

Repositories You May Use

Avon Town Historian, Maureen Kingston
23 Genesee St.
Avon, NY 14414
Genealogical resources, general town info, photos, maps, census records

Livingston County Historian's Office
5 Murray Hill Dr.
Mt. Morris, NY 14510
Genealogical resources, wills, maps and atlases, photos, newspapers, census, more

Livingston County Clerk's Office
6 Court St., Rm. 204
Geneseo, NY 14454
Deeds, mortgages, miscellaneous records, and maps from c. 1821 - present

Ontario County Clerk's Office and
Ontario County Records and Archives Center
3051 County Complex Dr.
Canandaigua, NY 14424
Deeds, mortgages, misc. records, maps and atlases from 1780s to c.1821

Step One: Identify your lot number

This may be found in the abstract, or record of deeds, for your property in the description. If you don't have this, locate your property on a map or atlas with lot numbers. Some are even labeled with names.

Step Two: Check the deeds

You may have an abstract, but if not, deeds can also be found at the Livingston County Clerk's Office back to 1821, and the Ontario County Clerk's Office before 1821. Quick tips: "Grantor" means seller and "Grantee" means buyer; a Quit Claim deed is almost always to a relative. Start with a name you know and work forward or backward. Remember to keep good notes, including the names, liber (book) and page numbers, and details about the deed, such as lot, township and range number, and acreage. People often bought and sold several properties over the years, so look closely at the descriptions to be sure the deed is pertinent to your property. Also be aware that the recording date of the deed does not always match the transfer date.

Step Three: Check mortgage records

These indexes run similarly to deeds. "Mortgagor" is the person taking out the mortgage. "Chattel" may imply a building on the property, so read carefully to pick out any clues. Note: personally-held mortgages were often more common than bank-held ones, and the mortgagee may have been the previous owner or some other person of importance.

Step Four: Check wills

Sometimes a property is transferred in a will; this is also a good genealogical resource. Wills are held at the County Historian's Office or the Livingston Co. Surrogate's Court, which also has probate records.

Step Five: Fill it out

Creating a house history may require research from many angles. Visit the Town and County Historians' Offices and the Historical Society armed with names associated with the property that interest you. Look for photographs, census records, maps, tax assessments, newspaper articles, and other references to help fill out the story of your property.

Good luck!