

Abstract of Title Research

You may already have in your possession the Abstract of Title for your home. This document was at one time a required portion of the sales transaction when selling/purchasing property. In today's world the process became too cumbersome and is no longer created as part of the transaction.

If you do have a copy of the Abstract of Title, a very significant portion of your research is done! The Abstract of Title will show every transaction, dating back to the original Land Grant from the United States government in 1824 to either David Hoover (most likely) or John Sheets. It is usually easy to determine when a house was built on the property, based on the selling prices as listed on the Abstract. A Century Structure Committee member can help you with this determination. After your completed application packet is approved, the SullivanMunce Cultural Center will add it to the museum historical collection and would also like to make a copy of the full Abstract of Title as well.

If you do not have a copy of the Abstract, it may be that a copy is available through the title company that handled most Village transactions over the years. Royal Title, located on the courthouse square in Lebanon, has archived many Abstracts and is willing to provide homeowners with a copy upon request. Royal Title is located at 108 North Lebanon Street, phone number 765-482-2270 or 800-733-7329. Christy Labrie is happy to help; you can email her your request at christy.labrie@royaltitle.com. Just be sure to include the legal description of your property when you make the request.

If you locate a copy of the Abstract and determine the point at which a house was built, it is helpful to include a copy of the actual Deed in the application packet. The Abstract will reference a book and page number, as well as a date, which you can then use to locate and copy the original Deed at the Boone County Courthouse. An Abstract of Title example is included here.

If you don't have a copy of the Abstract of Title and have no luck finding it, then you will need to start at the Boone County Courthouse. It is a beautiful building well worth a visit, and the staff in both the Auditor's Office and the Recorder's Office are very patient and helpful.

Deed Research

There are two important offices to visit at the courthouse. If you are already armed with the book and page number for a Deed, then you don't need to visit the Auditor's Office...unless you are interested in seeing the name of every owner of your home over the years (including you!). Including all those names and dates in your application packet would be of historical value, so why not start there? If you don't have any information at all, then you should always start with the Auditor's Office.

Auditor's Office Room 201

The Auditor's Office is open M-F from 8:00 to 4:00 but you should always avoid the last hour of the day so that the office staff has time to close all transactions before closing.

Before you arrive, you should have your 10 digit "parcel number", which you can find on your Property Record Card (PRC). The PRC information is available online at the Boone County website

under the Assessor's Office...look for the ONLINE GIS APPLICATION link and follow the instructions. You will need a copy of this PRC for your application packet anyway, so print it and take it along to Lebanon.

Every transaction involving your property (sales, quit claims, and so on) is recorded in a set of Transfer Books located in the Auditor's Office, and they will be happy to trace your property's owners (starting with you) all the way back to the earliest transaction (the Village is in Eagle Township...they may ask you that question). Make a note of all the names and the dates of the transactions. This summary information will then allow you to find and print actual Deeds when you go to the Recorder's Office across the hall.

Recorder's Office Room 202

Same hours (M-F, 8:00 to 4:00 but finish by 3:00). All Deeds are recorded in Deed Books, located in a small room inside the office; just tell them what you are after, and they will show you where to go. Deed Books are filed by date and in most cases are duplicated, with one book listing transactions by "Grantor" (seller) and the same information in a second book listed by "Grantee" (buyer). The books you are looking for are located just inside the door on the racks to your left.

The old Deed Books are many things: quite heavy, quite elaborate, and fascinating. Everything is handwritten, with beautiful script and in many cases first names you don't see so much these days (try "Pirtle" or "Luthenia" on for size!). It would be easy to lose track of time just browsing the books. What you want to record is the BOOK and PAGE number for the transaction(s) involving your research. Write them down.

Ask an office staffer to show you to the correct computer terminal, where you can enter the book and page information and see the Deed. If it is what you are after, you can print it; your cost will be \$1.00 per page. How many Deeds involving your home that you choose to print is up to you; the earliest Deed that documents the age of your home is the most critical for your application. It might not be the oldest Deed (which could be recording the sale of the land, with no house) so you might need to trace/copy more than one Deed.

Some Deeds may be handwritten (very old Deeds recreated after a courthouse fire); most are typewritten. Some examples are included here.

Including the twenty minute drive each way and the time needed for research, the entire process might take two to three hours. Plenty of places to eat in Lebanon...make it a field trip. Just remember that the two hour free parking limit on the courthouse square is usually strictly enforced.