

Kentucky Deed Records

Deed Records:

Counties: *varies by county
Deed Books 1781-2018

Background

Deed records in Kentucky date back to before Kentucky statehood. Deeds conveyed ownership either through purchase or inheritance.

These records typically include dates, the names of those involved, a description of the assets being deeded, signatures, and the certification of the county clerk. These records are valuable for many reasons. Deeds can provide information on land and other types of property, location, spouses, descendants, and estates. In addition, deeds can provide information on slaves.

Deeds could be filed in various courts including County Courts, Circuit Courts, District Courts, and Courts of Quarter Sessions, though they were primarily filed in the County Courts. In addition to general deeds there are also commissioner's or sheriff's deeds and proccessioner's deeds. Commissioners and sheriffs created and enacted deeds by order of the court when there were issues with an estate, there was no one to create a deed, or there were delinquent taxes, mortgage forfeitures, etc. Proccessioner's deeds typically involved an estate settlement or property dispute (Hogan, p. 90, 110-111).

Access

Deeds are organized by county or city, type, and year. Commissioner's and sheriff's deeds may be in their own books or interfiled with regular deeds. Most counties have grantor and grantee indexes for their deed books either independent of the books or included within individual books. Researchers should check both grantor and grantee indexes when searching for a deed. While searching for the surnames of those involved is the first step, a researcher might also try searching in "H" for heirs, "C" for commissioner, and "S" for sheriff (Hogan, p. 110).

In instances where a researcher does not know the names of the grantor or grantee or specific dates, another method of research is to work backwards from modern deeds. Starting in 1890 it was common for deeds to reference previous deed recordings regarding a particular piece of property. This allows for researchers to follow deeds in reverse order. For deeds prior to 1890, tax records can also be consulted to help in searching for deeds.

To determine what years records are available for a given county refer to our online resources at kdla.ky.gov or contact staff at 502-564-1770. Deeds are kept on microfilm and are available for use in the KDLA Research Room. For remote access, or to place an order for records from this collection refer to our website at kdla.ky.gov.

Resource Used

Hogan, Roseann Reinemuth Hogan. *Kentucky Ancestry: A Guide to Genealogical and Historical Research*. Ancestry, 1992.

Other Sources

Consider any of the following institutions for more information when researching Deed Records in Kentucky.

- **Kentucky Historical Society:** resources include printed biographies and family histories, access to unique genealogical materials including Bible records, surname collections, and cemetery and church records. *Contact: (502) 564-1792*
- **Regional Historical and Genealogical Groups:** valuable organizations for their familiarity with local history. Can find collections or records of local families, churches, or other institutions that can facilitate the discovery of genealogical information.
- **Local Library:** often include a reference or special collection of local history or interest. Knowledgeable staff can direct research inquiries or lead to discoveries in local newspapers or records preserved as part of their collections.