

WHERE TO START

Registry of Deeds

Chain of Title

The best place to begin your search is at the Registry of Deeds in Cambridge—see below for contact information. At the Registry you can trace the transfer of your property (the “chain of titles”) from owner to owner. The Registry indexes information according to the name of the Grantor (seller) or the name of the Grantee (buyer). In addition to the deeds, you may also find documents related to foreclosure, tax liens, mortgages, divorce complications, homestead declarations, and other situations.

Records from 1974 to the present are available online at www.cambridgedeeds.com. The documents are printable. You can search by name or by address for deeds and other documents, as well as for plans. For records prior to 1974 you will have to visit the Registry in person.

For 19th century records, you have to take a trip into the basement of the Registry. Older records may contain sketchy information but pay attention to the description of the property and the personal information about buyer and sellers.

Plan Department

At the Registry you will also find a Plan Department. You may or may not find the plan of your house here but you may find your neighborhood or street. It's worth a look. The plans are divided by City/Town, then by date, and then by street and owner.

Tracing the history of a piece of property is much like going through a family album. You are researching the changes

in a physical place, and hopefully you can go back to when it was just land with no structure on it.

As you go through deeds and records, make copies of the documents, and keep track of the names involved. These may serve you well as you start your research into the lives of the people who lived in your house.

Registry of Deeds
208 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02141-0068
(617) 679-6310
www.cambridgedeeds.com

Other Resources

Birth, Marriage and Death Records Prior to 1841

Medford City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Room 103
85 George P. Hassett Drive
Medford, MA 02155
(781) 393-2425

Records between 1841-1905

Massachusetts State Archives
Citizen Information Service
One Ashburton Place, Room 1611
Boston, MA 02108-1512
(617) 727-7030
1-800-392-6090 (toll free)

Records after 1905

Massachusetts Registry
of Vital Records and Statistics
150 Mount Vernon St., 1st Fl.
Dorchester, MA 02125-3105
(617) 740-2600

Cemetery Records

The cemeteries in Medford are the Salem Street Cemetery, and Oak Grove. Graves from the older Cross Street

Cemetery were moved to Oak Grove in 1958. For more cemetery history visit <http://medfordgen.home.comcast.net/cemetaries.html>. For information, call the Medford Cemetery Department at 781-393-2488.

Census and Naturalization Records

Census records, naturalization records, passenger lists, and other genealogical information can be found at the National Archives in Waltham.

National Archives
380 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Massachusetts 02452-6399
(781) 663-0130
<http://www.archives.gov/northeast/boston/>

Genealogy in Medford Website

This website contains listings and links for Medford genealogical information.
<http://medfordgen.home.comcast.net/>

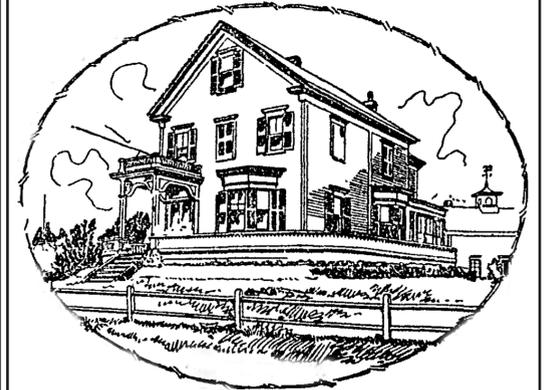
Medford Historical Society

10 Governors Ave.,
Medford, MA 02155
www.medfordhistorical.org
(781) 391-8739
Open 2:00-4:00 Sundays, and the first Thursday night of each month from 5:30-8:00.

Medford Public Library

111 High St.
Medford, MA 02155
(781) 395-7950
www.medfordlibrary.org
Open 9-9, Monday-Thursday,
9-6 Friday, 9-5 Saturday

LIBRARY HINT: To see Medford history holdings go to the Minuteman Library Catalog at <http://www.mln.lib.ma.us/>, and enter a subject search for Medford Mass.



Tracing the History of Your Medford House

House history can be divided into two parts—the history of the house itself, and the history of the people who lived in it.

Before you begin, collect as much information as you can about your house:

- 🕒 Do you have your deed?
- 🕒 Do you have any plans or other documents related to your house?
- 🕒 Do you know when your house was constructed and what the architectural style is?
- 🕒 Do you know the names of the previous owners?
- 🕒 Do you know anything about the previous owners or have any photos, scrapbooks or other items that belonged to them?

Collect everything you can find and make a file of the information. Every detail helps!

MORE INFORMATION

Resources at the Medford Public Library and the Medford Historical Society

City Directories

City directories list the address and occupation of the head of a household. Other information may also be included. Both the Library and MHS have a collection of directories from the mid-19th century to the present.

Maps and Atlases

Both the MHS and the Library have collections of historical maps, and street atlases, as well as Sanborn Maps. The maps show neighborhoods, streets, and individual businesses. They also include details of house construction. The Library has Sanborn maps on microfilm, and the Historical Society has a hard copy circa 1910.

Medford Historic Inventory

In the 1970's, houses and historic buildings were nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Several hundred historic Medford houses and buildings were nominated for inclusion in the Register. The Historical Inventory contains the forms for all of the buildings that were nominated. The forms have information about ownership and construction, and there are also some forms relating to entire neighborhoods.

Medford Historical Register

The Medford Historical Society published this periodical four times a years from 1898 to 1940. It contains huge amounts of Medford history including information about some houses, neighborhoods and industries. An index is available. Most of the register can also be viewed online

(unindexed) at the Tufts University Perseus Project. Go to www.medfordhistorical.org/edresources.php, and click on the link at the bottom of the page.

Postcards and Photographs

Both the MHS and the Library have collections of photographs. The MHS also has a postcard collection. The images are primarily from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and there are many pictures of streets and neighborhoods.

Newspapers

There have been a number of newspapers in Medford. The longest consistent publication has been the Medford Mercury. The MHS has paper copies of some Mercury's and other papers. The Library has the Mercury on microfilm starting in 1880, and other microfilm and paper holdings. For a history of Medford newspapers, and holdings at the MPL and Boston Library visit www.medfordgen.home.comcast.net/Newspapers.html.

School Records

The Library has high school yearbooks from 1915 to the present, as well as School Directories from 1891-1981. The MHS has a variety of school records including school census information that are not yet indexed. Some school information is included in town reports.

Town Reports

The MHS and Library have copies of the annual town reports dating back into the 19th century. Some late 19th and early

20th century reports include tax records for individuals.

You may also find names of city officials, employees, and businesses as well as lists of school graduates. The reports are not indexed.

Vertical Files

Both the MHS and the Library have vertical files, which include clippings, documents, pamphlets, articles, and other materials related to Medford history topics. These files include information about individuals, buildings, events, and neighborhood history. Indexes are available.

Vital Records

Birth, death, and marriage listings in Medford up to 1850 can be found in *Vital Records of Medford Massachusetts, to the year 1850*. This volume is available at both locations. Records from 1841-1905 can be found at the Massachusetts State Archives. Records after 1906 can be found at the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics.

Medford History Books

- History of the Town of Medford*
–James Usher
- Medford Historical Register*
- Medford on the Mystic* –Carl Seaburg
- Medford* –Anthony Sammarco
- Medford in the Revolution*
–Helen Tilden Wild
- Medford in the Victorian Era*
–Barbara Kerr
- Medford Past and Present: 275th Anniversary of Medford Mass*
- Medford (Then and Now)*
–Patricia Saunders
- Old Ships and Shipbuilding Days of Medford* –Hall Gleason
- Proceedings of the 275th Anniversary of the Settlement of Medford, Mass*
- Voices of West Medford: Oral Histories from the African-American Community*
–Sharon Kennedy
- Your House in the Streetcar Suburbs: the History and Care of Houses in Medford, Massachusetts*
–Cynthia Howard

