

SEARCHING BALTIMORE CITY LAND RECORDS, 1851-1966

by Nancy L. Yuill

Deeds are official ownership records of real property. A deed will describe the kind of property and its location. It can verify dates a family is living in a certain area. It can identify other family members (spouse, parents, children, in-laws, etc.). Deeds, recorded in Land Records, have been microfilmed and are available at the State Archives.

To find a specific deed, the book reference, consisting of the court clerk's initials and a number, and page number are needed. The references can be found in the Block Books or name indexes. The Block Books [MSA CM196 and CM197], arranged numerically by block number, give the address, names of grantors and grantees, and deed reference. Land transactions of all properties on the block are listed chronologically. Block Books are available at the Archives and the Mitchell Courthouse in Baltimore.

To use the Block Books the block number is needed. As long as an address is known, the city block maps can be used to determine the block number. There is an 1851 block map and one of 1896 [MSA SC1427-298] at the Archives in the search room and at the Mitchell Courthouse. City directories can be used to determine an address, at least of where a person was living at a specific time. Since many street numbers were changed between 1851 and 1896, the names of cross streets may be necessary to locate the correct block number. Some city directories give cross streets.

The second type of index to land records provides references based on the names of the parties involved in the transaction. Grantor and grantee indexes list the respective parties alphabetically on a year by year basis. Entries give the address, book reference, and page number. These indexes, having never been microfilmed, exist only at the Mitchell Courthouse.



BALTIMORE CITY BLOCK BOOKS

by Kevin Swanson

Information on Baltimore City records was gathered in the 1930s by the Maryland Historical Records Survey Project of the Works Projects Administration. This survey indicated that the block books actually consist of at least three distinct, though often overlapping series. These are:

Blocks 1-2099, corresponding to the "Old City", i.e the approximately 7 square miles contained within city limits prior to the Annexation of 1888. This series begins in 1851, and appears to be incorporated within our film series MSA CM196.

Annex Blocks 2100-4199, covering property contained in the 23 square miles added to the "Old City" by the Annexation of 1888. This series runs from 1888 to 1913, and is incorporated into our series MSA CM196. After 1913, blocks 2100-4199 are no longer identified as Annex Blocks, and are undist

New Annex Blocks 4200-8491, covering property contained in the 62 square miles added by the Annexation of 1918. This series begins in 1918, and appears to correspond to our film series MSA CM197. The block books serve as a supplementary index to the Baltimore City land records, showing conveyances of city property on a block by block basis. Every block is assigned a unique number. These numbers are shown on block book plats, which serve as a finding aid to the block books. Once assigned a number, blocks do not appear ever to have been renumbered, although they were often subdivided with sequential alphabetical suffixes being added to the base block number. The system accommodated the growth of Baltimore through development and annexations (in 1888 and 1918) simply by increasing the total of numbered blocks, and in subdividing existing blocks. These numbered 2,073 in 1851, 4,199 after 1888, and 8,491 after 1918.

Every transfer of property within a block is supposed to be noted under that block's number. Individual entries give a reference to the land record volume in which the actual instrument was recorded. The Archives collection of block books consists of 312 reels of 35mm film. Most of this film was produced between 1956 and 1960 as part of an Archives initiative to microfilm all land records created prior to 1950.

Block books are found in two microfilm series from the Baltimore City Superior Court: MSA CM196 (Block Book) and MSA CM197 (Block Book, New Annex). CM196 covers the period 1851-1966, and CM197 the period 1918-1953. Blocks in the area of the 1888 annexation are incorporated into CM196 after 1913. Blocks in the area of the 1918 annexation are incorporated into CM196 after 1953. In both series, blocks are grouped numerically within a sequential span of years. The collection appears reasonably complete for the period covered. However, the Archives has no film of any block books subsequent to 1966. It appears that the post-1966 block books have never been filmed. Additionally, not all numbered blocks appear in each series. For instance, annex block 2100 begins to appear in 1888, but there is no listing for block 2099. A future comparison of the books themselves with the film may help us explain such anomalies.

1. Go to the SDAT web site, www.dat.state.md.us.
2. Click on Real Property Data in the center panel under Data Search.
3. Select the county in which the property is located by matching the county code to the respective name from the above **County Codes** table. The county name can also be identified by looking at SDAT's return address on the assessment notice. The return address will be the SDAT office for the county in which the property is located. For example, property located in Garrett County will have the following return address:

State of Maryland

Department of Assessments and Taxation
 GARRETT COUNTY
 PO BOX 388
 OAKLAND, MD 21550-0388

4. Click on the button that says "Property Acct. ID"
5. Fill in the District and Account No. boxes, and click on "SEARCH" Your account information will be shown in a few moments.
6. You can click on Go Back or New Search to look up other properties.

Special Instructions for Anne Arundel County

Following the **ACCT#02** are the two digit assessment district, the three digit subdivision code and the 8 digit account number. You will need the district, subdivision, and account numbers to search for your property.

Example: **ACCT#02 01 333444444444**

My County Code:	02
My District Code:	01
My Subdivision Number:	333
My Account Number:	44444444

Special Instructions for Baltimore City

Following the **ACCT#03**, are the two digit Ward, the two digit Section, the Block (which consists of four digits and in some cases followed by a letter), and the Lot (which consists of three digits and in some cases followed by a letter). Each of these identifiers are separated with a space. You will need Ward, Section, Block and Lot to search your property.

Example: **ACCT#03 01/24/1111A/222B**

3432 E. Lombard St

My County Code:	03	<i>03</i>
My Ward:	01	<i>26</i>
My Section:	24	<i>15</i>
My Block:	1111A	<i>6277</i>
My Lot	222B	<i>24</i>