

## Utilizing the State Land Office Website to Find Common Historical Land Title Documents

The Louisiana State Land Office has scanned all original land title records on the website for customers to search, view, print or save at home, free of charge. The following instructions will teach the user how to find common Historical Land Title Records such as Official Township Plats, U.S. & State Tract Book Pages, and State Patents.

*If a customer would like to visit the State Land Office, 24 Hour advance notice is required. Please call, 225-342-4578 to set up an appointment.*

### Known background information

Section, Township, Range, & Land District of Property in Question

### Find an Official Government Survey Plat

- Choose “Plats, Official” as your document type.
- Type your township in the “Township” field in this format: 15N.
- Type your range in the “Range” field in this format: 14E.
- Choose the land district, if known, in the “Land District” dropdown box.
  - Note: This is not required in order to complete your search.
- Click the “execute search” button.
- Review the plats in the list of results.
  - If the results have dates in the title, click the earliest plat first.
    - Note: Frequently, only one result will appear. This means the U. S. Surveyor’s General Office only surveyed this township once. However, it is not uncommon to have more than one result indicating that at least a portion of the township was surveyed more than once.
- Read the earliest plat.
  - The plat will open in a new window like all other documents.
    - Note: These plats were created for the primary purpose of selling public land. To the right of the image, you will find a table of contents which lists acreage for the public land sections, and beneath that the names, acreage, and certificate numbers for the private claims. Only claimed lands will show names of individuals on the plat. Some plats describe the nature of the land and identify nearby features like “*low slashy land*” or “*cart road*”. Beneath the table of contents, the name of the surveyor(s), the year(s) surveyed, and lastly the date that the plat was approved by the U. S. Surveyor General is listed.
- Print or Save.
  - Use icons on toolbar.

Close the window and return to the Search Results.

## Find a U.S. Tract Book Page

- Choose “Tract Book, U.S.” as your document type.
- Type your township in the “Township” field in this format: 15N.
- Type your range in the “Range” field in this format: 14E.
- Type your section number in the “Section” field.
- Choose the land district, if known, in the “Land District” dropdown box.
  - Note: This is not required in order to complete your search.
- Click the “execute search” button.
- Review the list of results.
  - Note: Frequently, only one result will appear. This means the section entered only appears on one U. S. Tract Book Page. However, it is not uncommon to have more than one result indicating that at the section appears on more than one page, possibly because the Township & Range are found stemming from both the Louisiana Meridian & the St. Helena Meridian. Be sure to double-check the Land District.
- Read the U.S. Tract Book Page
  - These entries are read left to right, starting at the column marked “section”. The names of the columns generally indicate the information provided, but sometimes the clerk included other pertinent information as well.
  - The State Land Office has limited U.S. Documentation; The Louisiana State Land Office has no U.S. Patents, as they are found at the [Bureau of Land Management](#).
- Print or Save.
  - Use icons on toolbar.

Close the window and return to the Search Results.

## Find a State Tract Book Page

- Choose “Tract Book, State” as your document type.
- Type your township in the “Township” field in this format: 15N.
- Type your range in the “Range” field in this format: 14E.
- Type your section number in the “Section” field.
- Choose the land district, if known, in the “Land District” dropdown box.
  - Note: This is not required in order to complete your search.
- Click the “execute search” button.
- Review the list of results.
  - Note: Frequently, only one result will appear. This means the section entered only appears on one State Tract Book Page. However, it is not uncommon to have more than one result indicating that at the section appears on more than one page, possibly because the Township & Range are found stemming from both the Louisiana Meridian & the St. Helena Meridian. Be sure to double-check the Land District. Some sections appear on more than one page because one

page will show how the property was transferred from the U.S. Government to the State Government, while other pages will show how the property was transferred from the State Government into the private domain.

- Read the State Tract Book Page
  - These entries are *not* read strictly from left to right. Familiarize yourself with the way the page is set up. Examine the column titles.
    - Note: Each line of the State Tract Book page should be divided into two parts. Draw an invisible line between the columns marked “approved” and “purchaser” to separate the two parts. The information to the left of the line will answer the questions: how did this property become state-owned. The information to the right of the line will answer the question: who did the State sell it to?
  - Make note of patent number, volume, and page, for future use.
- Print or Save.
  - Use icons on toolbar.

Close the window and return to the Search Results.

#### Find a State Patent

- *To properly find State Patents, one must use the following instructions.*
  - Choose “Patents” as your document type.
  - Type your patent number in the “Patent Number” field in this format: 9506.
    - Note: Do not include the volume and page numbers in the “Patent Number” field.
  - Click the “execute search” button.
- Review the patents in the list of results.
  - Note: Frequently, several results will appear because patent numbers have been re-used. This means that there could be several patents with the same number, but in different volumes on different pages. Patent document titles will read as follows: **PATENT 0009506 FROM BOOK 519.00021: 'STATE PATENTS 9135- 9565 Oct. 9, 1860- Jan. 10, 1861 No. 10 PAGES 161- 304'**
  - “No. 10, Pages 161–304” will indicate that the patent in this document is in Volume 10, between pages 161–304.
  - Choose the patent document which falls within the volume and page indicated on the State Tract Book Page.
- Read the Patent.
  - The plat will open in a new window like all other documents.
- Print or Save.
  - Use icons on toolbar.

Close the window and return to the Search Results.