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## **Kalamazoo County Clerk/Register of Deeds Digitizes Nearly 200 Years of Local History**

### *Land Records Dating Back to 1831 Now Accessible Online*

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – The Kalamazoo County Clerk/Register of Deeds Office proudly announces the successful completion of a large-scale project to digitize the County’s land records dating back to 1831.

This monumental effort, funded primarily by American Rescue Plan Act dollars allocated by the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners in 2022, ensures the permanent preservation and enhanced accessibility of the County’s irreplaceable historical land records. Until recently, Kalamazoo County land records prior to 1992 were maintained solely in physical formats vulnerable to deterioration.

To safeguard these records through digital preservation, the Clerk/Register of Deeds Office partnered with Saginaw-based US Imaging to scan over 1.5 million documents and index books, and engaged software partner Fidlar Technologies Inc. to upload the documents to the internet.

Clerk/Register of Deeds Meredith Place expressed pride in completing the significant digital preservation of these records, emphasizing their importance to local history and the real estate industry.

“I am proud that we achieved completion of this huge digitization project to preserve our county’s most valuable records and to provide online for the first time at least the minimum 40 years of records needed for real estate professionals to complete a chain of title search,” said Place. “Our goal was to digitize these records to preserve them for posterity and not rely on the permanent integrity of old paper books and decades-old microfilm copies. I am grateful for the support of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners who allocated funding to make this project to protect critical infrastructure possible.”

The Register of Deeds Office plays a crucial role in the Kalamazoo County housing and real estate industry. Its primary mission with respect to real property transactions is to provide a trustworthy place where instruments and notices concerning ownership of and encumbrances against real property can be located by all creditors, subsequent purchasers, and others with an economic interest in the property. The means by which land recording offices achieve their mission is not only by maintaining original copies of all real estate-related documents required to be recorded in secure, non-alterable form, but also by providing searchers with a means of accessing these documents through indexes to the documents recorded, sorted into an orderly listing.

The Kalamazoo County Clerk/Register of Deeds maintains partnerships with several online land record search vendors, including Fidlar Technologies Inc.'s Laredo and Tapestry search tools, and WebTecs' Deed Search tool. The office also provides desktop computers in its lobby where the public can search digital records.

Navigating historical records prior to 1985 may require some guidance due to the varied recording practices used over time. To search these historical records, please visit the Register of Deeds office at 201 W. Kalamazoo Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007, Room 102, or contact [deeds@kalcounty.com](mailto:deeds@kalcounty.com) or 269-383-8970. Office hours are as follows:

- 8:00am - 4:30pm Monday
- 8:00am - 4:30pm Tuesday
- **9:00am** - 4:30pm Wednesday
- 8:00am - 4:30pm Thursday
- 8:00am - 4:30pm Friday

For more information, visit <https://www.kalcounty.com/clerk/deeds/>.

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