

Using Bergen county Land Records for Genealogy and Local History

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Proprietary Records, 1715-20th century. The proprietors were the initial landowners in New Jersey; their sales of land are called patents.

LEARN:

- [Joseph R. Klett. Using the Records of the East and West Jersey Proprietors. New Jersey State Archives, 2014.](#)
- [Michelle Novak. New Jersey at 350: A short history of New Jersey Land records](#)

SEARCH: [Early Land Records, 1650-1900s](#), searchable database, New Jersey State Archives

Early Bergen Patents discussed in these books:

- [W. Woodford Clayton. History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey. Everts & Peck, 1882](#)
- Howard I. Durie. *The Kakiat Patent in Bergen County New Jersey.* (in libraries)
- [Cornelius Burnham Harvey. Genealogical History of Hudson and Bergen Counties New Jersey. New York: New Jersey Genealogical Publishing Company, 1900.](#)
- George Olin Zabriskie. The Zabriskie Family. 1963. [volume 1](#) [volume 2](#)

Bergen County Deeds

- *Bergen County New Jersey Deed Records, 1689-1801* compiled by John David Davis, Heritage Books, 1995. Abstracts of deeds in books A-N. Available in libraries or [Buy used.](#)
- Deed Vault, Bergen County Clerk's Office, 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, Books A to present, Presently Closed
- [County Clerk's Online System for Deeds, 1970-present](#) (earlier deeds may be added later)
- [Bergen County Deeds, Books A-Z8 \(1715-1873\) FamilySearch.org](#)
- Bergen County Deeds, Books A9-522 (1873-1901) Family History Center or Affiliate Library*
- [Abstracts of Bergen County, NJ Deeds, 1803-1813](#)
- [Index to Ancient Deeds](#)

Additional Exploration

- [Bergen County deed records for land now in Passaic County, Book A-Z \(1715-1838\)](#)
- [Bergen County Mortgages, 1766-1870; index 1766-1920 FamilySearch.org](#)
- [Guide to Indexing land records used \(more or less\) by Bergen County](#)
- [John P. Snyder. The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries, 1606-1968](#) New Jersey Geological Survey, 2004 (original edition, 1969)

*Ridgewood Public Library is an Affiliate Library

Parts of a Deed

Book (Liber) and page

- Date
- Grantor and Grantee (names and possibly name of wives, occupations, or residences)
- Type of instrument (usually an “indenture”)
- Consideration
- Conveyance (boiler plate)
- Parcel of land: general description, location (borough, township, etc)
- Beginning
- Specific description of parcel (usually with “calls”)
- Size (acreage)
- Names of property owners bounding the parcel
- Previous owner or sale
- Easements or agreements
- Type of ownership and warranty of title (boiler plate)
- Signatures of seller(s) (recorded copy is a transcription, not the actual signature)
- Witnesses
- Attestations & release of dower
- Recorded date and clerk’s name

Preparing for Research

- Identify likely landowners and where they lived
- Use Censuses:
 - value of real property given in 1860 and 1870
 - Agricultural Census 1880, 1900 indicates ownership
- Use city directories. They sometimes differentiate between owners and renters (see abbreviations at beginning of directory)
- Use probate records, newspaper ads—offering for sale or report of sales.
 - See ownership maps at [Ridgewood Public Library, Bolger Heritage Center](#)
 - Walker Atlas, 1876
 - Robinson Atlas, 1902
 - Bromley Atlas, 1912/1913