

Discover the History of Your Medway House

by Marian Pierre-Louis for the Medway Historical Society

Definition

Grantor – the person selling the property

Grantee – the person buying the property

Basic Research Strategy

1. Assessor's Office – Property data

- The Assessor's Office will provide links to field/property cards, assessment values and assessor maps. It also provides the most recent book and page number to the deed of your house.
- Medway Board of Assessors - <https://www.townofmedway.org/assessing-department>
- Medway Assessor Maps – same as above
- Medway Assessor Database - <https://medway.patriotproperties.com/default.asp>

2. Registry of Deeds

- <http://www.NorfolkDeeds.org/> - Deeds are indexed by name back to 1793.
- Deeds images are available online back to 1793. Earlier deeds are located in Suffolk County.
- Norfolk County Registry of Deeds is located at 649 High Street, Dedham, MA.
- Search first for yourself as **grantee** and then find the seller who is the **grantor**.
- Next search the indexes for the seller as the grantee and find the previous grantor. Continue this process for as far back as you can go.
- You can also find Norfolk pre-1901 deeds at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2106411>

2. Census Records (also Mass. State Census Records)

- Find the occupants of your house in the census. Please note: the occupants might not be the owners!
- Available from:
 - Ancestry.com (subscription service) <http://www.ancestry.com/>
 - [FamilySearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (free)
 - [MyHeritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com), [FindMyPast.com](http://www.findmypast.com) and others

3. Probate

- You can find house/estate inventories and list of family members in wills.
- Norfolk County Probate Court is located at 35 Shawmut Road, Canton, MA. Probate records available at this location for 1793 – present
- Pre-1793 probate records are located in Suffolk County.
- Norfolk County, MA Probate Index - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5656/>
- Massachusetts, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1635-1991 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9069/>

4. Mass. Vital Records

- Provide birth/marriage/death dates and locations.
- Names of parents

- Available from FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, www.AmericanAncestors.org.
- *The Record of Births, Marriages and Deaths in the Town of Medway, MA 1778-1872* - <https://archive.org/details/recordofbirthsma00fran/>

5. Maps

- Ancestry.com, Hathi Trust, www.DavidRumsey.com
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps>

6. Massachusetts Historic Commission Inventory Sheets (State & Local)

- Check database online - <http://mhc-macris.net/> The database contains a complete index of historical properties. Full pdf versions of some may be found at the website.

7. City Directories & Residents Lists

- City Directories are available online at the major database sites like Ancestry.com
- Resident Lists may be available in Local History Room at local libraries or Town Hall.

8. Tax Records

- Value of property through the years with basic descriptions of buildings or land
- Check the Medway Library History Room for Medway Town Annual Reports which contain the tax records.

9. Newspapers

Many old newspapers are available online through Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, AmericanAncestors.org, GenealogyBank.com, Newspapers.com, Boston Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society (Worcester). See <https://theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html> for more.

10. Photos and Miscellaneous Items

Be sure to check with the Medway Historical Society for old photos of your home, old maps and other miscellaneous information.

Further Reading

Donovan, Francis D. *The New Grant: A History of Medway*. Medway, MA: Town of Medway, 1976. Medway Library/Adult 974.47 D.

Hoag, Grace G. and Priscilla N. Howker. *Medway* (Images of America series). Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishers, 2004. Medway Library/Adult 974.47 Hoag.

Jameson, E.O. *The History of Medway, Mass., 1713-1885*. Providence, RI: Reid Printers, 1886. Medway Library/Adult 974.47 Jameson.

Mason, Orion T. *The Handbook of Medway History: a condensed history of the Town of Medway*. Medway, MA: G.M. Billings, 1913. Medway Library/Reference, 974.4 M.

Hurd, D. Hamilton, *History Norfolk County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Co., 1884. Available at Internet Archive <https://archive.org/details/historyofnorfolk00hurd>

The Northeast House Historian (lots of tips for house history research) - <https://northeasthousehistorian.com/>