ADAMS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GETTYSBURG, PA

GETTING STARTED: PROPERTY RESEARCH

Before digging into our resources, it is important to locate the property you are researching on both modern and historic maps. If you do not already know the property's current address, you will need to find it. You can consult the following resources:

1. Adams County Tax Parcel Viewer (online - via Google) - useful in determining the current address of the property and the most recent deed reference.
2. The 1858 Adams County Wall Map (available at ACHS).
3. The 1872 Adams County Atlas (available at ACHS).
4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (available at ACHS).
5. Gettysburg Battlefield Maps (hard copies available at ACHS, also at www.loc.gov)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The most important step in property research is establishing a chain of title. There are many ways to do this. We recommend beginning with the most modern deed (see step one above), and moving back through time, from deed to deed. To begin searching land deeds, you can use the Adams County Courthouse's online public records search tool, available on all ACHS computers. Once you have reached a dead end in your deed search, you can turn to a host of other records at ACHS that can fill in the gaps. These records include, but are not limited to:

1. Tax Records: Each town and township generated an annual tax book. ACHS holds the originals from 1800 through the 1950s, and also photocopies of pre-1800 York County tax lists.
2. Estate Files: Check the estate files for the property owner(s) to look for a description of real estate
3. Newspaper references: Check our card file for any references to property owners, and search area papers at www.newspapers.com (available on all ACHS computers).
4. Look for Federal Census records (via ancestry.com, on all ACHS computers), and also local septennial census records (ACHS). This will help you determine who was living at the property at any given time.
5. Search our PastPerfect collections database for any relevant documents or images.
6. Search for Civil War Damage Claims to see if the property owner suffered any losses during the Civil War. These records are available on microfilm at ACHS and some are online via Ancestry.com.
7. Look through our family files to find more information about any owners or residents.

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