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Researching Your Home

Delving into the past history of your home can be a fascinating way of learning about local history. The search can be regarding, but also very frustrating. Patience, persistence, and curiosity are necessary.

The Beginning

Perhaps the first step is to gain some knowledge and an overview of your local area. I recommend the following;

A. Snell's History of Sussex and Warren Counties, 1881. Reprinted by Genealogical Researchers
Washington, NJ 1981.

●Early Architecture of Warren County, by Dennis Bertland. C. Beer's J Atlas of Warren County, reprinted?

Once you've digested these and really want detail, try these;

a. The Musconetcong Valley of New Jersey~ by Peter O. Wacker (Rutgers, 1968)

●Agriculture in New Jersey, by Hubert G Schmidt (Rutgers, 1973) c. Rural Hunterdon, by Hubert G. Schmidt (Rutgers, 1945)

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Deed Tracing

Prepare yourself for a day, or an afternoon, in the County Clerk's office with a pad and pencil (no pens allowed). Start with the person from whom you bought your house and look him/them up in the Grantee Index. Write down the Book & Page Number for your township, if there are several entries. Note there are different sets of deed indexes and different methods indexing. If in doubt write every listing.

Go to the deed book and copy the following from the appropriated deed; Grantor and their residence, Grantee and residence, Deed date and the size, make notes on anything unusual. (I usually make a copy of the first deed and where the acreage differs rather than write all the courses of a large tract, to save time. Once you get some experience and barring problems, you can easily go a hundred years and hour.)

Now find the next Grantor by using the Grantee Index. Continue on until you get stuck, reach 1825 (now you go to Sussex County), or find a partition. I suggest you go back as far as you can to see who owned the land way back when. Mine was a West Jersey Land Dividend to William Penn (there were **no** royal land grants). If you get stuck, look for a will partition, foreclosure, subdivision, or, when desperate, trace neighbors.

Flesh out the Framework

Do research by looking up wills, inventories, census records, marriage records, and newspaper archives. The Road book can help indicate when your neighborhood was settled.

Hints

Deed and maps contain errors, watch out for Township changes, never assume anything, stone remains, wood burns (only your foundation may be original), deeds have " catchall phrases", read all of the deed, note family relationships, try plotting on graph paper to envision tracts (compare with tax maps or agricultural surveys).

Tentative Dating

- Study your house for original features and compare with "Early Architecture" usconetcong Valley" .. ,
- Look at early maps (Caution! some houses are missed) 1852 in Hope Historical Society, 1860 in Hackettstown Historical Society, 1874 Beers Atlas ..
- Study the deeds and estate proceedings. Homestead farm? When subdivided?
- The 1830 and 1840 Census listed heads of households, 1850 very detailed.
- Genealogy and house dating go hand in hand, ascertain family structure.