

**THE BIRMINGHAM GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

**P.O. Box 2432  
Birmingham, AL 35201**

**Founded August 15, 1959  
[www.birminghamgenealogy.org](http://www.birminghamgenealogy.org)**


**<http://birminghamgenealogy.wordpress.com/>**

**NEWSLETTER No. 501**

**August 15, 2014**

**General Meeting for August:** The Birmingham Genealogical Society will meet at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 24th on the fourth floor of the Birmingham Public Library (in the Arrington Auditorium). The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the same room.

**The program for August:** Please join us as Yvonne Crumpler, former President of the Birmingham Genealogical Society and the Alabama Genealogical Society and former head of the Southern History Department of the Birmingham Public Library, will give us a presentation on **American Land Records**. Yvonne will provide a power point program discussing the history of land records with information on public land states and state land states, with a brief explanation of the different type land surveys. Please join us and bring a friend!



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Don't forget the BGS October Fair on Saturday, October 25th!** It's time to plan for your exhibit – some ideas to consider for an exhibit are old family photos, clothing worn by an ancestor, family histories, articles owned by or made by an ancestor. Ribbons to be awarded to the first, second and third place winners and of course the silver bowl is awarded to the first place winner! We need your participation!



**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR 2015! PLEASE READ!**

Effective January 2015, annual dues are increasing to \$20 individual/\$25 family

We will no longer have monthly meetings. We will meet bi-monthly (every other month) with our first meeting being held in February 2015. We will continue to meet the fourth Saturday of every other month unless notified.

Due to the increased cost of printing and postage, we will no longer publish the Pioneer Trails magazine. We will publish the expanded Pioneer Trails Newsletter on a bi-monthly basis which will be emailed. We will mail hardcopies of the newsletter to those who do not have an email address.

**Research & Genealogical Tips:**

**A State Act Mentioning Your Ancestor**

Is it possible that there was a special act of the state legislature involving your ancestor? Up through the 19th century, it was not uncommon for the state legislature to mention acts regarding specific individuals-perhaps granting them a divorce, citizenship, name change, or other "relief" they could not get through some type of court action.

© Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day,"

<http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, TIPDATE.



**The past is not dead. It isn't even past. --William Faulkner**

*Scott A. Martin, BGS Newsletter Editor*

## 2014 Officers & Directors

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### HOW TO SEARCH DEEDS - [http://dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/deeds.html](http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/deeds.html)

Deeds are records of land ownership and transactions. They can date back to before the American Revolution. They reveal much more than ownership, however. They may also give information about relative land values, about who could hold land, and about relationships between people. Deeds are useful to genealogists, those buying and selling land, and those wishing to find information about particular times or events. To find out the history of a piece of real estate, the researcher can work backward or forward from one deed to the next. Each deed tells who conveyed the right of possession of the land to whom. The list of owners in succession is called the chain of title. Trying to reconstruct the chain of title by searching through the deeds is called a title search. Deeds were recorded in a central place, according to law. This location differed from state to state. Counties changed over time, so information about deeds for one piece of land might be found in two or more locations. In other states towns recorded deeds. This was not always the case in the American West. Furthermore, very early deeds might be found in central state archives. Deeds, probate records, and court decrees--three kinds of records that can show property changing hands --are usually found in the same location.

- Note the names of the buyer (grantee) and/or seller (grantor) of the land in which you are interested.
- Find out where deeds are recorded and stored for the time and place in which you are interested.
- Check to see if any of the information is available online and use it if it is.
- At the registry of deeds, look in the grantee index for an index of buyers. Look in the grantor index for an index of sellers.
- Look in the body of the deed for variations on these kinds of information:

name of grantor, type of covenant (warranty, quit claim, mortgage), name of grantee, description of the property conveyed. This usually starts by naming the town and county (or their equivalent) and then a detailed description follows. Descriptions take many forms. They may describe metes and bounds (boundary line distances, compass bearings, and boundaries that end the line), they may name abutters, they may contain survey section designations, or they may be very imprecise and vague. a "meaning and intending" clause stating the intent of the deed, the volume where the deed is recorded. in some deeds, the price of the transaction, in some deeds, the chain of title. This might be confusing if some of the occupants were renters and not owners.

- Look for a tax stamp. This indicates a fee assessed according to the value of the transaction. Knowing the value of the stamp and the rate of the tax (for example, \$1.10 per \$1000 of the transaction), one can estimate the selling price.
- Look for a release of spousal rights. A release of the right of dower meant that a wife agreed to the sale of the property. A release of courtesy rights meant the husband agreed to the sale of the property. Release of homestead rights meant that the person was living on the property at the time. This information can be used to establish genealogical relationships between family members.
- The acknowledgment indicates that the release was given before a Justice of the Peace and was of the person's own free will.
- Look for the date and time of recording to establish chronology.
- Look at other sources to verify or fill in missing information: tax maps, aerial photos, insurance maps, town atlases, historical wall maps, letters, wills, court records.