

Genealogical Guide to Monroe County, New York

Land Records

Land records do not usually show any relationship between the parties involved. In fact, if a father sells property to his son there usually is no indication that they are related in any matter. Land records are most useful in showing the residences over time and the increase (or decrease) of land owned. There are two kinds of records which should be investigated; deeds and mortgages. The deeds are indexed by Grantee (buyer) and Grantor (seller). Quite often people may have tried to purchase land through a mortgage. Indexes for mortgages are by Mortgagee (buyer) and Mortgagor (holder of mortgage).

This Indenture, Made this *fourteenth* day of *April* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and *fifty one* **BETWEEN** *Sarah Jeffords of the Town of Henrietta* of the first part, and *John T. Fargo of the same place* of the second part,

Witnesseth, That the party of the first part, in consideration of the sum of *Nine Hundred Dollars* lawfull money of the United States *to her duly paid*, have sold, and **By these Presents**, do grant and convey to the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, all that tract or parcel of **Land**, situate in the Town of Henrietta aforesaid bounded as follows beginning at an oak post at the north end of the brand fence on the west side of the road and then the center of lot number seven in the third range of the said lots in the said Town of Henrietta thence north eighty seven and one quarter degree west four chains and one & a half links to a post, thence twenty four degrees west parallel to and in direct line of the west line of the west brand of David C. Chapmans Village lot in which the said W. Merby above said five chains and seventy seven links to the north west corner of his lot thence south sixty four and one quarter degree east three chains and seventy eight links to the north side of a gate post broken off, thence north twenty five and a quarter degree east seven chains and thirty seven links to the place of beginning containing two acres and forty three hundredths of an acre of land together with all the land in front of the above described premises to the east line of said lot number seven which is now included in the highway "

Portion of a deed from 1851.

Since the formation of Monroe County in 1821, it has been the responsibility of the Monroe County Clerk's office (39 W. Main St., Rochester, NY 14614) to record all deeds and mortgages. The indexes to those records are still available in large volumes in that office. All the original deed and mortgage books have been sent to permanent off-site storage but there is a complete set of the records available on microfilm at the Clerk's office. Copies can be made from the microfilm for a small fee.

In the late 1990s Monroe County began putting land records online. The [Monroe County Clerk Online Services](#) web page has indexes beginning in 1973 and both deeds and mortgages beginning in Jan. 1976. Their system was improved in Sept. 2018 and became accessible by all browsers. That improved web page requires a new account to be created if you had an account previous to that date. Once you find a record, you can print or download each page.

In the 1970s the organization now known as FamilySearch filmed some Monroe County deeds, mortgages and indexes. Those records have been put online on [this web page](#). They did not film all the records that were available at that time. FamilySearch has Grantee and Grantor indexes up to 1975 but only deed books

Genealogical Guide to Monroe County, New York

up to number 700 (dated 1905). Even less of the mortgages were filmed. Their collection of mortgage indexes and records only cover the period of 1821 to 1851 (volume 54).

Old deeds may show the price paid for the land. More modern deeds usually say that the amount paid is "\$1 or more." Then figuring out the property description can be a challenge. Measurement in early deeds are given in chains (66 feet) and links (100 links to the chain or each link being 7.92 inches). Boundaries start in the center of a road and then directions are given in degrees from that mark and eventually back to the beginning spot. Lot numbers can be found on some old maps but those lot numbers may have been changed in some Towns over the generations. As the area grew, subdivisions were created. Some of the subdivisions have maps in the County Clerk's office and a map reference is sometime listed within a deed.

For most of the twentieth century, the only land records for Monroe County are those in the Clerk's office.

