Land Records Research

Researchers should come prepared with as much information as can be obtained ahead of time. Valuable pieces of information include Square, Lot, Grantor / Grantee names, and the year the record was entered.

Indices

The DC Archives have three types of indices that can be used to search land records.

- **General Index** is organized yearly then alphabetically by grantor’s last name. The time period covers 1792 – 1907.
- **Grantor / Grantee Index** is organized by last name of the grantor and grantee and covers a period of December 31, 1900 – December 31, 1919.
- **Card Index** is organized by square and lot and covers primarily 20th century records, with an emphasis on 1900 – 1921.

The indices will provide the location of the land record within the record books and specific pages, referred to as libers and folios. A sample record location is Liber W.B. Folio 350.

Records

A patron / group may request up to 4 Libers per visit. The last pull time is 11:15am. A request form is provided.

Some record books have been re-typed and thus the folio numbering has changed. These re-typed volumes now have “old” folio numbers and “new” folio numbers. Only the “new” folio numbers are needed to locate the record in the liber. New folio numbers are either listed in the indices or in the index of the liber itself.

Requesting Copies

DC Archives provides free copies of records but limits how many folios can be copied at one time per patron or group. Up to 4 copies of folios will be provided per visit but staff will only copy one folio of choice while a patron is onsite during the walk-in hours and the other three will be delivered electronically within several business days. If copies of more than 4 folios are needed, they can be requested in subsequent business days with a maximum of 12 folio copies per week per patron or group.

Online Access via Recorder of Deeds

For land records from 1921 – Present, it is easiest to search these records using the Recorder of Deeds online database, found here: bit.ly/DCRecDeeds. Records that pre-date 1921 are not available online.

Tips for researchers: At DC Archives, the records for the period of 1900-1921 are the most easily identifiable. For earlier records, it is important to have the grantor and/or grantee name and the year of the transaction. Without these pieces of information, the records may be difficult to locate based on the organization of the indices. Patrons should consult DC Archives staff to learn more.