on FamilySearch

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- Contain the records of each parcel of land transferred from federal to private ownership in 28 of the 30 federal land states
 - The tract books for Alaska and Missouri are lost.
- Volumes are organized by state, in some states by land offices, and then by township number and range.
 - Within each volume, entries are arranged by Section, Township, Range.
- Use the Coverage Table on the FamilySearch wiki to identify which volume to find the corresponding tract book.

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<https://www.familysearch.org/wiki>

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[illegible]

www.familysearch.org

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Results List

Patents

Image

Accession

Patent #

Date

Doc #

State

Section

Entry - Range

Aliquots

Serv. #

County

NE1330...351

VICKNA, JOHN N

5/15/1880

8391

NE

6th PM

067N - 102W

50%

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Fillmore

https://glorerecords.blm.gov

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| | | |
|----------|------------|----------------------------|
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 95 | Township 7-8N, Range 15E |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 95 | Township 7N, Range 16E |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 96 | Township 7-16N, Range 1-2W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 97 | Township 7-16N, Range 3W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 97 | Township 7-15N, Range 4W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 97-98 | Township 7-14N, Range 5W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 98 | Township 7-13N, Range 6W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 98 | Township 7-12N, Range 7W |
| NEBRASKA | Vol. 98-99 | Township 7-11N, Range 8W |

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki

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FamilySearch

Family Tree Search Memories Indexing Activities

United States Bureau of L...Tract Books, 1800-c. 1955

State

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Delaware Territory

Florida

Iowa

Indiana

Illinois

Kansas

Louisiana

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New Mexico

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

Utah

Washington

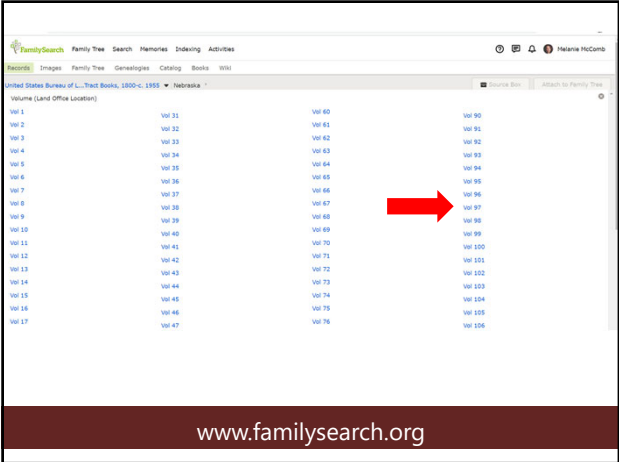
Wisconsin

Wyoming

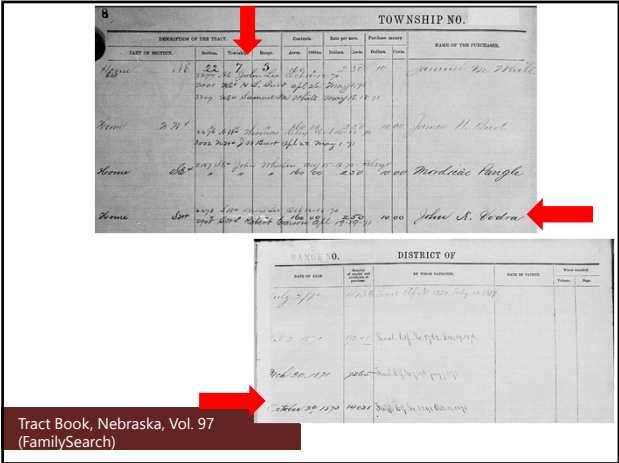
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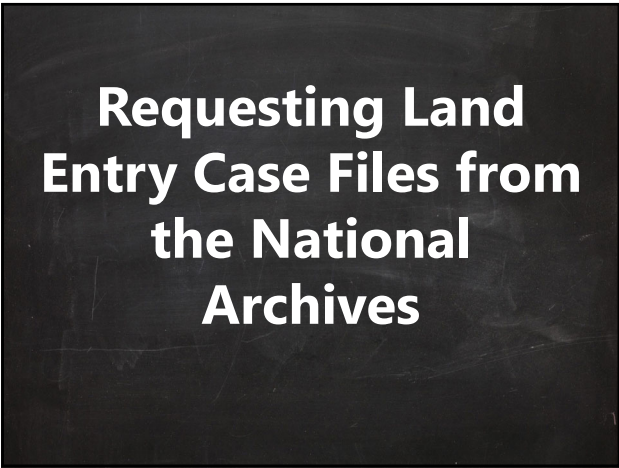
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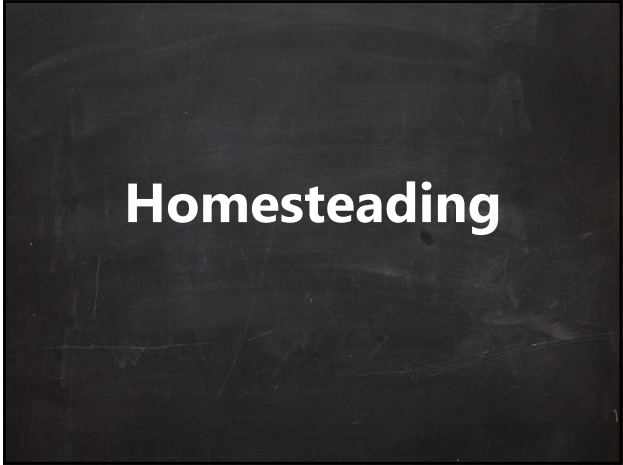
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The Homestead Act

- Signed in 1862, this law allowed any American (or immigrant pursuing the citizenship process) to purchase up to 160 acres of federal land.
- The law was not fully repealed until 1986, when it expired in Alaska. All previous states had repealed the law by 1976.
- Buyer was required to live on the land for five years and perform necessary upkeep and additions.
 - Civil War Union veterans could use time served in military towards the residency requirement.
 - Settlers could also acquire the title of land if they lived on the land for 6 months and paid the government \$1.25 per acre.

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Eligibility

- Adults 21 years and older
 - Single women
 - Former enslaved people
 - (1868 – 14th Amendment was passed)
 - Immigrants
 - 1st papers required (declaration of intention)

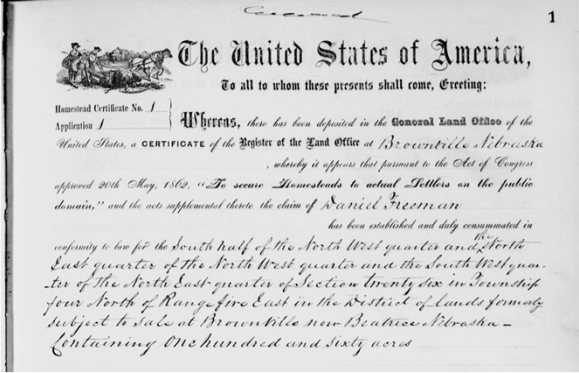
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The Process

- Go to the local land office.
- Pay a small filing fee (\$10)
- Live on the land and grow crops for 5 years.
- After the 5 years, file for the patent (land title). Pay the last fee (about \$8).
- If approved, patent was awarded.



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Homestead Certificate No. 1
Application 1

The United States of America,
To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, there has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States, a CERTIFICATE of the Register of the Land Office at Neenah, Wisconsin, whereby it appears that pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Daniel Freeman has been established and duly consummated in conformity to law for the South half of the North West quarter and North East quarter of the North East quarter of Section twenty six in Township four North of Range five East in the District of lands forming part of the public domain, subject to sale at Neenah, Wisconsin, Nebraska - containing one hundred and sixty acres

Homestead Certificate 1, Daniel Freeman

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What's in the Land Entry Case File?

- Final Certificate
- Final Receiver's Receipt
- Testimony of Claimant
- Testimony of Witness
- Final Homestead Affidavit
- Application and accompanying affidavits


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Which States Did NOT Have Homesteads?

- Original 13 colonies
 - Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia
- Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia

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Items From the Junction Union,

 Emigration is beginning to pour into Western Kansas. The benefits of the Homestead Act are already being felt in this portion of the State. Come on, emigrants and home-seekers, this is the best country in the West.

The cattle and other stock in this county are getting excessively fat.— There is no better stock raising country in the world than Kansas. In this branch of industry is a mine of inexhaustible wealth. Our farmers are becoming aware of this fact and are acting accordingly.

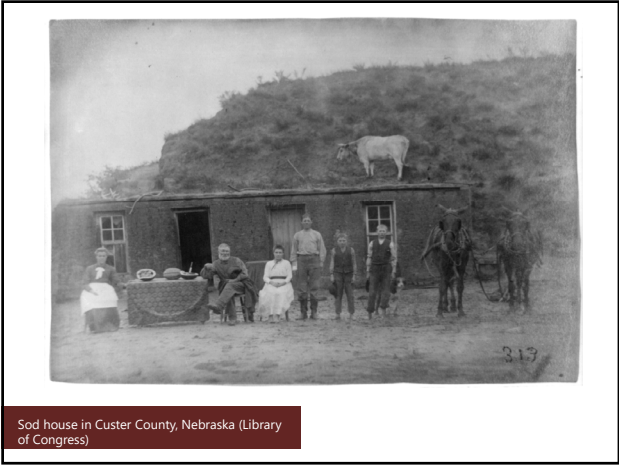
The Topeka Tribune – 5 July 1862
(Newspapers.com)

86

Life on the Prairie

- Fierce winds and fires
- Grasshopper infestation
- Severe droughts
- The lack of trees forced many of the early settlers to create their houses out of sod.
- Settlers had to supply their own farming tools.
- It was common for settlers to give up their land claim or declare bankruptcy.

87



88

Homestead Acts

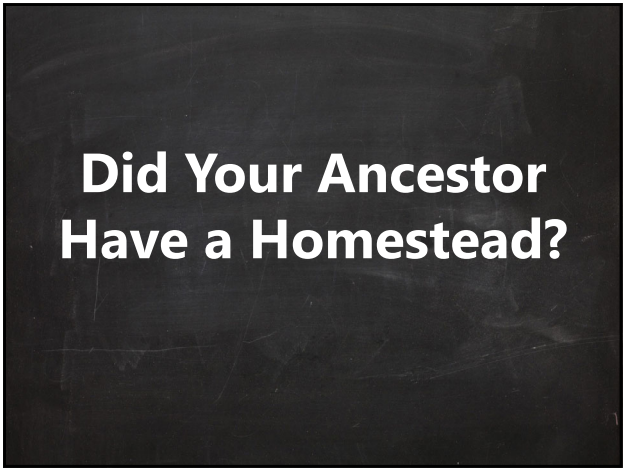
- Southern Homestead Act of 1866
 - Included and encouraged African Americans to obtain a homestead
- Timber Culture Act of 1873
 - Claimant required to plant trees
 - No residency requirement
- Kinkaid Amendment (1904)
 - 640 acres to new homesteaders in western Nebraska
- Enlarged Homestead Act (1909)
 - Doubled acreage from 160 to 320 acres in marginal areas
- National Stock-Raising Homestead Act (1916)
 - Granted 640 acres for ranching purposes

89

Dawes Act

- Passed in 1887 under President Grover Cleveland
- Allowed the federal government to divide tribal lands. Native Americans who accepted the division were allowed to become U.S. citizens.
- 160 acres of farmland or 320 acres of grazing land was granted to the head of each Native American family.
- To receive allotment, enroll with the Office of Indian Affairs. Their name went on the "Dawes rolls".

90



91

Clues for Possible Homesteading

1

Check census records for birthplace of head of family and children. You may notice a move shortly after 1862 out west.

2

Check census records for the occupation of the head of household. Look for farmers that owned property.

3

Review agriculture schedules to identify if the family had 160 acres (full portion) or 80 acres (half portion).
•Early 20th century, you may see a higher acreage (320-640 acres).

92

1880 United States Federal Census for John Vadra

| Direct | Indirect | Name | Age | Sex | Relationship | Occupation | Sick | Dead | Deaf and dumb | Blind | Insane | Birthplace | Birthplace of Father | Birthplace of Mother |
|--------|----------|-----------------|-----|-----|--------------|------------|------|------|---------------|-------|--------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | John Vadra | 38 | M | Head | Farmer | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | Mary Vadra | 35 | F | Wife | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | William Vadra | 12 | M | Son | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | Elizabeth Vadra | 10 | F | Daughter | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | Charles Vadra | 8 | M | Son | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | John Vadra | 6 | M | Son | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | Mary Vadra | 4 | F | Daughter | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |
| | | John Vadra | 2 | M | Son | | | | | | | Germany | Germany | Germany |

1880 U.S. Census – Geneva, Fillmore County, Nebraska (Ancestry.com)

93

| OF THE PERSON WHO CONDUCTS THIS FARM. | | | | ACRES OF LAND. | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| THE NAME. | | | | CROPPED. | | UNCROPPED. | |
| | | | | Devoted to food or other crops. | Devoted to other crops. | Timber, including brush and grain in rotation, (whether pasture or meadow.) | Other unimproved, including "old field" and growth; wood. |
| | | | | No. | Ac. | No. | Ac. |
| Amichael Sarah | | | | 1 | 2.19 | | 2.10 |
| Edgar John | | | | 1 | 8.1 | | 8.0 |
| Eliot James | | | | 1 | 3.4 | | 3.5 |
| Howard William | | | | 1 | 8.1 | | 8.0 |
| McMahon John | | | | 1 | 12.0 | | 12.0 |

1880 Agriculture Schedule - Geneva, Fillmore County, Nebraska (Ancestry.com)

94



95

U.S., Homestead Records, 1863-1908

Search

☐ Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)

Last Name

Day

Month

Year

Location

Birth

City, County, State, Count

Any Event

City, County, State, Count

Keyword

e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"

Range

Land Office

Section

Township

Provided in association with National Archives and Records Administration

Browse this collection

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

State

Choose...

Land Office

Final Certificate Year

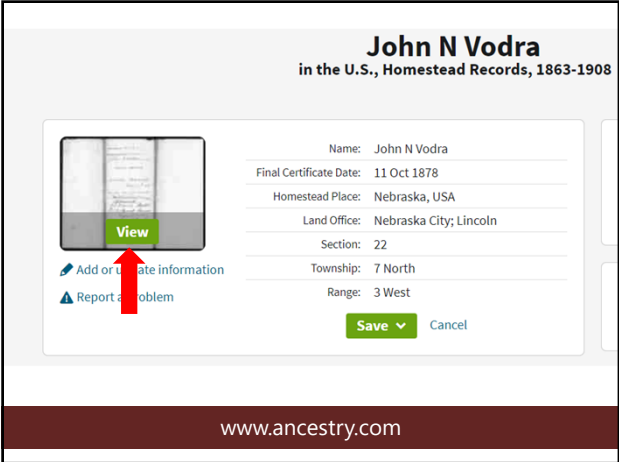
Township and Range

Related data collections

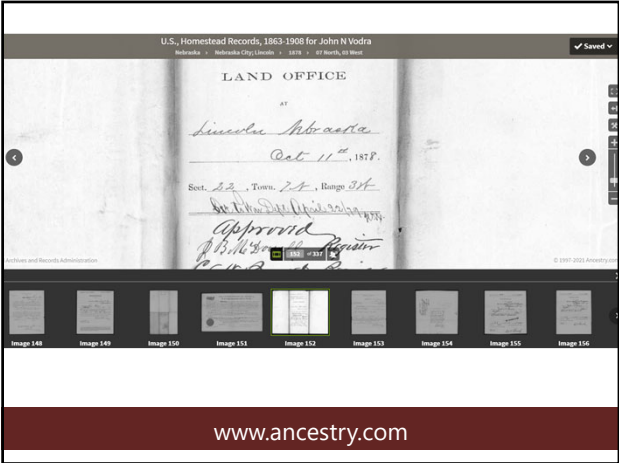
[U.S. Indexed County Land Ownership](#)

www.ancestry.com

96



97



98



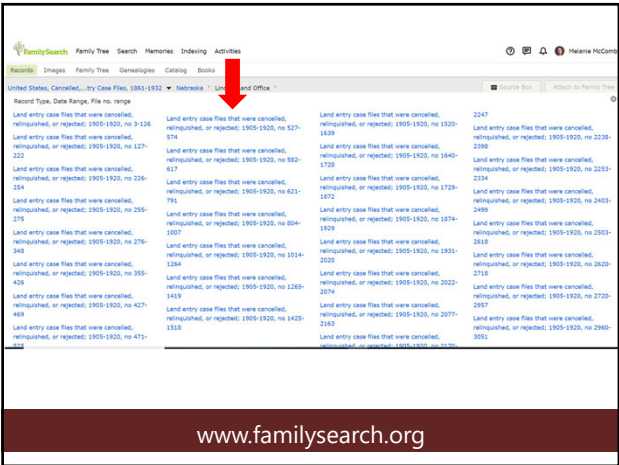
99



100



101



102

Lincoln NE 0643.
4-400.
Adverse report.
2 100.
700.

REPORT OF FRAUDULENT CLAIM OR ENTRY.

This form must be used only in cases found or believed to be fraudulent or abandoned. Cases found to be lawfully made and maintained may be reported by letter when necessary.

In cases of homestead claims the blanks must be filled up strictly as here indicated. In other cases the form will be followed as closely as applicable, and in all cases reported such other points will be covered as the nature of the case may require.

In EVERY INSTANCE where names of parties or witnesses are given, the post-office address and residence must also be stated.

FRED DENNETT,
Commissioner.

1. Name and post-office address of claimant: **James Bros, St. Ann, Neb.**

2. Dates and numbers of filing or entry and of final proof and certificate, with description of land.
Lincoln NE 12903, Serial 0643, Dec., 15, 1903, for 20000, 04000, Lot 2, Sec. 3-6-31, 70 not issued.

3. Date of examination: **July 8, 1909.**

4. Character of land (Timber, Mineral, Agricultural or Desert). If timber land, whether, if cleared, it would be fit for agriculture; if a desert entry, whether grown or other agricultural crop could be produced without artificial irrigation; if mineral, character and evidence thereof.

Land is all rough except about 16 acres. The rough land is suitable for stock pasture only. Corn is growing on about 6 acres without irrigation.

Report of Fraudulent Claim or Entry (1903)

103

State of Nebraska }
Hayes County } SS:

I, Peter Kuera, being duly sworn, upon oath say: I am 60 years of age. Thornburg, Neb., is my postoffice. I reside about one half mile from the sod house that is on the homestead land of James Bros. His said land is in Sec. 2, T 5 N., R 31 W. I have lived at my said place of residence for the last seven years. I am well acquainted with the said James Bros. I am also well acquainted with the father of said James Bros. The father lives about 4 miles from the sod house on the James Bros land. During the first year after the said James Bros made said entry he made his home and resided with his brother-in-law, Frank P. McKillip and since then he has made his home and resided with his father. He has never made his actual home on his said homestead land.

(Signed) Peter Kuera.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this July 8, 1909.

(Signed) P. E. Underworth,
Special Agent, G.L.O.

Affidavit alleging fraud (1909)

104

8. Residence of claimant.—When actually established on the land, and whether continuous for the period required. If the land is a variety of which more than the homestead amount, whether the family farms on the land, or has an actual residence elsewhere. State every fact relative to the proof as to the fact of the claimant in establishing and maintaining actual residence, and whether he was legally entitled to make the entry, and is known to the neighborhood of the claim.

Claimant is a single man and has never been married. He was qualified to make the entry and is well known in the neighborhood of the land. He has not made his actual residence and home on this land as required by law, having resided and made his home with his father and with a married sister.

10. Evidence that the entry was made at the instance or in the interest of a party or parties other than the claimant. Whether such contract or agreement has been made, date of such contract, name of purchaser or transferee, price given or agreed upon, names and date of any agreement in writing, and whether the entry has become a matter of record; whether the entry has been abandoned or relinquished, and, if so, when and for whose benefit.

There is no evidence that the entry was made in the interest of anyone other than the claimant.

11. If you have not secured affidavits of any witnesses, state why not, with the names of such witnesses.

Affidavits of witnesses secured.

12. Have you requested claimant to make a statement? If so, and he does not intend to offer proof, did you try to obtain a relinquishment or an affidavit to that effect (without success)?

I requested claimant to make a written statement but he said that he did not have anything to state except what he had already said in his legal proceedings have been initiated.

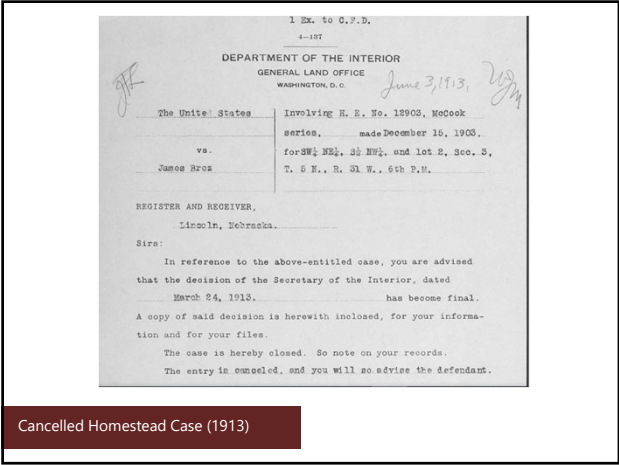
Note.

13. The undersigned special agent protests against the validity of said entry for the following reasons:

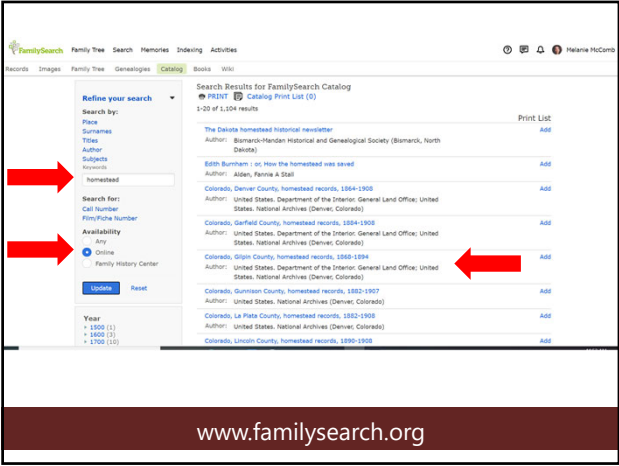
A. That the entryman has never resided upon the land.

Report of Fraudulent Claim or Entry Cont'd (1903)

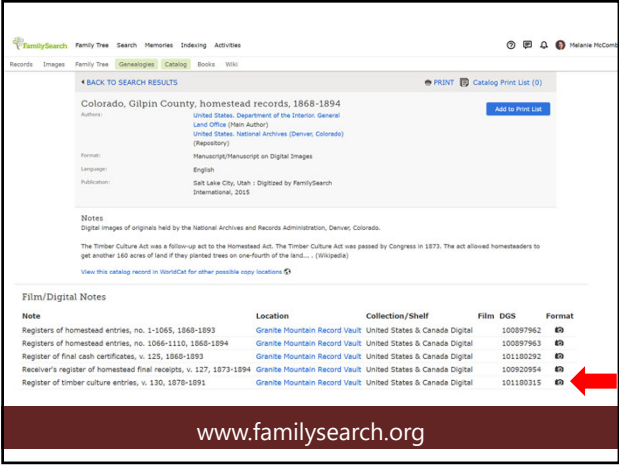
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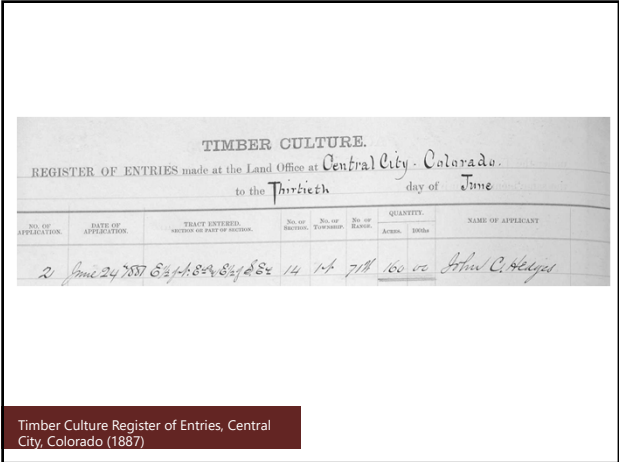
106



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108



109



110

The Exodus of 1879

- First mass migration of African Americans from the South after the Civil War
- Many were former slaves (known as exodusters)
- Settled in the states of Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Library of Congress

111

African American Homesteaders

- 6 Primary Homesteading Communities
 - Nicodemus, Kansas
 - DeWitty, Nebraska
 - Sully County, North Dakota
 - Empire, Wyoming
 - Dearfield, Colorado
 - Blackdom, New Mexico

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National Park Service

Staking their Claim: Black Homesteaders' Successful Quest for Land

(Click National Park Service title above to return to Black Homesteading in America site)

Overview

Nicodemus, KS

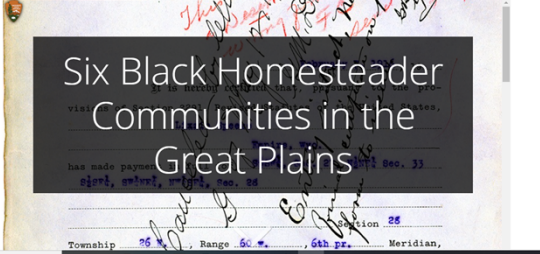
Sully County, SD

Blackdom, NM

Dearfield, CO

Empire, WY

DeWitty, NE



<https://www.nps.gov/home/black-homesteading-in->

113

National Park Service

Staking their Claim: Black Homesteaders' Successful Quest for Land

(Click National Park Service title above to return to Black Homesteading in America site)

Overview

Nicodemus, KS

Sully County, SD

Blackdom, NM

Dearfield, CO

Empire, WY

DeWitty, NE

Acknowledgments

Nicodemus, KS

Background Information

Nicodemus is the only surviving Black homesteader colony in the Great Plains.

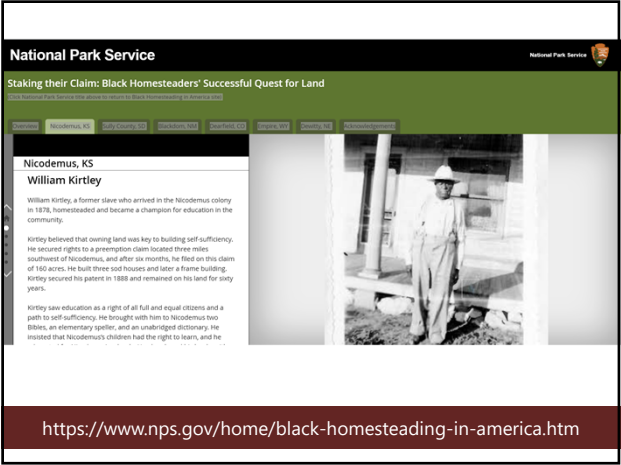
In 1877, Black entrepreneurs in Topeka formed the Nicodemus Town Company to recruit homesteaders for its site in north-central Kansas. The first group or "colony" of 30 people settled, then a colony of 300 arrived from Kentucky. Half of the Kentuckians, discouraged by what they viewed as Nicodemus's bleak prospects, immediately turned around and went home.

By 1887, the town center had a general store, hotel, churches, school,

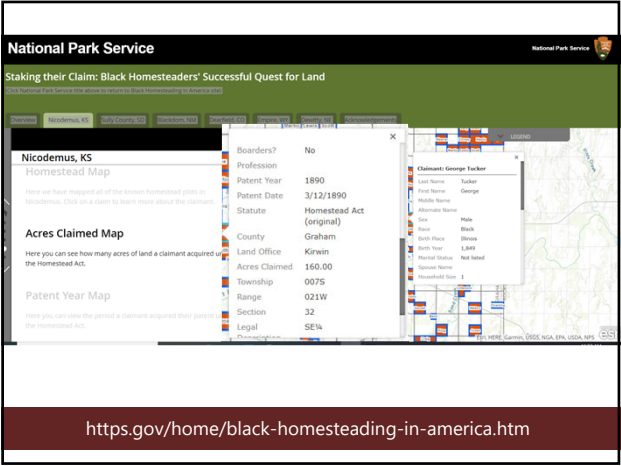


<https://www.nps.gov/home/black-homesteading-in-america.htm>

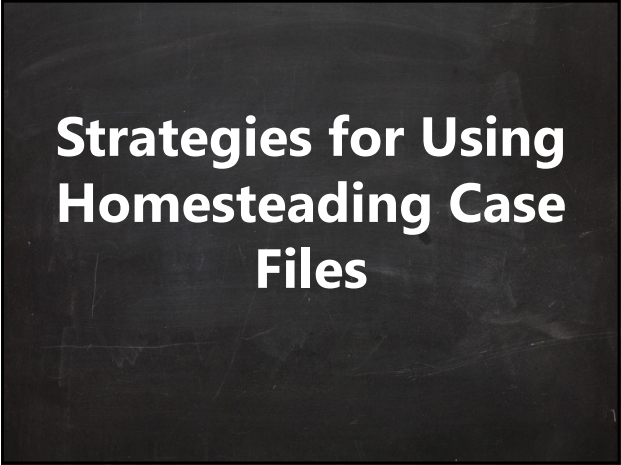
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115



116

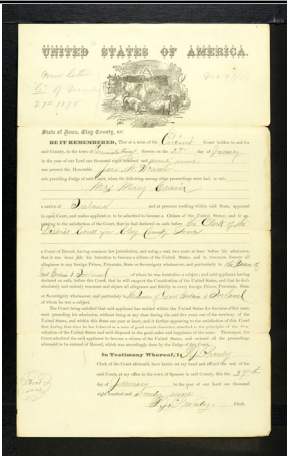


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Immigrant Origins

- Immigrants were required to have already filed their first papers (declaration of intention) in order to apply for a homestead.
- Many land entry case files contain copies of the naturalization papers that were filed by the applicant.
- Applications also list details about an ancestor's birthplace.
 - Pre-1906 naturalization records often list the name of the country with no specifics on county or townland.

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Certificate of Naturalization of Mrs. Mary Crain (Ancestry.com)

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Military Service

- Veterans who served in the Union during the Civil War were eligible to apply for a homestead and use their military service towards the 5-year residency requirement.
- Soldier's Discharge records are included as proof of service.
 - Information includes regiment information, where enlisted or drafted, occupation, birth date and birthplace.

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Review

1. Bounty land was an incentive for enlistment and may explain why your ancestor moved outside of their county and/or home state.

2. Federal land entry files may hold valuable clues about your ancestor's migration, their military, and citizenship status.

3. Multiple sources should be consulted to learn more about your ancestor's story.

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QUESTIONS?

Hire Research Services

research@nehgs.org

Chat with a Genealogist

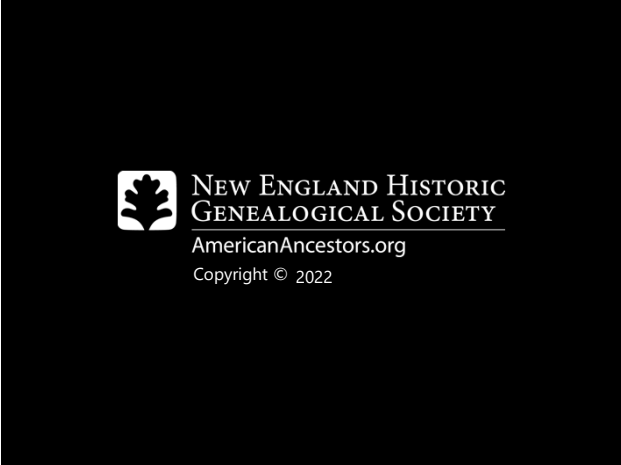
AmericanAncestors.org/chat

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THANK YOU!

AmericanAncestors.org/Education

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