

## Branford Land Records

Land Records for the Town of Branford are found at the Branford Town Hall in the Town Clerk's vault. Early land records are mixed in with other town records in volume I and II of the Branford Town Records. The first volume devoted to land records is Volume 3 1709-1717. Subsequently all land records are in dedicated volumes. These books, called copy books, were recorded by the town clerk from the original deeds. The original deeds were given to the grantor (seller) and grantee (buyer) at the time of the land exchange. In the colonial period and sometimes later deeds may not be registered at the Town Clerk's office until many years after the initial transaction. When searching for deeds, also check probate records which often include land descriptions and deed information.

Most of the land record volumes have an original name index in the front or back of the book. There is a master index of all land record volumes at the Town Clerk's vault. These are in various volumes sorted by grantor, grantee and by date or volume ranges. The latter indexes include only one or two grantor or grantee names, so some names are missing if multiple people were involved in the land transaction.

A project was started some years ago, suggested by the late Betty M. Linsley, to abstract genealogical references from the Branford Land Records. Information abstracted included a notation of relationships or place of residence if not Branford. Initially volume I and II of the Town Records and volumes 3-25 of the land records were included in the project. About 2019 copies of the microfilms of Branford Land Records became available on FamilySearch.org through volume 47 and the database now includes those entries. Other land records were included such as deeds from the Branford Historical Society and the Blackstone Memorial Library Archives.

North Branford's land records were included with Branford until North Branford became a separate town in 1831. The microfilm of North Branford's land records after about 1831 just became available on Family Search.org.

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2020

How to:

The master indexes for deeds can be researched at the Town Clerk's vault. Some of the books have grantor (seller) and grantee (buyer) in the same index book, more recent books separate the two categories. Look in the index book with the approximate year span of the deed or transaction.

Check grantor or grantee depending on what information you already have. The index books have alphabetical tabs on the right of the page to guide you to the right surname. Do scan the entire page as the indexing is roughly alphabetical by first and second letter of the surname, but not necessarily completely in order (tends to be by date within that alphabetical listing). Be careful with surnames with many listings- in Branford such as surnames beginning with "B." Sometimes there is an overflow on the "Z" page or elsewhere in the book.

Be aware that until the 20th century, a mortgage may not be stated as such and can be confusing. In the cases of mortgages- the holder of the mortgage is the grantee and the person taking out the loan is the grantor. When the mortgage is released the assignment of grantor and grantee is flipped.

Copy all of the information in the index such as deed volume, page number, the date, the grantor and grantee's name(s) and location if given.

When you look up the deed, also copy the information especially boundary descriptions. Be patient as it can get confusing. If feeling overwhelmed, it is good to stop, go over the information with fresh eyes then go back to the indexes. I find drawing a diagram with the bounds from the deeds is helpful. If a party is involved in many land transactions, be careful you have the right parcel.