

# Ohio Family History Research

## *Class 2: Land Records*

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When the Peace of Paris was signed after the American Revolution in 1783, the United States gained millions of acres west of the Appalachian Mountains. To survey and settle this land, the federal government passed legislation like the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Harrison Land Act of 1800. In direct result, both the federal government and private groups sold and distributed this land to settlers, creating several different record sets. Though sometimes a complicated and time-consuming record collection to examine, land records offer rich genealogical information.

### **Types of land in Ohio**

1. Federal land surveys
2. Private land surveys/Sales to private groups
3. County land records

**Federal land surveys:** Federal land surveys were conducted by the United States Federal Government in the Public Domain. Some of the federal land surveys were:

- Seven Ranges
- United States Military District
- Congress Lands
  - Lands East of the Scioto River
  - Land West of the Miami River
  - North of the Seven Ranges
  - South and East of the First Principal Meridian and Base Line
  - North and East of the First Principal Meridian and Base Line
- Michigan Survey

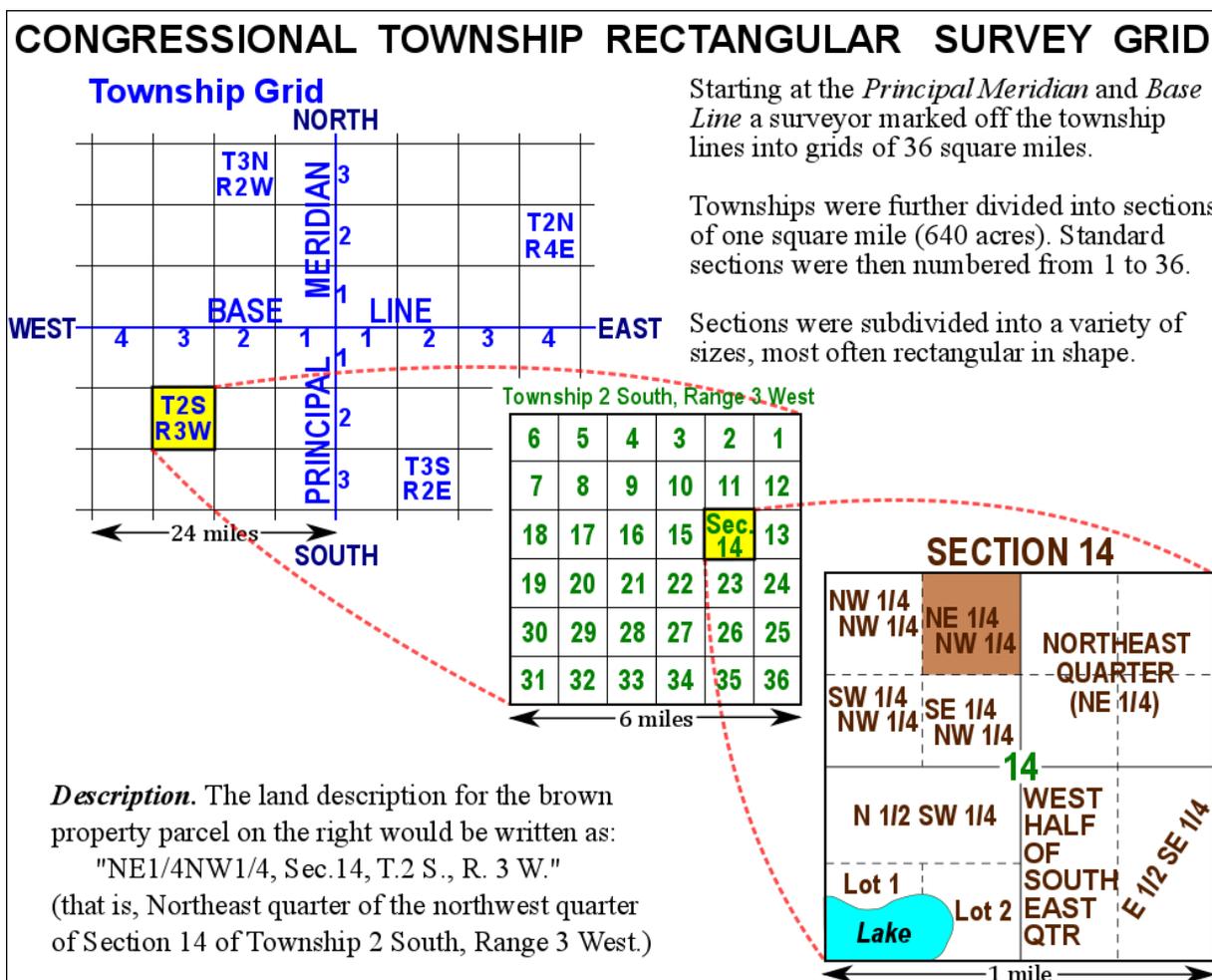
*Public Land Survey System:* Also known as the Rectangular Survey System, it was enacted into law by the Land Ordinance of 1785, an act that standardized the survey, sale, and settlement of Public Domain lands.

Public Land Survey System terms

<b>Aliquot</b>	Fraction part of a section; like a ½ section or ¼ section
<b>Section</b>	One-square mile parcel of land; 36 sections in a township
<b>Township</b>	A parcel containing 36 square miles
<b>Range</b>	Row of townships that are located east or west of principal meridian



<b>Principal Meridian</b>	North to south line
<b>Base Lines</b>	East to west line



**Private land surveys/Sales to private groups:** Private land surveys were conducted by states or by private companies that held large swaths of land in Ohio. Some of the private land surveys or sales to private groups were:

- Virginia Military District
- Connecticut Western Reserve
- Fire Lands
- The Ohio Company of Associates
- Donation Tract
- Symmes Purchase

**County land records:** County land records recorded the purchase and sale of land held in private ownership.

- Deed Process
  1. Seller agrees to sell land to the buyer
  2. Buyer pays the seller agreed upon amount
  3. Deed is written
  4. Seller takes deed to courthouse
  5. Dower release (if necessary)
  6. Clerk records deed
  7. Deed given to buyer
  
- Format
  - Seller and Buyer
  - Payment
  - Property description
  - Dates
  - Witnesses

## Types of County Deeds

Mortgages: Money borrowed using land as security

- Mortgagor or Borrower: Person who mortgages property
- Mortgagee or Lender: Person who holds the mortgage
- Look for repayment information included in the deed or the mortgage satisfaction in left hand column of deed

Sheriff's Deed or Sale: Forced sale of property

- Failure to pay taxes
- Satisfy judgement against landowner

Leases: Transfer of use and possession of property

- Specific time period and fee
- Length of lease varies

Assignments: Transfer of interest or rights belonging to document

- Warrant or Bounty Land
- Lease
- Mortgages

Quitclaims: Instrument that releases grantor's interest in the property

- Does not guarantee title is valid
- Common amongst family to family transfers

Divisions/Partitions: Process in which a parcel is divided between several owners

- Owners appear in court to request division
- Always examine court records for any corresponding records

Power of Attorney: Legal document authorizing individual to act on behalf of another individual

- Did not require grantor to be physically present at sale
- Can give clues regarding origins and prior residences

Dower Right: Lifetime interest in a property allowed by law; allowed widow to retain rights in the property of deceased husband

- Also referred to as widow's thirds

Dower Release: Wife agrees to the sale of land that included her dower rights

- Generally recorded at the end of deed
- Sometimes recorded in separate volume
- Not all states required Dower Release

## Further Reading and Resources

### Ohio

Dr. George W. Knepper, *The Official Ohio Lands Book*, (Columbus, Ohio: Auditor of the State, 2002)

<https://ohioauditor.gov/publications/docs/OhioLandsBook.pdf>

"Ohio Land Divisions and Grants," Ohio History Connection

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Mayburt Stephenson Rigel, *Early Ohioans' Residences from the Land Grant Records*, (Mansfield, Ohio: The Ohio Genealogical Society, 1976) – found on Ancestry.com

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<https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/land/viriniamilitarydistrict>

Archer Butler Hulbert, *Ohio Company Series: The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, Volume I-II*, (Marietta, Ohio: The Marietta Historical Commission, 1917)

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Carol Willsey Bell, *Ohio Lands: Steubenville Land Office, 1800-1820*, (Youngstown, Ohio: C.W. Bell, 1987)

Marie Taylor Clark, *Ohio Lands, Chillicothe Land Office: Entries Encompassing the Lands of Congress Lands, Refugee Tract, United States Military District, and French Grants*, (Chillicothe, Ohio: M.T. Clark, 1994)

Ellen T. Berry and David A. Berry, *Early Ohio Settlers: Purchasers of land in Southeastern Ohio, 1800-1840*, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1984)

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Ellen T. Berry and David A. Berry, *Early Ohio Settlers: Purchasers of land in East and East Central Ohio, 1800-1840*, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1989)

### **General Sources**

Hatcher, Patricia Law, *Locating Your Roots: Discover Your Ancestors Using Land Records*, (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2019)

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Donald A. Wilson, *Interpreting Land Records* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2006)

E. Kay Kirkham, *The Land Records of America and Their Genealogical Value* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., c1964)

“United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books,”

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Bureau\\_of\\_Land\\_Management\\_Tract\\_Books\\_-\\_FamilySearch\\_Historical\\_Records#FamilySearch\\_Catalog0](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Bureau_of_Land_Management_Tract_Books_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records#FamilySearch_Catalog0)

“United States Military Bounty Land Warrants,”

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Military\\_Bounty\\_Land\\_Warrants](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Military_Bounty_Land_Warrants)

“Land Entry Case Files,”

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Land\\_Entry\\_Case\\_Files](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Land_Entry_Case_Files)

The Legal Genealogist – [www.legalgenealogist.com](http://www.legalgenealogist.com)

*Black's Law Dictionary* – <https://thelawdictionary.org>

Genealogical Dictionary of Legal Terms -

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Genealogical\\_Dictionary\\_of\\_Legal\\_Terms](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Genealogical_Dictionary_of_Legal_Terms)

Randy Majors Mapping Tools, <https://www.randymajors.org>