



Resources for Researching Early Property History in Oakland County

Sometimes it is difficult to locate free online resources of information when working on a personal research project, like trying to search local property history or a community's early settlement. Here are some sources and How-Tos to get you off to a good start.

Original mapping of Oakland County and first survey maps and surveyor notes

FIRST: These documents explain how they work, what town and range enumeration means, etc. as a good place to start before further research:

- https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/ogs-oilandgas-mapping-t-r-s_263223_7.pdf
- <https://seekingmichigan.org/look/2013/04/30/land>

THEN: To investigate specifically the land parcels in Oakland County, I recommend the **Bureau of Land Management /General Land Office** online documents. It is not too hard to use once you know the town and range of the township you want to search. It provides a wealth of information on the original purchase information, related purchases, etc. that can yield names of property owners and then they can be further researched fairly easily, or the specific land section can be tracked through time once you know this. The best part is they have detailed scans of the original surveyor maps and notes. You can see exactly where the surveyor encountered streams, swamps, sometimes certain trees as they ran the section lines and compare to modern landscape.

HERE'S HOW: <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>

Use **Michigan, Oakland County** and **Toledo Strip** to get to Oakland County records and use **Original Surveys (1816)** to see maps and **Patents** to see original documents. (*Note: the entry of the original purchases varies, and be aware that many original purchases were investments only and never settled by the purchaser. Once you know the **names** of the individuals connected to an original purchase, you can search by name to learn more.*)

Detailed mapping of Michigan's Indian Trails

State Archaeologist Wilbert Hinsdale created a detailed mapping of all major and minor Indian trails, camps, burial grounds, of every county in Michigan in 1933. His **Archaeological Atlas of Michigan** is searchable online and very fascinating, especially for those who love maps. He used an overlay of area maps from 1908, so you can see enough modern roads and features to narrow things down pretty well.

HIGH QUALITY SCANS can be found here:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/g/genpub/1265156.0001.001?view=toc>