



Researching House Histories

Part One: Researching in Deeds and Maps

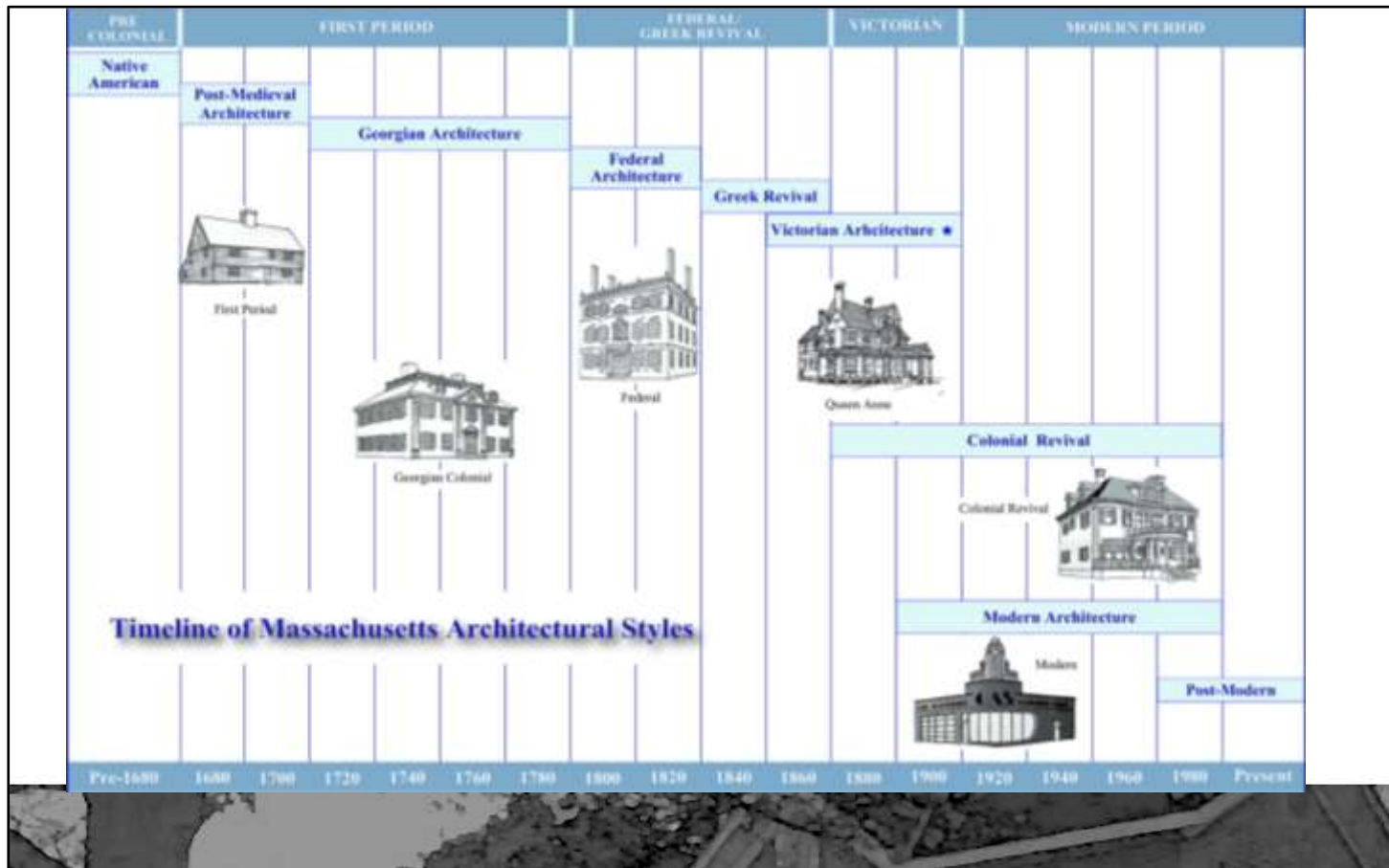
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Do you live in an old house? Do you know who lived in your house before you? You can determine the history of your house by researching online. Part One of this presentation will focus on researching deeds and tracing titles back in time, using resources available on the Internet.

Overview

- Where is the house?
- Who owns the house?
- How old is the house?
- When was it built, and who owned & lived in the house in the past?
- What is the architectural style of the house?

You can research your own house or any house; perhaps the house you grew up in. Or you are curious about the old house at the corner of your road. You should ask yourself a few questions. Where is the house? Who owns the house? How old is the house? When was it built, and who owned & lived in the house in the past? What is the architectural style of the house?



The architectural style of the house may provide clues as to the age of a house, but you can be fooled by this when a previous owner changed the style of the house. If a house displays Georgian architecture, like the Wellington House on Trapelo Road, this may hint that the house was built in the pre-1800 era. For more information on architectural styles of the past, see this Historic New England guide: <https://tinyurl.com/ybfepqpr>.

Who owned the house?

- Locate the house
 - Waltham GIS
 - Building Department building card
 - Google maps (Google Earth)
 - Historic maps
- Check MACRIS
- Check deeds on Middlesex Land Registry
- Research title back as far as you can
 - Middlesex Land Registry
 - Familysearch.org

The first step is to locate and document the house and property on the Waltham GIS system, on Google satellite and street view, and historic maps. Next, obtain the building card from the Building Department. Then, check the MACRIS database to see if the property is listed there, and if so, download the photo and the report. Next, research the property on the Middlesex Land Registry website, and document the deeds back to the last deed listed under property search. Lastly, research the deeds under book search back to about 1900, and then if necessary, the pre-1870 deeds on familysearch.org.

Locate the house on Waltham GIS

The screenshot shows the Waltham GIS website interface. The title bar reads "Waltham, Massachusetts 'The Watch City'". The main interface is divided into three sections:

- Selection Panel (Left):** Contains a search bar with "Parcels" selected, a "Parcel Viewer" dropdown, and a "Pan" button. Below is a table of selected parcels:

Parcel ID	Number	Unit/Alt	Street	Owner
0052 009 0002	44		PLEASANT ST	

- Map (Center):** A satellite-style map showing a street grid. A yellow highlighted parcel is located at the intersection of Pleasant St and another street. Other street names visible include "DANBURY STREET", "GARDEN STREET", "GARDEN DRIVE", "GARDEN PARK", "WALTON STREET", and "WALTON DRIVE".
- Details Panel (Right):** A "Details" panel with a "Parcel Information" dropdown and a "Print" button. It displays the following information:

Parcel Information	
MapID	F_729706_2963233
DataID	F_729706_2963233
Parcel ID	0052 009 0002
Owner	
Co-Owner	
Co-Owner2	
Number	44
Unit/Alt	
Street	PLEASANT ST
Year Built	1920
LotArea	101
Total Acres	0.218110
Sq. Feet	9370.000000
Building Type	OLD STYLE
Total Land Value	\$258,900
Total Bldg Value	\$215,200
Total Value	\$483,500
Sale Price	\$235,000
Prev. Sale Price	\$66,500

Start by looking for the property on the City GIS website:

<http://webgis.city.waltham.ma.us/GPVParcelSearch/Default.aspx>. The web page will list the owner, but for this presentation, I have erased the owner's name on this slide. The year built is not always correct. 44 Pleasant St. is the Rev. Jacob Cushing house, built in 1759, not 1920.

Locate the house on Waltham GIS

The screenshot displays the Waltham GIS Parcel Viewer interface. The main map area shows several parcels with their dimensions and area. A central parcel is highlighted in yellow. The dimensions of this parcel are 93.16 (top), 67.25 (right), 76(d) (bottom), and 90.8 (left). The area of the parcel is 142.1. The parcel is labeled with '60' and '33'. The map also shows other parcels with dimensions like 1.27, 62, 130.5, 67.71, and 80. The interface includes a 'Parcel Viewer' dropdown, a 'Pan' button, and a 'Details' button. The 'Details' panel on the right shows sales information for the selected parcel, including MapID, Deed ID, Deed Search, Legal Reference, Sale Date, Sale Price, Grantor, and Previous Sales Information. The Deed Search and Legal Reference fields are circled in red.

Sales Information	
MapID	7229706_2963233
Deed ID	7229706_2963233
Deed Search	22894-440
Legal Reference	22894-440
Sale Date	1983-03-28
Sale Price	00:00:00.00000000
Grantor	NAL
Header	Previous Sales Information
Prev. Sale Date	19629460
Prev. Sale Price	00:00:00.00000000
Sale Price	\$66,500
Grantor	NAL

On the sales page, shown here, many times the most current deed book and page are posted.

Obtain the building card

STREET: 509 - 517 Moody Street		LOT NO:		
DATE	OWNER	PROPOSED WORK	AMOUNT	PLAN NO.
11.27.22	H J Young	Store building per #610	\$15,000.	UL 44
11.30.38	"	Alter storefront at #517 per #388	\$1500.	
2.15.50	"	Repair fire damage to bldg per #37	\$400.	
2.12.52	Dexter Florist	Sign #5 at #511		
2.12.52	"	Sign #7 at #511		
7.29.55	Elkins Shoe Store	Install new bulkhead at #517 per #400	\$350.	
2.9.56	H J Young	Alterations to store #515 per #63	\$1000.	
3.13.56	Flynn TV Appl Co	Sign #16 at #517		
7.30.58	"	Sign #65 at #517		
9.10.58	Flynn's Music Center	Sign #80 at #515		
12.27.61	H J Young	Alterations to store #515 per #659	\$200.	
4.2.65	Harold Young	Alterations to #509 for a medical suite per #117	\$15,000.	65-14
8.30.65	Dr Leon Ginsburg	Sign #73 at #509		
8.30.65	Moody Medical Bldg	Sign #77 at #509		
6.15.66	Middlesex Vacuum Cleaner Co	Sign #51 at #515		

Obtain the building card from the building department, located at Government Center, 119 School Street. This will give you a history of the permits issued since 1900. The cards date back to about 1900, so if the house was built before 1900, you won't see any entries before 1900. This is the building card for the commercial building at the corner of Moody & Maple, owned now by the City of Waltham. It has been demolished for the construction of a new fire station. The building had been erected in 1922, as evidenced by the permit issued in that year.

Find the house on Google maps

Satellite view



Street view



Plug the address, 44 Pleasant Street, into Google maps. Once you have located the house (sometimes Google can be off), click on satellite view, then drag the little man over to the street in front of the house. This will give you the street view.

Check MACRIS

- Check MACRIS spreadsheet
- Plug address into MACRIS database
 - On National Register?
 - On State Register?
- Download photo
- Download report



The screenshot displays the MACRIS website interface. At the top, it reads "Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System" and "MACRIS". Below this, there is a navigation bar with "MHC Home" and "MACRIS Home" on the left, and "Login" on the right. The main content area is titled "Results" and includes links for "Get Results in Report Format" and "CSV" / "Spreadsheet". It shows search criteria: "Town(s): Waltham", "Street No.: 44", "Street Name: Pleasant St", and "Resource Type(s): Building". A table below lists the search results:

Int. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year	SR	NR
001202	Cushing, Rev. Jacob House	44 Pleasant St	Waltham	c. 1700		

At the bottom of the table, it says "1 Properties Found". Below the table are buttons for "New Search", "New Search - Same Search", and "Previous". The footer contains "MHC Home" and "MACRIS Home".

Next determine if the house is listed on the state historical commission database of historic places. Go to the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) website and find the property. Determine from the report if the property is on the National Register of Historic Places. Here is a link to the MACRIS website: <http://mhc-macris.net/>.

Download MACRIS photo & report



ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

The integrity of this Georgian house has been destroyed by Italianate Greek Revival renovations. The building remains Georgian in overall appearance due to its squat proportions and some detailing (window heads in particular) survives.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

Rev. Jacob Cushing built this house as his parsonage in 1758. He had graduated from Harvard in 1740, one of a line of ministers. (His father, Rev. Jacob Cushing, prepared his ordination sermon on 23 Nov. 1753). He served for 37 years before being succeeded by Rev. Samuel Ripley. In 1854 the house was owned by H. Thurston and it is likely that he transformed the house into an Italianate Greek Revival structure. Later it was owned by James Ellison, who owned most of the land in the vicinity.

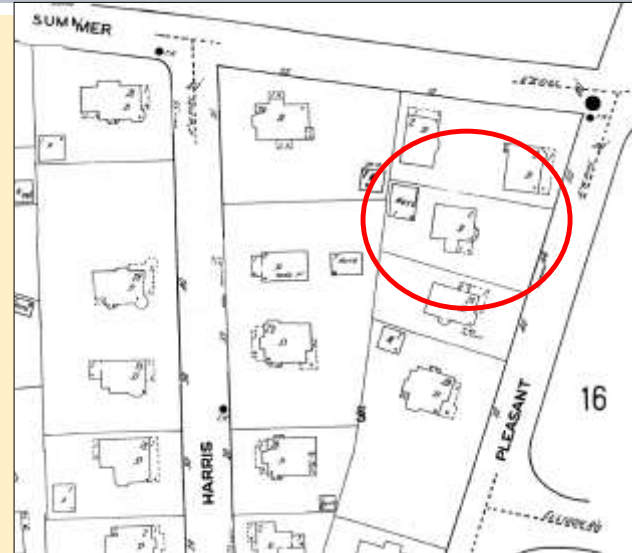
BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Maps. (see area form)
Charles Nelson, *Millions Paid to Progress*, Thomas Lewis, Cambridge, 1879.

If it is listed in MACRIS, download the photo, if any, and the report. 44 Pleasant Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Look for the house in 20th century maps

- Is the street & neighborhood on the 1946 USGS map?
- Is the house on the 1938 Sanborn map?
(Available online at the WPL)



1938 Sanborn map

Using 20th century maps, look to see if the street and neighborhood were there after 1900. Much of North Waltham was developed after 1950, and the 1946 USGS maps show the land was open space. Many historic maps are available on the website of the Waltham Historical Commission. The 20th century Sanborn maps are available on the web at the Waltham Public Library, but you have to go there to access them. One website that shows 20th century topographical maps and aerial views is Netronline.com's Historic Aerials: <https://www.historicaerials.com/>.

Find the house in historic maps

1875 map



1854 map



Look to see if the house appears on the 1900, 1875 and 1854 maps, and if so, note the names of the owners. The house at 44 Pleasant Street was on the early maps, with owners James H. Ellison in 1875 and H. Timmons in 1854. Note the property boundaries on the 1875 map, since they will help identify the correct property in the deeds. The 1854 map is available on the Harvard University Library website. Waltham town: <https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/ids:2979366>. Waltham village: <https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/ids:2979368>. The actual map is hanging by the library desk at the Waltham Public Library. An 1856 map of Middlesex County is available on the Norman Leventhal map center site: <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:1257bb45s>. The 1875 and 1900 maps are available on the Waltham Historical Commission website: <https://www.city.waltham.ma.us/historical-commission/pages/historical-maps>.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

- Under search criteria, choose property search

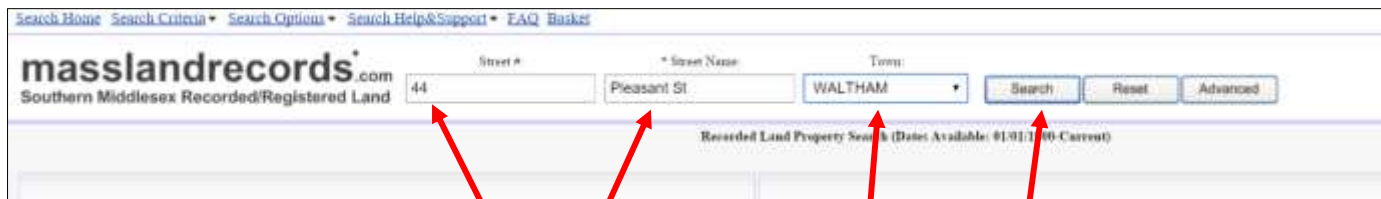


Research the title of the deeds starting with present day and working back in time. Start by selecting property search under the dropdown menu, search criteria.

The Middlesex County South Land Registry website:
<http://www.masslandrecords.com/middlesexsouth/>.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

- Fill in the address & select Waltham from drop down; click on Search



The screenshot shows the search interface for masslandrecords.com. The page title is "masslandrecords.com Southern Middlesex Recorded/Registered Land". The search form includes the following fields and buttons:

- Street #: 44
- * Street Name: Pleasant St
- Town: WALTHAM
- Buttons: Search, Reset, Advanced

Below the search form, the text "Recorded Land Property Search (Date Available: 01/01/00-Current)" is visible. Four red arrows point to the "Street #", "Street Name", "Town", and "Search" fields respectively.

Plug in the street number and street name, and choose Waltham from the drop down menu, Town.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

- Select the oldest deed or mortgage from list



masslandrecords.com
Southern Middlesex Recorded/Registered Land

Street #: 44 * Street Name: Pleasant St

Recorded Land Property Search (Dates Available: 01/01/1900-Curren

Select All | Invert Selection | Deselect All | Print Search Result | View: 20/Page 50/Page 100/Page

Street Name	Rec. Date	Book/Page	Type Desc.	Street #	Town
PLEASANT ST	1/3/2011	60917/244	DISCHARGE		WALTHAM
PLEASANT ST	11/27/2011	60828/126	MORTGAGE		WALTHAM
PLEASANT ST	12/27/2011	60828/142	DECLARATION OF HOMESTEAD		WALTHAM
PLEASANT ST	3/29/2006	47177/368	MORTGAGE		WALTHAM
PLEASANT ST	1/19/1979	11679/469	DEED		WALTHAM

Click on the line items called deeds. Declaration of homestead will also provide title information also. You are looking for documents that will show the previous owner, with the book and page number of the previous deed.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

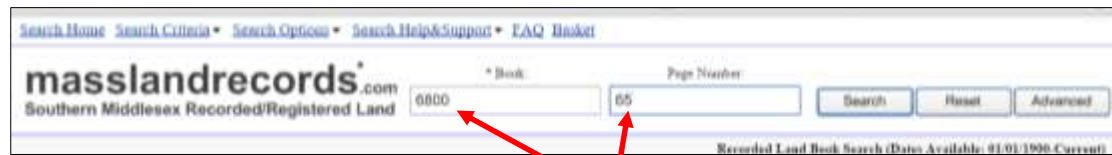
- Look for paragraph about grantor's title
- Write down book & page numbers of previous deed



When the deed comes up, click on view image over on the right. This gives you the image of the actual deed. Make note of the boundaries. This helps ensure that you have the correct deed. At the bottom, look for the title information of the grantor. This is the previous deed. Write down the book and page number of the previous deed.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

- Under search criteria, select book search; fill in book & page number



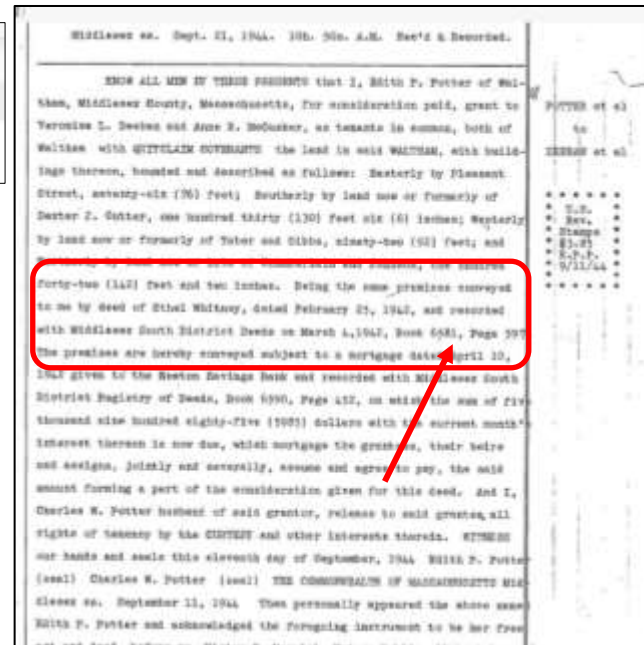
The visible online deeds on the Middlesex Land Registry date back only to the 1970s or 1980s. But you can pull up earlier deeds by choosing book search under the search criteria. Plug in the book and page number of the previous deed.

Check Middlesex Land Registry

Rec. Date	Book/Page	Type Desc.	Turns	Doc. #
9/11/1944	658/147	NONE		658/147

Even though the description says none, click on it anyway.

Write down the book & page number of previous title; then repeat book search



The results show under type description, none. Don't worry. The MLR has scanned these deeds, but has not indexed them yet. If you click on the item, you will still be able to view the deed. Again, write down the book and page number of the grantor's title.

Going back before 1870s

- Using the book search on Middlesex Land Registry, trace back in deeds to ca 1870
 - This is as far back as the MLR website goes
- Switch to the Family History Library website, familysearch.org
 - Use the Massachusetts Land Records database
 - Continue noting previous title data for book & page
 - The deeds are not indexed; you will have to browse to find them

You can search back to about 1870 on the Middlesex Land Registry site. To research pre-1870 deeds, go to the website, familysearch.org.

Familysearch.org

- Website of the Family History Library (LDS Church) in Salt Lake City
 - Free to all users
 - FHL previously microfilmed records all over the world
 - Now they are in the process of digitizing the microfilm
 - Many records are searchable online, but deeds are not; but they are “browsable”

Familysearch.org is the LDS church Family History Library website. It is free to all users, but you do have to register to use the site. They microfilmed the Middlesex deeds a couple of decades ago, and they have now digitized the microfilms. However, they have not indexed the deeds, so they are not searchable. Instead, you have to browse them. This can be tedious, but it is doable, and beats having to go into the Registry in Cambridge.

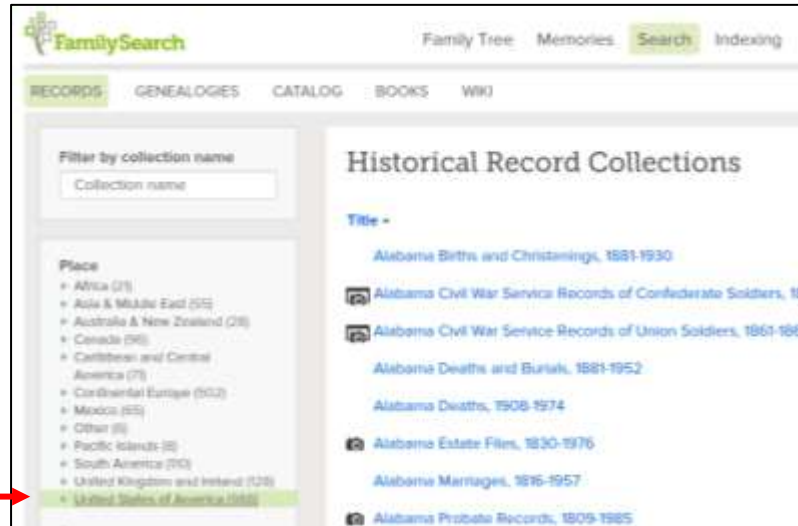
Familysearch.org search page

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org search page. The page has a navigation bar at the top with links for 'Family Tree', 'Memories', 'Search', and 'Indexing'. Below the navigation bar, there are several search options: 'RECORDS', 'GENEALOGIES', 'CATALOG', 'BOOKS', and 'WIKI'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Search Historical Records' and contains a search form with fields for 'DECEASED ANCESTOR'S NAME' (First Name and Last Name), 'SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT' (Birth, Marriage, Residence, Death, Any), 'SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP' (Spouse, Parents, Other Person), and 'RESTRICT RECORDS BY' (Location, Type, Batch Number, Film Number). The right column is titled 'Research By Location' and features a world map. Below the map is a 'Find a Collection' section with a 'Collection Title' search box and a link that says 'Browse all published collections'. A red arrow points to this link, and a red box highlights the text 'Do not search; click on browse instead'.

Start by choosing the search tab on the FHL website, familyserch.org. Above is the search page. But do not search. You will get nothing. Instead click on the hyperlink called “Browse all published collections.”

Familysearch.org search page

- On left, choose USA
- Next choose Massachusetts



Next, choose the country to browse, United States. Then choose the state to browse, Massachusetts. Do not rush the site. Give it time to load all the data.

Familysearch.org search page

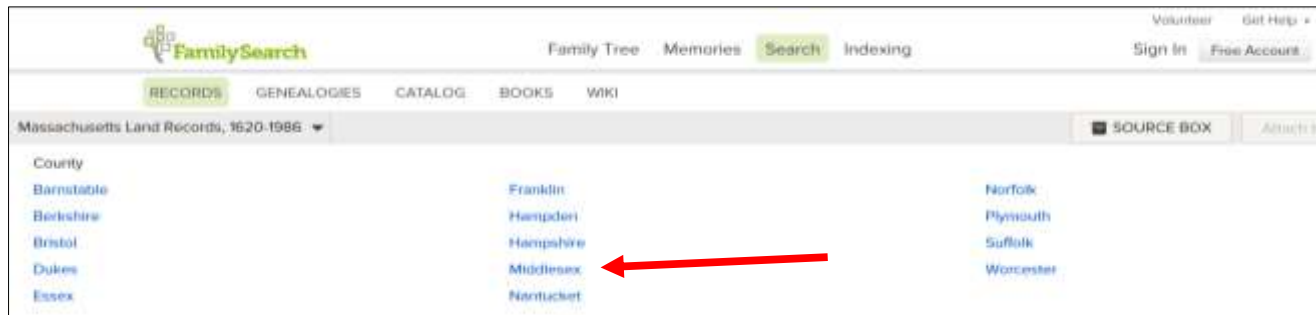
The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org search page. The main heading is 'Historical Record Collections' with 29 collections. A table lists various records with columns for 'Title', 'Records', and 'Last Updated'. A red arrow points to the entry 'Massachusetts Land Records, 1620-1986', which has a 'Browse Images' link next to it. The left sidebar contains filters for 'Place', 'Date', 'Collections', and 'Availability'. The 'Place' filter is set to 'Massachusetts (29)'. The 'Date' filter is set to '1620 - 1986 (1)'. The 'Collections' filter is set to 'Land Records (1)'. The 'Availability' filter is set to 'Available (1)'. The 'Records' column shows the number of records for each collection, and the 'Last Updated' column shows the date the collection was last updated.

Title	Records	Last Updated
Massachusetts Births and Christenings, 1639-1915	4,175,664	15 Mar 2016
Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915	3,831,485	15 Mar 2016
Massachusetts Death Index, 1970-2003	2,037,187	27 Feb 2013
Massachusetts Deaths and Burials, 1795-1910	1,334,801	15 Mar 2016
Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915	2,739,148	18 Feb 2016
Massachusetts Land Records, 1620-1986	Browse Images	18 Jun 2014
Massachusetts Marriages, 1695-1910	949,294	18 Feb 2016
Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915	1,539,261	27 Jul 2015
Massachusetts Naturalization Index, 1906-1952	388,086	09 Nov 2010
Massachusetts State Census, 1855	1,202,234	12 Apr 2013
Massachusetts State Census, 1885	1,352,817	26 Feb 2013

Choose Massachusetts Land Records database

You will then get a list of all the digitized collections for Massachusetts. You will see that some are searchable and others say “browse images,” which means you cannot search on these. Click on the browsable database, “Massachusetts Land Records, 1620-1986.”

Familysearch.org search page



- Next choose Middlesex County
- Browse the indexes
 - Grantee is person buying land
 - Grantor is person selling land or giving a mortgage to a bank or individual

You will get a hyperlink called “browse through 5,766,135 images.” Don’t panic at this point. There are ways to whittle down the numbers. When you click on the hyperlink, you will get to this screen. Choose Middlesex County. If you do not already have a book and page number, you will have to look at either the grantee or the grantor indexes.

Familysearch.org search page

- Grantee indexes are a good place to start
- Work your way back in time

Massachusetts Land Records, 1620-1986 ▾

Record Type, Year Range, and Volume numi

[Chattel mortgages 1838-1853 Natick](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1639-1799 A-G](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1639-1799 H-R](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1639-1799 S-Z](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1800-1835 A-E](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1800-1835 F-O](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1800-1835 P-Z](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1836-1846 A-H](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1836-1846 I-Z](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1847-1859 A-B](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1847-1859 C-E](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1847-1859 F-H](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1847-1859 I-M](#)

[Deed index \(grantee\) 1847-1859 N-S](#)



A grantee is the person buying the property, and a grantor is the person selling. We saw James H. Ellison owned 44 Pleasant Street in 1875. So how did he get this land? Start with the grantee index looking for James H. Ellison. Choose the time period and deed index that includes the letter E.

Grantee index 1849-1860

- Note that 1854 map showed Timmins
- Look for a Timmins to Ellison deed

Year	Grantor	Grantee	Page 1	Page 2
1849	Andrew	G. Pratt	541	472
1853	James	G. Miller	657	276
.	.	O. W. Wellington et al	651	364
.	.	J. Wellington	664	570
1857	.	J. F. Timmins	776	117
1856	Mary S.	G. H. Timmins et al	737	507
.	.	G. H. Dexter Jr.	...	531
1859	.	M. Timmins	113	577

Although the 1875 map shows James H. Ellison as the owner, be aware that a lot of business men chose to have their wives own the family homestead, perhaps as a way to protect the home from lawsuits stemming from the husband's business activities. Here we see that a Mary S. Ellison purchased a lot from G. H. Timmins et al in 1856. We saw from the 1854 map an H. Timmons owned the property. Mary S. Ellison was the wife of James Ellison and the mother of James H. Ellison and Charlotte E. Ellison. So this deed is of interest. Notice the grantor (seller) is G. H. Timmins et al (et al means "and others"). This is often a clue that these people are heirs, and there is a probate case.

Look for the book & page



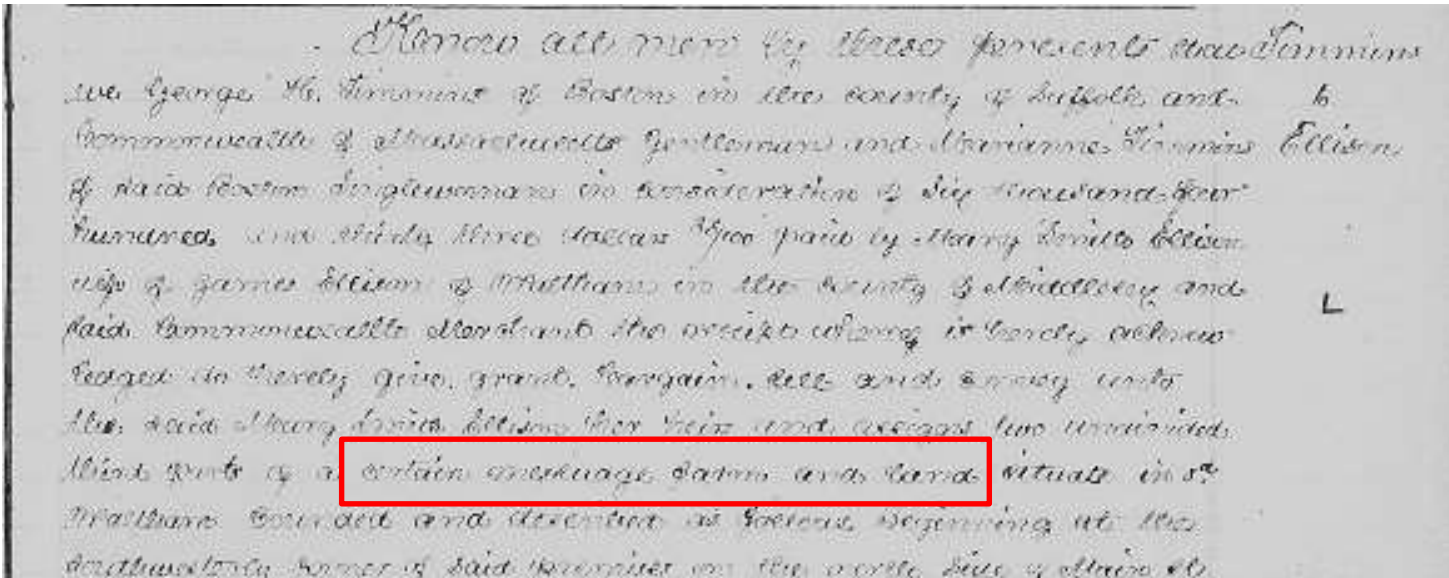
So when we choose books 736-737, we see that we have 693 images to browse. Yikes! But not to panic. There is a way to get to the page rather quickly.

Guestimate the right image number



So our deed is in book 737, which is the second book on the film. Also, the page we need is 507. This is a pretty high number, and the original books did not go much higher in page counts. So make a guess. Let's choose a round number near the end of the 693 images, say 650, and plug this into the image number box. Voila! We see this is page 518. So we are close. Notice that there are two pages to each image. So we need to go back 12 pages or 6 images to get to 507. Plug in 644 in the image number box.

Look for mention of house in deeds



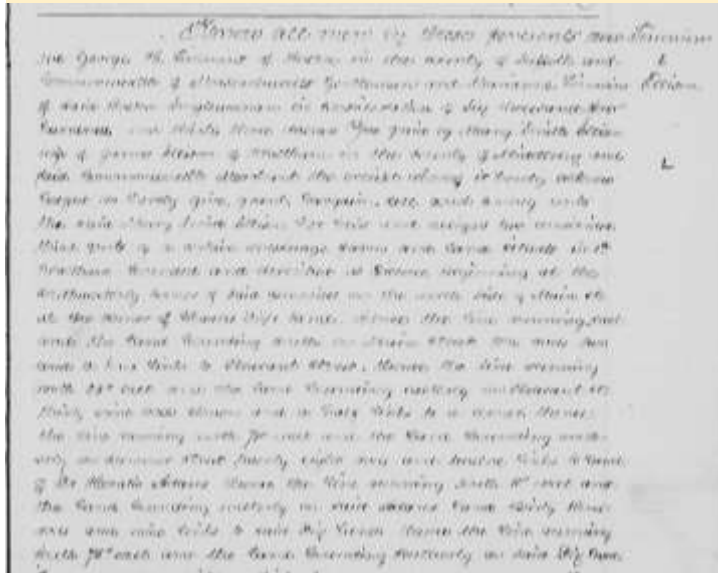
Know all men by these presents that Timmons
we George W. Timmons of Boston in the County of Suffolk and
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Gentlemen and Marianna Timmons Ellison
of said County of Suffolk in consideration of Six thousand four
hundred and thirty three Dollars then paid by Harry Smith Ellison
wife of James Ellison of Mattapan in the County of Middlesex and
said Commonwealth the receipt whereof is hereby solemnly
certified do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto
the said Harry Smith Ellison her heirs and assigns the undivided
third part of a **certain messuage farm and land** situate in
Mattapan Town and District of Boston beginning at the
southeasterly corner of said parcel on the north side of Main St

- Messuage = dwelling house & outbuildings

This is the 1856 Timmons to Ellison deed. If you go back far enough in time, you may find that the property did not have a house on it. Since you are interested in the age of the house, look for evidence that the property had a house on it. In this case the deed mentions a messuage farm. This means it was a farm with a house and outbuildings on it. So there was a house there in 1856. We knew this. The house was on the 1854 map.

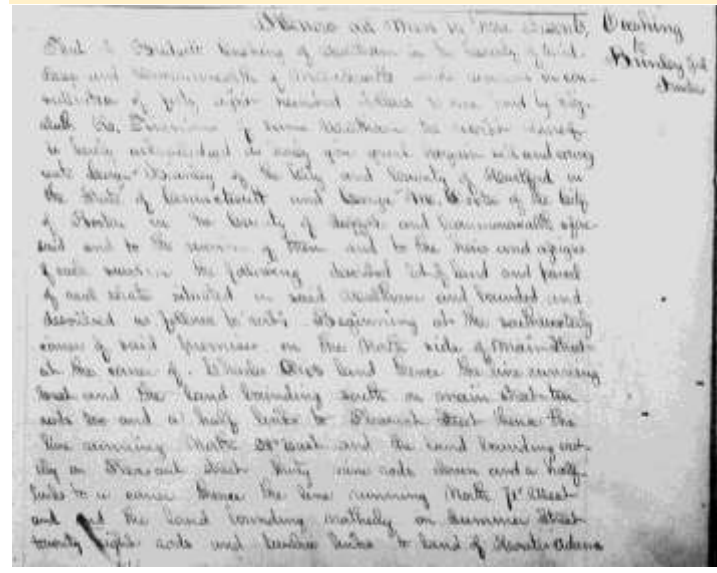
Keep working back in time

Timmins to Ellison deed



Handwritten deed from Timmins to Ellison, dated 1856. The text is written in cursive and is somewhat faded. It begins with "I hereby sell unto the above named..." and describes the property being sold. The deed is written on a single page with a header line.

Cushing to Timmins deed

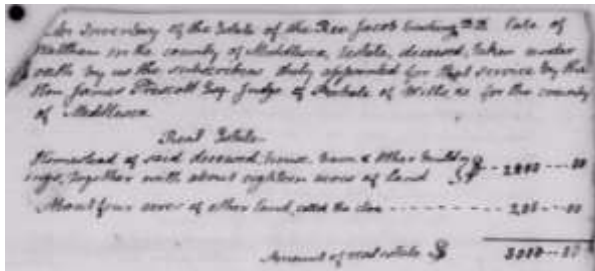


Handwritten deed from Cushing to Timmins, dated 1847. The text is written in cursive and is somewhat faded. It begins with "I hereby sell unto the above named..." and describes the property being sold. The deed is written on a single page with a header line. The name "Cushing" is written in the top right corner.

Using the mention of a previous deed and book, or the grantee and grantor indexes, keep working your way back in time. In 1847, the heirs of Rev. Jacob Cushing sold the property to Elizabeth Timmins via the trustees of the estate of Elizabeth's father. Elizabeth died, and the land went to her son, George H. Timmins in 1856.

Probate real estate inventories

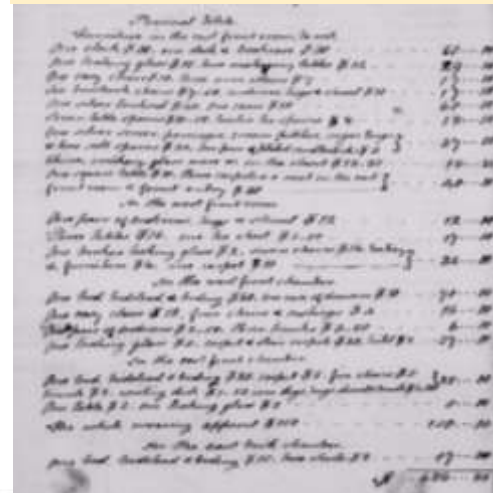
Real estate inventory



1809 probate of Rev. Jacob Cushing

- Pre-1871 records available online at www.americanancestors.org
- 1871-1949 records at Judicial Archives
- Post 1949 records at court

Personal inventory



Probate records can provide very detailed descriptions of real estate. Early probates sometimes detailed the property by fields and parcels, as in the estate of Rev. Jacob Cushing. Probate inventories have two sections: real estate (land and buildings) and personal estate (household & farming items, bank accounts & financial instruments). Both can be interesting. For the Cushing probate, the personal estate inventory documented every item in the household by room, so it provides a glimpse into the interior of the house. For Middlesex County probates, you can view the pre-1871 records online at americanancestors.org (subscription required). Records from 1871 through 1949 were transferred to the Massachusetts Judicial Archives at Columbia Point. The post 1949 indexes and records are available at the Middlesex County Probate Court in East Cambridge.

Probate real estate inventories

Cushing inventory p1

The homestead, consisting of about fourteen acres and three quarters of land, with a dwelling house, a pump room, wood house, subkey house & chaise house adjoining and contiguous to said dwelling house, a barn, sheep pen and bee house thereon, situate in said Waltham, and bounded, as follows, viz. — southerly, partly by the County road leading from Boston to Worcester and partly by land of Samuel Mel-

Cushing inventory p2

lington; westerly, partly by land of Jacob Foster and partly by land of Henry Drumball; northerly by land of Theodore Lyman; and easterly by the town road leading from Waltham meeting house to said County road

Said homestead consists of the six parcels next following bounded, described, and appraised, as follows, viz. —

1st The house lot, on which all said buildings stand, contains about one acre and is bounded, easterly by said town road, southerly by the southern front lot herein after described, westerly, partly by the south centre lot, and partly by the north centre lot, both herein after described, as the wall next stands, excepting at the barrow front of the barn, and eastern side is to be a straight line, so as to include the narrow strip of land east of said barn and fenced as a passage way to them; northerly by land of Theodore Lyman to said town road; which house lot we appraise at two hundred dollars — 200.00

While the initial inventory shown previously gave some details of the metes and bounds, when the estate was parceled out to the heirs later on, the real estate description became extremely detailed. The real estate was described in various lots, only one of which contained the house.

Probate real estate inventories

Cushing inventory p3

Am^t be^t forward \$ 1901.25

2^d The south centre lot, containing about three acres and bounded, southerly by said land of Samuel Wellington; westerly partly by the southwest front lot and partly by the northwest lot, herein after described; northerly by the north centre lot, herein after described; and easterly part by by said house lot and partly by said southeast front lot; which south centre lot, we appraise at three hundred dollars ————— 300.00

1st The north centre lot, containing about one acre and three quarters, and bounded, southerly by said south centre lot; westerly by the north west lot, herein after described; northerly by land of said Thoreau Lyman; and easterly by said house lot; which north centre lot, we appraise at one hundred and seventy five dollars — 175.00

Cushing inventory p4

Am^t be^t forward 3261.25

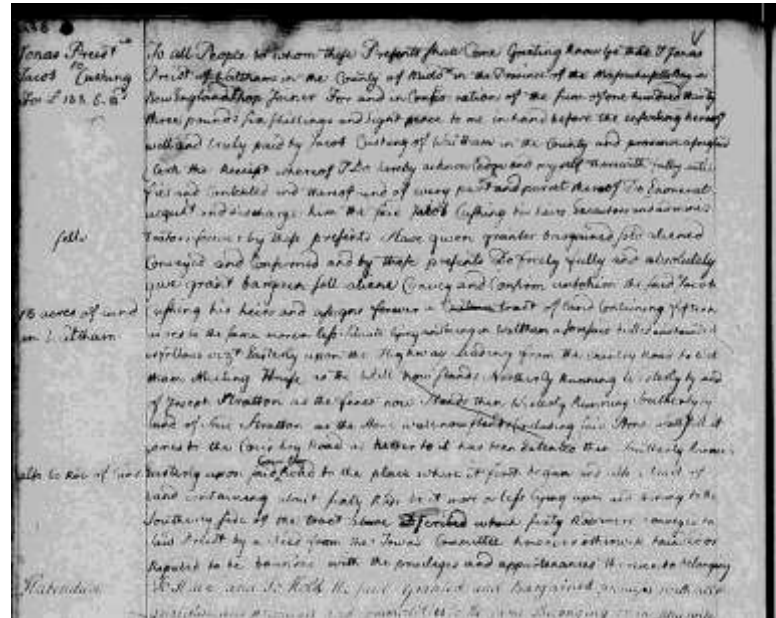
7th The close, so called, containing about four acres of mowing, orchard and woodland, situate in said Northam, and bounded, easterly by land of Henry Kimball, southerly, westerly, and northerly on land of Thoreau Lyman, together with the right of fishing to and from the same, in the usual way, as said testator had — which close we appraise at one hundred and sixty dollars ————— 160.00

8th The stable, standing back of said mowing house, and the right in the land on which said stable stands; which stable is bounded, northerly and southerly by common land; easterly by the stable of Jacob and Alphaeus Gale; and westerly by the stable of William Clark; which stable and the right in the land on which it stands, we appraise at fifteen dollars ————— 15.00

The final real estate inventory for the Cushing estate went on for 4 pages.

Work back in time

- Did Jacob Cushing build the house?
- Or was there a house there already?
- Check grantee index for Jacob Cushing
- 1754 deed Priest to Cushing – no house



Rev. Jacob Cushing married Anna Williams, the daughter of the previous minister, Rev. Warham Williams, in 1753. The MACRIS report claims the house was built in 1759, but it was probably built few years earlier, given the 1754 date of the deed.

Summary Part One

- Find property on maps & MACRIS
- Research title on Middlesex Land Registry
 - Current deeds
 - Book searches
 - Research ownership back to 1870s
- Research title on deeds on FamilySearch.org
 - Start with grantee index, then deeds
- Check for probate records inventories
- Work back to a deed with no house

To summarize part 1, start by finding the property on the Waltham GIS maps. Check 1943 USGS & 1938 Sanborn maps to see if house, street & neighborhood are >75 years old. Check 1900, 1875, 1854 & 1831 historic maps. Go to Middlesex Land Registry site & start with property search. Make note of citations of grantors' title, book & page. Trace the property back to ca 1900. Switch to historic deeds on FamilySearch.org. Use grantee & grantor indexes if necessary. Look for real estate inventories in probate records.