

What are General Land Office Records?

Land patents document the transfer of land ownership from the federal government to individuals. Our land patent records include the information recorded when ownership was transferred. The Bureau of Land Management does not maintain records for the thirteen original colonies, their territories (what is now **Maine, Vermont, West Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky**), or Hawaii and Texas. The responsibility for these documents remains with each state.

Over 2 million pre-July 1, 1908 documents from the Eastern States, have been scanned and indexed, and are available on this web site. Pre-July 1, 1908 Eastern States patents are available here, except those from Iowa before July 1, 1908 to which were scheduled to be added in 2005. Western state land patents issued before 1908 are filed in the BLM state office that has jurisdiction over the land. The Bureau of Land Management does not have any images available for the Western States before 1908.

Accessing the Federal Land Patent Records

NOTE: Only the **Basic** search will be covered in this document. The **Standard** search has more fields for entering search information.

- Click on **Search Land Patents** on the green bar at the top of the page.
- On the Basic tab, select a state from the **State** drop-down menu.
- Enter the surname in the **Last Name** field. This is required. You may enter a first name in the **First Name** field, if desired.
- Click on **Search**.
- Scroll through the results list and click on the **name link** for the record you wish to view.
- There are four tabs for the record: **Patent Description**, **Legal Land Description**, **Document Image**, and **Certified Copy**. The patent record opens with the Patent Description tab open.
- To view the document image, click on the **Document Image** tab.
 - Select the type of image to view. If you want to save the image so that you can insert the image into a word processing program, select **Small GIF**. If you only want to view the image, select **PDF**.and use the scroll bars at the bottom and the side to view more of the image that is not currently seen in the window.
 - **Right click** on the image and select **Save Picture As**.
 - Select the location where the image should be stored, give the image a name and click on **Save**.

To order a certified copy, click on the **Certified Copy** tab.