

Home Histories Research Guide

Thank you for downloading this Research Guide from Home Histories. We hope you will enjoy it and find it useful. As we grow, we will add instructions for additional localities, please check the website.

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Getting Started

Begin With What You Know - Chances are you purchased your home and have the title search and other documentation that was provided to you. By reviewing that material you can probably complete your Home Profile, find the previous owners' names, and begin to formulate your search for additional information.

Talk to Neighbors - They may have known the previous owners and have interesting stories to tell.

Check your county's website- Many counties provide online access to property information. (see example below for Jackson County, Oregon)

Visit local historical societies - they are likely to have information on some homes, plus city directories, photos, and occasionally family archives

Visit a public library - the library may not have archives or property information, but may carry books that help you date the age of your home by architectural style, building materials, etc. If you explain your project, the librarians may have other helpful suggestions about local resources.

Internet Search - Checking your address and former owner names online may yield surprising results

As you discover new facts about your home, be sure to record them. If you subscribe to Home Histories, use Past Owner and Miscellaneous Facts forms. For additions and remodels, you might want to use Home Improvement forms. Remember to keep track of your sources, too!

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National and Oregon Statewide Online Sources



General Land Office Records (BLM)

- This is the best online source for determining earlier settlers on your property, if they had donation land claims
- Before using this source, determine the Township, Range and Section of your property (Jackson County Interactive Mapping can help with that, if you don't have the information already from older deeds)
- Use the Surveys tab if you wish to search by name
- Use the CDI tab to search by Donation Land Claim number (enter it as the Document number). An image of the original document may be available, although it may be difficult to read
- Use the SURVEYS tab to view maps for your township and section. The early surveys may show Donation Land Claim boundaries in more detail than other resources



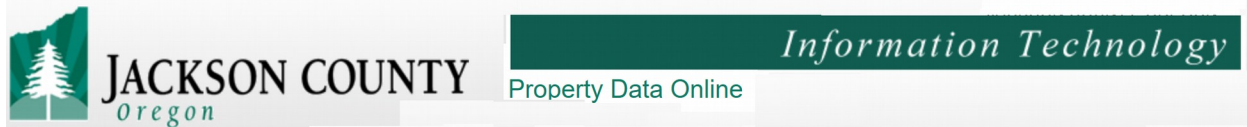
[Historic Oregon Newspapers](#) might turn up articles about the people who lived in your home.



[Newspapers.com](#) is another source that covers many local papers, but it requires a subscription (free trial may be available).

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Jackson County, Oregon, Online Sources



[Property Data Online](#), for Jackson County, Oregon. This provides previous owners' names, improvements made to your home, original deed cards, and other information. [Instructions](#).

- ***This source may be your best starting point.*** The deed card that you will find should list previous owners, with dates. It may not show your home or property's earliest owners.
- To pursue your search to ownership of your home or property in earlier years, you may continue your search at the [Jackson County Recorder's office](#). By using their print indexes and digitized data, you may search previous sellers and previous buyers, then print out deed records.

Jackson County Interactive Mapping

Home Property Permits Development Overlays Precincts & Districts **Survey Index Map** Build Your Own

[Jackson County Interactive Mapping - Survey Index Map](#) - this is a good source for a quick overview of township, range and section boundaries. By zooming into a property, you can determine existence of buildings on the property, subdivision names, and dates of surveys. You can also view the surveys.

- You can find Donation Land Claim boundaries on this map also:
- Select Survey Index Map
- Zoom in to the property
- Click the Layer List icon in the upper right corner
- Deselect Townships, Sections, County Surveys
- This unclutters the screen so you may view the brown outlines of Donation Land Claims
- Within the boundary of a DLC, zoom in until you can view the brown DLC number

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Additional Important Online Sources for Jackson County, Oregon



Jackson County
Genealogy Library

JCGL

[Jackson County Genealogy Society](#) has indexing online for many Jackson County obituaries and other records. Try it online, or visit them (3405 South Pacific Highway, Medford, OR)



SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAKING HISTORY TOGETHER

Library ▾ Research ▾

Search this site

The [Southern Oregon Historical Society](#) collection includes histories of the area's older and/or more notable homes plus the multiple historical surveys of homes and buildings that have been published for the county. Indexing for those sources can be found in the [SOHS Address Index](#). In addition, SOHS has biographies of many local families, and its [photo collection](#) may reveal early photos of your home or its residents.



**Southern Oregon History,
*Revised***

[Southern Oregon History, Revised](#) (Ben Truwe's website) provides many articles about people, places and events in our area, particularly Medford. No local history research is complete without a visit to this full-text site.

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Medford, Oregon



[City Departments](#) ▾ [Elected Officials](#) ▾ [Online Services](#) ▾ [Get Involved](#) ▾ [Maps](#) [Contact](#)

The [Medford Building Department](#) website provides deed cards, reports that include taxation, and plat maps. Since records vary slightly, it makes sense to explore the maps and other options.

In order to view permits issued for specific address back to 1962, visit the Building Department: 200 South Ivy Lausmann Annex, Medford. The Annex is located south of 200 South Ivy and across the parking lot.

For permits issued prior to 1962, the Building Department has ledgers in order by date. The only way to search for names/addresses is to scan each page, so if the year is unknown, a search is impractical. Also, the information available in the ledgers is limited to name, permit number, whether or not plumbing or electrical permits are included, address and project name (eg "erect residence" for new construction).

Please note that the Building Department staff may ask you to make an appointment if they are too busy to retrieve permit packets or ledgers.

Rural Properties

Water rights information may provide details on properties. Home Histories will publish a separate guide for rural property research in Oregon – eventually.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society has resources that cover water rights in Southern Oregon in 1909 and earlier.

Oregon maintains a [statewide water rights database](#) and maintains an [office in Medford](#).

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PLSS: The Public Land Survey System (Townships)

The USGS pages that explain the system:

https://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/a_plss.html

This link is one detailed online explanation of the township system:

<http://www.jsu.edu/dept/geography/mhill/phygeogone/trprac.html>

Basically, most states in the United States have been mapped with townships as a way to determine property locations. Most townships are squares, 6 miles on a side. Each township is located by its Township number and Range number.

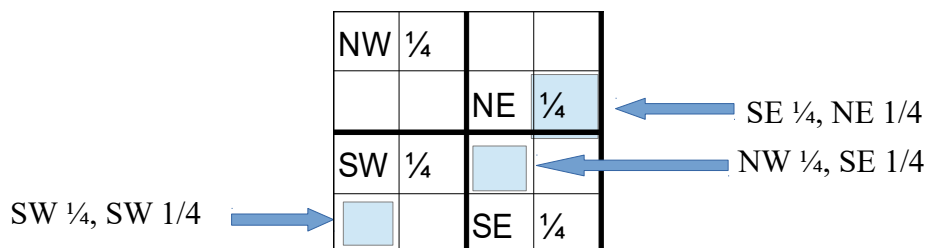
A township is divided into sections. In a standard township, each section is 1 mile by 1 mile. They are numbered in this way:

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36



Each section is divided into quarters. Each quarter-section is 160 acres.

Each quarter is further divided into quarters. One quarter of a quarter section is 40 acres.



Helpful terms:

Aliquot part—The standard subdivisions of a section, such as a half section, quarter section, or quarter-quarter section.

Cadastral—Having to do with the boundaries of land parcels.

Initial point—The starting point for a survey.

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READING DEEDS

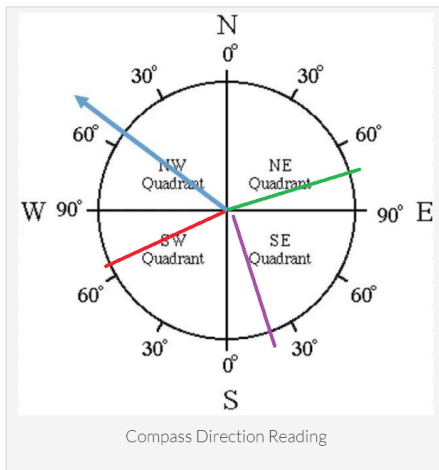
The following information pertains to properties in Oregon, but may be applicable to other states as well.

Each deed will include reference to Township and Range, and probably section. Many websites, including Wikipedia, explain this Public Land Survey System. Maps may be viewed on multiple sites, too, including this one:

<http://www.earthpoint.us/Townships.aspx>.

In Oregon, Donation Land Claims and Land Patents are often mentioned in deeds because their borders were often used to describe property lines.

If you research your home's history back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, you may read handwritten deeds. Determining whether or not a particular deed even includes your property may be challenging because boundaries change. It helps to understand the measurements that describe the boundaries.



Notes on distances
1 chain = 66 feet
1 rod = 16.5 feet (1/4 of a chain)


Reading Metes and Bound directions (compass directions):


Directions will just be North, South East or West for due North, South, East or West.


Other annotations begin with North, or with South (or N or S), followed by degrees East or West.

The directions begin from the center of the circle. From there, orient toward the north or the south, then rotate the correct number of degrees to the east or the west.

Examples: **approximate degrees are shown**

N 56° E 

S 63° W 

N 72½° E 

S 20½° E 