

**ALL THE LATEST ON:**

**ONLINE RECORDS AND  
PAPERLESS FILINGS**

***For Collin County,  
Dallas County,  
Denton County,  
Tarrant County,  
and Texas***

Presented To:

**Dallas Bar Association  
Real Property Law Section**

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Securities and Exchange Commission, Ft. Worth, 1995. Litigation law clerk

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The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A., Dallas, 1986-1992. Vice President, Assistant Manager

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Dallas/Collin/Denton Bar Associations, 2006 -2011 Articles: *Online Real Estate and Court Records*

State Bar of Texas, Property Owner Associations Committee, 2001 - 2008

Real Estate Financial Executives Association, President, 1995-1996; Director, 1995 - present

First Place Award, Construction Law Article, American Bar Association, 1995

## PREFACE

**WHAT'S NEW: I list in a box at the start of each section the major changes to online records over the last 2 years.**

### TYPES OF RECORDS

I refer to three types of online records in this paper:

- A. An **index** of available real estate and court documents
- B. A **detailed summary** of the real estate and court documents.
- C. An **image** of the real estate and court documents.

Most County and District Clerks provide an index and a detailed summary online. Many County Clerks also provide real estate document images online. The Dallas County Clerk and District Clerk have just started to provide court document images online. Other Clerks provide some online document images with the payment of a monthly or annual subscription fee.

### DEFINING WHO OWNS REAL ESTATE: ONLINE RECORDS AREN'T ENOUGH

Consider this definition of real estate ownership as you review real estate records:

*Real estate ownership is really defining the various rights and obligations held by numerous and conflicting parties over a piece of property.\**

You may now include in your real estate records search Court orders and other records that affect these rights and obligations over a piece of property.

\*I thank Chicago attorney Sherwin D. Abrams for refining this real estate ownership definition.

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**UPDATE:** The author updated this paper through February 1, 2011. All corrections and comments are welcome.

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## I. TIPS FOR ONLINE ACCESS: REAL ESTATE RECORDS

### A. Collin County (<http://www.co.collin.tx.us/>)

***WHAT'S NEW: No major changes over the last 2 years.***

***HOW TO SEARCH: You search the database by name or other criteria, and your results appear in a table. Click the PDF symbol for your result, to open the image.***

1. Click: **Online Services  
Deed Search (under Property & Taxes)**
2. Disable: Your popup blocker (Internet Explorer Toolbar)
3. To Search: Enter: Last Name, First Name, in boxes indicated.
4. Results: A new popup screen will provide you the following records:
  - a. Real estate records
  - b. Assumed names
  - c. Birth/death certificate/marriage licenses
5. Images: To view images, click the PDF symbol in the left column
6. Save: To save an image, click the Save A Copy icon, top left.
7. Date Range: You are searching records from 2-14-1974 to Present.
8. OTHER:
  - a. NEW COURTHOUSE: The real estate records recording unit is housed at the new Collin County Courthouse, 2300 Bloomdale Road, Suite 2104, McKinney, Texas 75071.
  - b. ROAM/ENTERPRISE SYSTEM: The Collin County Clerk is researching the ROAM/Enterprise web search engine for real estate records (similar to the Dallas County Clerk's office).
  - c. TIP: For recording at Courthouse. If the clerk is not busy, and you request it, the front desk clerk will record your document and immediately return your original document to you.
  - d. FORECLOSURES: Instead of clicking Deed Search (above), click Foreclosures. Then select the city where the property is located. Click on the foreclosure notice under that city (then Click on "attachments" to find the Notice of Substitute Trustee's Sale).

**B. Dallas County Clerk**  
**([http://www.dallascounty.org/department/countyclerk/cclerk\\_index.html](http://www.dallascounty.org/department/countyclerk/cclerk_index.html))**

***WHAT'S NEW:*** *The major change over the last 45 days was the substitution of the ROAM/Enterprise Search Engine, for the earlier basic search engine.*

***HOW TO SEARCH:*** *You search the ROAM database by name or other search criteria, and your results appear in a table. Click the instrument number of your result, then click "View Image," to open the image.*

- 1. THE ROAM (ENTERPRISE) SEARCH ENGINE (DALLAS CLERK OPR)**
  - a. Click: **Left column, Click ROAM Official Public Records Search;**  
**Click on the right side of the screen:**  
**"Rapid Online Access Method website"**
  - b. To Search: Enter Grantor or Grantee, Subdivision Name, Instrument Name, Date, Lot and Block or any of about a dozen other fields that have been captured in the records index maintained by the Clerk. Then click Search.
  - c. Results: A new results screen will provide you all of those records, which meet your search criteria (that is, all of those records in which your search terms appear in the index of the terms for the recorded Dallas County Clerk documents). Your search terms are being searched against an index of all recorded documents, and not being searched on a full text search of the recorded documents. Summary: For real estate records, you are searching an index of recorded documents, and not the recorded documents themselves.
  - d. Images: To view images, click the column "Instrument," and the "View Image" link at the top right of the page. The right half of the next screen will show you the image.
  - e. Save: To save an image, click the Save A Copy icon, top left.
  - f. Date Range: You are searching records from 1-1-1964 to Present. However, for images of records, you generally are searching 1-1-74 to Present.
  - g. OTHER:
    - i. For Birth and Death records, use the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor computers in the Records Building.
    - ii. For Marriage Records: Click Marriage License

Tab. Then enter last name, first name, of bride or groom.

- iii. On results screen, click Instrument Number for a summary of the marriage license information. There is no image provided of the signed marriage license application.
- iv. For Foreclosure Notices: You can review foreclosure notices for the last 3-4 months, by Clicking on the welcome page, left column, "Foreclosure Notices." You may then click the list of PDFs to review the Notice of Substitute Trustee Sale, arranged by month, and then by city.

## **2. THE ROAM / ENTERPRISE SEARCH ENGINE (real estate documents)**

- a. Info you May Search: You may enter into the search box any information that the Clerk's office has "indexed" for a real estate instrument (lot and block number, date of instrument or date of recording, subdivision name, other party names besides grantor/grantee, etc.).
- b. Search Box: Enter any information regarding your real estate document, such as first name, last name, etc. (the order of the names does not matter).
- c. Results:
  - i. Every document which contains any of the search term(s) you entered, will be displayed.
  - ii. Click the year listed in the left column to review only those documents for that year.
  - iii. Unlike the former General Search engine, ROAM will look for your search terms anywhere they appear in the document's index of terms used in that document (e.g., ROAM will search its index for that search "name" also as a subdivision name, a grantor or grantee name, or any of its almost one dozen captured index names).
- d. SEARCH TIPS:
  - i. Try spelling a last name several ways. McMinn was indexed as one word, and also as two words "Mc" *space* "Minn". Given the inconsistent indexing over time, search for names using likely misspellings and as two separate words.

- ii. For an entity name, type in the first word of its name, but try abbreviating additional words (for example, “PK” for “Park”).
- iii. If you also search with a person’s middle name, try searching with the middle name initial to expand your possible target documents.
- iv. Your search terms must try to match how the dozens of county employees/contractors indexed the grantor/grantee name of each document onto the computer since as early as 1964 (now you know to anticipate some index inconsistencies when searching by name).
- v. You may search only Marriage records using the ROAM search engine.
- vi. You can find some Birth and Death records on the public computers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Dallas County Records Building (but not online). Limited Birth and Death information is provided on these public computers.
- vii. TIP: With full featured Adobe Acrobat, you can save all documents as PDF files (and not just the “Save A Copy” documents on the Clerks’ websites). Some Acrobat software competitors also permit saving a document image as an Acrobat PDF file.



C. **Denton County Clerk:**

**<http://www.co.denton.tx.us/dept/main.asp?Dept=17>**

**WHAT' S NEW:**    *--The major change over the last 2 years was the addition of free online document images/printing.  
--You still need full Adobe Acrobat/equivalent to save a PDF image of a downloaded document.  
--Search real estate records back to 1854 (but see the note below regarding "DATES").*

**HOW TO SEARCH:** *You search the database by name or 4 other search criteria. Enter last name (no comma) first name and click Search, and your results appear in a table. Click the search result, and then on the right side of your screen, click "Images," to open the image.*

1. Click: Left column, Real Property Records Search.
2. Enter in the two boxes at the top center of the page: The target name you are searching: last name [no comma] and first name.
3. Results: Documents will appear on the left half of the screen.
4. Review: The list of results your search criteria found.
5. In the left window pane, Click the instrument to view an image of that document.
6. Image: To view the image of the document, in the right window pane, click "Images" in the top center.
7. To Print: You may Click" the "Print Document" hot link at the top right side of the right window pane, then click "Next" on the popup screen.
8. Your computer print screen will popup. Click "OK" to print.
9. To save document image as PDF File:
  - a. At #5 above, Click "Add to Basket."
  - b. Then Click "Basket" at the top center of the page.
  - c. Click "Next" on the popup screen.
  - d. At top center of screen, Click "Basket".
  - e. In the left window pane, check the empty box with a checkmark with one Click.
  - f. Still in the left window pane, in the center, Click "Download All."
  - g. In the new popup window, Click the information bar at the top of the window to permit your computer to download this document as a compressed file. Click "Download File."
  - h. Click "Open" to open this compressed file, and the PDF file will appear as a PDF file on your screen.
  - i. Highlight this PDF file. Copy this PDF file of your document to a

directory on your computer. You may now open it as a saved PDF image of your document.

10. Foreclosure Notices: Click the Foreclosure Notices at the bottom of the Denton County Clerk's search page. In the left column of the new page that opens on your screen, select one of the three months shown to view Notices of Substitute Trustee's Sale on the right side of your screen.
11. DATES: Documents are indexed from 5-12-1854 to the Present. Do not rely on this index of documents, however, to search **real estate records prior to 1875**. An original Denton County Courthouse caught fire in 1875, reportedly destroying most county records. Any recorded documents appearing before 1875 were mostly brought in by owners for re-recording on a voluntary basis.

**D. Tarrant County: <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eGov/site/default.asp>**

**WHAT'S NEW:**    *--The major change over the last 2 years was the addition of more early years of real estate records – now you can search from 1-1-1970 to the Present.  
--You must separately search on a Grantor list of names, and then search on a Grantee list of names, to view all documents associated with a given name.*

**HOW TO SEARCH:** *You search the database by Grantor name and then Grantee name. Enter last name (no comma) first name and click Search, and your results appear in a table. Click the search result, and then on the right side of your screen, click “Images,” to open the image. Other search criteria are available.*

1. Tarrant County Clerk: lower right side, under “County Clerk,” Click Real Property Records
2. Click: on left side, Click under Real Estate, Search Real Estate Index.
3. Also available: Marriage, UCC, and Assumed Name record (on left).
4. Enter: Last Name (no comma) First Name; or entity name.

**NOTE:** You must separately search for Grantor, and/or for Grantee. The three other north Texas counties search online by both Grantor and Grantee combined.

5. OR: Enter Instrument Number, Book/Page, Date Filed, or Document Type.
6. RESULTS: Review table of results for your target document.
7. Click: the underlined instrument number at the far left to open a document (open an Image).
8. To Save the Document (Image): Click the center/top icon, “Save Image.”
9. Under Name/Identifier, place your name or initials, then click NEXT.
10. On the right side of the page, Click the PDF icon, then Click Save, and save this file to the folder on your computer you desire.
11. TIP: Other online records to search from the County Clerk main page are:
  - a. Marriage records
  - b. Foreclosure records
  - c. UCC records
  - d. Assumed name records.

## II. TIPS FOR ONLINE ACCESS: COURT RECORDS

### A. Collin County (<http://www.co.collin.tx.us/>)

***WHAT'S NEW: Probate Court Records and older Justice Court Records were provided online within the last 2 years.***

***The "Case Lookup" search function has now been combined into one basic search screen, with the option to add/delete the court types to search. The original court-by-court search screen is also available as an advanced search.***

***HOW TO SEARCH: You search for cases by name or other criteria, and your results appear in a table. Click the case for your results, for a list of "Case Events."***

1. Click: Online Services, then Click Case Search-Basic.
2. Select any one of these four types of search criteria:
  - a. Name
  - b. Case Number
  - c. Citation
  - d. Attorney
3. You can select to search by clicking any of the 5 kinds of Courts: County Courts at Law, Probate, Criminal, District, and JP Courts.
4. You then select to search by Criminal Cases, and/or Civil, Family, Probate Cases.
5. Results Screen: Will display case number, parties, filing date, case type, case status, and judge.
6. Click on one of the cases, and a "Case Events" type of docket sheet will be displayed.
7. Document Images: None available online.
8. Case Record Inquiry-Advanced: Allows you to search using the prior case lookup system (which requires a properly spelled first and last name for a party). The same information is presented as in "Case Search-Basic" above.
9. TIP: [www.texasjudge.com](http://www.texasjudge.com) is a web site created by several Collin County judges (miscellaneous information on the judges and courts)

**B. Dallas County ([www.dallascounty.org](http://www.dallascounty.org))**

***WHAT'S NEW: --Court Document Images are now available for District and Family Courts, County Courts at Law, and Felony cases.***  
***--Available dates of records varies.***  
***--You may save Court Document Images as PDF files, and may print them.***  
***--Available Images include pleadings and exhibits.***  
***-- Available Images include cases filed both electronically as well as filed on paper.***  
***--The Clerk's office also provides public terminals in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Lawyer's lounge in the Allen Courthouse, which permits you to read (but not print or copy) scanned images of documents filed for district court cases.***

***HOW TO SEARCH: Start with the case number. If you don't have a case number, you first search the Civil Case lookup page by party/attorney name, and obtain your 7 digit case number. You may print a Register of Actions, similar to a docket type sheet, from the Civil case lookup. Then with your case number, you may search on the Public Access to Court Records search page, to view images of filed pleadings and exhibits for your case.***

**TO SEARCH AN INDEX OF FILED CASES –  
COUNTY COURTS AT LAW / PROBATE COURTS**

1. County Courts at Law / Probate Courts
  - a. Hold Cursor: Over Law and Justice
  - b. Click: County Clerk
  - c. Click: Civil Division
  - d. Click: Civil Case Information

- e. From the drop down menu, select either:
  - i. All County Courts at Law Civil, or All County Probate Courts.
  - ii. Then Click County Courts at Law, or Click County Probate Courts.
  
2. For Civil Cases: Make sure you have selected from the drop-down menu, “All County Courts at Law Civil;” then click “County Courts at Law.”
  - a. Enter: Case, Party or Attorney Name.
  - b. For Party, enter last name, and in next box, enter first name.  
NOTE: This civil case search screen will not search on a first name initial, unless you add an asterisk \* (a wildcard character) after the first name initial.
  
3. For Probate Cases: make sure you have selected from the drop-down menu, “All County Probate Courts;” then click “County Probate Courts.”
  - a. Enter: Case, Party or Attorney Name.
  - b. For Party, enter last name, and in next box, enter first name.  
NOTE: This probate case search screen will not search on a first name initial, unless you add an asterisk \* (a wildcard character) after the first name initial.

<p><b>TO SEARCH AN INDEX OF FILED CASES – DISTRICT COURTS / CIVIL CASES</b></p>
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4. District Clerk
  - a. Hold Cursor: Over Law and Justice
  - b. Click: District Clerk
  - c. Click: Online Case Information
  - d. Click: Civil, District & Probate Case Information
  - e. Click: All District Civil Courts, or All District Family Courts;
  - f. **Click: Civil Case Records, or Family Case Records.**
  - g. Click: Party Name
  - h. Enter: Last Name, First Name; or Case Number (or for a business, select business, and enter the business name)
  - i. **Results: Click on the target case, docket info. appears below.**
  - j. For Criminal Case Information: Click Criminal Background (includes felony and misdemeanor)
  - k. Enter: Last Name, First Name; or Case Number
  - l. Results: Click on the target case, docket info. appears below.

NOTE: The civil case and family case search screen will not search on a first name initial, unless you add an asterisk (wildcard character) after the first name initial. The criminal background search screen requires a full first name to search.

- m. TIP: For access to all Felony and Misdemeanor cases, go to Frank Crowley Courts, Records Dept., 1<sup>st</sup> floor computer.
  - n. DOCUMENT IMAGES: Also find at the public terminals in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Lawyer's lounge/George Allen Sr. Courthouse, Court document images for the cases stated above. For older (unscanned) cases, you may also request and review the paper Court files/jackets to view Pleadings/Images.
5. DATE RANGE: Various. See the chart below for dates available currently.
6. TO VIEW FILED COURT DOCUMENTS: You may also go to the lawyer's lounge on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the George Allen Courthouse (new east building), and use the public computer to view (but not print or save) scanned document images for civil cases.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TO SEARCH FOR IMAGES OF COURT DOCUMENTS (AFTER YOU KNOW THE CASE NUMBER)</b></p>
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7. Court Document Images:
- a. None available online for Tax, Probate, or Justice Courts.
  - b. Document Images are available for County Courts at Law/District Courts.
  - c. **Steps to Access Court Document Images Online:**
    - i. Hold Cursor: At [www.dallascounty.org](http://www.dallascounty.org), over Law and Justice
    - ii. Click: Public Access to Court Records, then Click "Accept".
    - iii. In the search box in the upper left corner, enter the case number:
    - iv. District Court Civil Cases: For example, for case 10-10012, enter DC1010012, click enter, then click on the right side for

your document. The document image will open as a pop-up screen.

v. Family Court Cases: For example, for case 10-01288, enter DF1001288, click enter, then click on the right side for your document. The document image will open as a pop-up screen.

vi. Felony Cases: For example, for case 10-00196, enter F1000196, click enter, then click on the right side for your document. The document image will open as a pop-up screen.

vii. County Court at Law Cases: For example, for case 10-00192, Court No. 4, enter CC1000192D. Then click enter, then click on the right side for your document. The document image will open as a pop-up screen.

<b>SUMMARY OF COURT DOCUMENT IMAGES AVAILABLE ONLINE</b>				
	<b>COURT TYPE</b>	<b>COURTS ONLINE</b>	<b>AVAILABLE ONLINE COURT DOCUMENTS BY FILING DATE</b>	<b>ENTER CASE NUMBER: EXAMPLE</b>
1.	District Court (Civil)	95 <sup>th</sup> , 116 <sup>th</sup> , 101 <sup>st</sup> , 134 <sup>th</sup> , 160 <sup>th</sup> , 193 <sup>rd</sup> , and 298 <sup>th</sup>	Electronic: Starting 6-2009; Paper: Starting about 1-2010 Note:	DC1010651
2.	District Court (Family)	All	Cases starting with 2003 will be made available in stages over time (after redacting confidential information)	DF1001288
3.	District Court and County Courts at Law/ Criminal (Felony)	194 <sup>th</sup> , 203 <sup>rd</sup> , 204 <sup>th</sup> , 283 <sup>rd</sup> , 292 <sup>nd</sup> , CC#3, CC#4, CC#6	Cases starting with 2003 will be made available in stages over time (after redacting confidential information).  NOTE: No misdemeanor court images are currently available.	F1000196



4.	County Courts at Law (Civil)	CC#4 initially, then all CC At Law	All pending cases for County Court at Law #4, and over time, all CCs At Law will be made available in stages.	CC1000192D
5.	COURTS NOT ONLINE WITH IMAGES	a. Tax Cases b. Misdemeanor Cases c. Probate Cases d. JP Cases	a. Tax case images are planned to start online in 2011. b. No current plans to bring images online. c. No current plans to bring images online. d. No current plans to bring images online.	

8. Criminal Cases: Under County Clerk, click on Criminal Division, then click on Criminal Background Search (Note: You are searching an index to obtain an electronic-style docket sheet).
  - a. You enter a last name, and you enter a first name to search.
  - b. Click page down to view an index of additional cases.
  - c. Click on the underlined name to view a docket style update for the case.
  - d. Also under County Clerk, Criminal Division, click on Criminal Disposition Codes, for the codes to interpret the actions taken on criminal cases.
  - e. Also under County Clerk, Criminal Division, click on FAQs Criminal Division, for additional information.
  
9. JP Courts: There are no online court records for JP Courts. For JP Court records, you must go to your respective JP Court and request copies of your target documents.

C. Denton County (<http://justice.dentoncounty.com/>)

***WHAT'S NEW: --No major changes over the last 2 years, for either County Courts at Law, JP Courts, or District Courts.***

***HOW TO SEARCH: You search for cases first by selecting your relevant Court, and then enter a name or other criteria. Your case results appear in a table. Click the case for a list of "Register of Actions."***

1. Click: the types of Court records you want to search:
  - a. Click: Criminal Case Records
  - b. Click: Civil/Family/Probate Case Records
  - c. Click: JP Civil Case Records

TIP: Unlike with Collin County, you must select the type of Court Cases (Criminal, Civil, etc.) that you wish to search in Denton County.

TIP: You also have the option to search for a Court's Calendar for a given time period (Click Criminal Dockets, or, Civil/Family/Probate Hearing Records). The Calendar will show you those cases that have been set for the time period and the Court that you selected.

2. Click: Last Name (comma), then First Name; or case number.
3. Click target case.
4. Read: Register of Actions (a docket list of filings), and disposition of the case.
5. For Attorney Webaccess to Pleadings: Attorneys may subscribe to Webaccess to images of pleadings (\$200/year, with a \$50 setup fee). Payment of this fee entitles you to view/print copies of pleadings only for cases in which you are the attorney of record.

D. Tarrant County (<http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eGov/site/default.asp>)

**WHAT'S NEW:** --No major changes over the last 2 years, for County Courts at Law, Probate Courts, or JP Courts.  
--The District Clerk's office has public computers for viewing Court documents (document look-up) in the following locations: District Clerk downtown Ft. Worth, and suburban locations at Southlake Town Hall, and Sub-Courthouses in Arlington and in SW Ft. Worth. You may print copies for .35/page.  
--Web access is for anyone, for viewing and/or downloading District Clerk documents, upon payment of a \$50 processing fee, and \$35/month.  
--Web access not available for felony criminal records.  
--Online/free access is available for criminal settings.

**HOW TO SEARCH:** You search for County Court at Law, JP, and Probate Cases only, first by selecting your relevant Court, and then enter a name or other criteria. Your case results appear in a table. Click the case for a list of "Register of Actions." Without paying a fee for WebAccess through the Clerk's office, no District Court records are available online.

1. County Courts at Law/Probate Court
  - a. Click: Under County Clerk, lower right corner, click "County Courts at Law", or, "Probate Court Public Browse".
  - b. Click one of the buttons on the left side of the page, and enter the requested case information (party name, attorney name, case number, etc.). You will see some of the most detailed case information available online.
  - c. For the target case on the far right, Click "Events" for filings and disposition; and Click "Case" for party information.
  - d. For some cases, you will also be given the option to Click "Details" for a detailed summary of the judgment entered (but no document images are available).
  - e. No copies of pleadings are available online (but see Webaccess below for District Court cases only).

2. JP Courts (<http://cc.co.tarrant.tx.us/CivilCourts/JP/>)
  - a. Generally the same information as County Courts at Law shown above. JP Court No. 3 is not online for case searching.
  
3. District Courts
  - a. The only online access to District Court records is through the Web Based Access Service.
  - b. Fees: \$35.00/month, plus a \$50.00 one-time set-up fee.
  - c. Anyone can receive online access to these records (not just the attorney of record).
  - d. Available civil and criminal records: District Courts, and District Court Tax Cases (unknown if County Court at Law, Probate, or JP Court cases are available through Web Based Access Service – no such access is noted online).
  - e. Court case document images are provided through this Web Based access service.
  
4. Free Public Computers to Access Most District Court Clerk Records
  - a. The District Clerk's office now has public computers for viewing Court documents (document look-up) in the following locations:
    - i. District Clerk's downtown Ft. Worth office;
    - ii. Southlake Town Hall;
    - iii. Sub-Courthouses in Arlington; and
    - iv. Southwest Ft. Worth at 6551 Granbury Road.
  - b. The Clerk will print copies for \$.35/page, and provide certified copies for \$1.00/page.

### **III. APPRAISAL DISTRICT RECORDS**

- A. CROSS-REFERENCE TOOL:** Appraisal District Records also operate as a cross-reference tool for Online Real Estate Records searching.
- B. PROPERTY ADDRESS:** When you only have a property address, you locate the property in the appraisal district records, and obtain the following:
  - a. Record owner(s)
  - b. Prior owners
  - c. Legal description
  - d. Prior deed recording information (Volume, page, date)
  - e. Physical information on the building and land (size, age, etc.)
- C. SPOUSE NAMES:** Most Appraisal Districts in the past have only indexed the property using the husband's (and not the wife's) first name. Therefore, for property owned by a husband and wife, search using the husband's first and last name.
- D. COLLIN COUNTY CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT**  
(<http://www.collincad.org/>)
- E. DALLAS COUNTY CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT**  
(<http://www.dallascad.org/>)
- F. DENTON COUNTY CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT**  
(<http://www.dentoncad.com/>)
- G. TARRANT APPRAISAL DISTRICT** (<http://www.tad.org/>)

**TIP:** When you are searching for a property owned by a person with a common last name, start with the Appraisal District Records first. You will then find more information on the property, which you can enter into your online Real Estate Records search (for a more limited search).

**EXAMPLE:** In the Dallas County Real Estate Records, there are over 400,000 records indexed to the name "SMITH." To narrow the number of "hits" your search produces especially for common last names, enter the last name, first name, middle initial (no period), and at least one of the following: document volume and/or page, instrument number, lot, block, subdivision name (use any abbreviated name). You can obtain this "additional information" from these appraisal district records.

**TIP:** Some Appraisal Districts offer online parcel maps, to help locate the property.

**H. [www.taxnetusa.com](http://www.taxnetusa.com) WEB SITE:**

Central Appraisal Districts: The property ownership information found in the “Central Appraisal District” web sites is usually driven off of the respective county’s real estate records. Anticipate the appraisal districts take up to several weeks to update new owner information. Furthermore, the tax records do not evidence ownership of real estate in Texas—they only furnish tax information. To identify which counties have online Central Appraisal District information, search “[www.taxnetusa.com](http://www.taxnetusa.com)”. All 254 counties are listed, though not every county will have all tax information available online.

TaxNetUsa does provide some property information at no charge for most counties, and even more property information for a fee (daily, annual, etc.).

TaxNetUsa is a good starting point to help determine ownership of properties where the local county clerk does not provide online ownership records.

**IV. ONLINE FILING OF COURT PLEADINGS**

- A. Texas OnLine ([www.texasonline.com/portal/tol/en/info](http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol/en/info)): This State agency provides attorneys information and registration information for eFiling of many types of court pleadings. An attorney will register with Texas OnLine, and also with one of several State approved “Electronic Filing Service Providers (EFSP).” Seven companies are currently listed on the Texas Online web as approved EFSPs. Some or all of the Courts in 47 counties currently participate in eFiling (including in the DFW area, Collin County, Dallas County, Denton County, and Tarrant County).
- B. An EFSP will have their own set-up process and fee structure. The attorney files the pleading/document with the EFSP, which in turn files with the respective Court.
- C. All four of our North Texas Counties accept eFiling for court cases, except for the following: Collin County (Probate Court, Justice Court); Dallas County (Justice Court); Denton County (Justice Court); and Tarrant County (District Court).
- D. Individual case eFilings fees may total \$10.00 (more or less, plus the usual clerk’s filing and service of process fees). Most EFSPs will not charge you monthly maintenance fees for registering for their eFiling service.

## V. OTHER TEXAS COUNTIES WITH “SOME” ONLINE RECORDS

- A. [www.taxnetusa.com](http://www.taxnetusa.com) reports online real estate records for all 254 Texas counties. TaxNetUSA, for a fee, will provide this online records access, even though some of these counties may provide some or complete online access for no charge. TaxNetUSA does say it has custom searching tools to more easily find the information you are seeking.

## VI. OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

- A. Real Estate Records through Texas Land Records: [www.texaslandrecords.com](http://www.texaslandrecords.com)

This vendor supplies real estate and some vital records (marriage, death, etc.) online for these 33 Texas counties at the present time:

Angelina County  
Bandera County  
Bee County  
Bell County (NEWLY ADDED)  
Brazos County  
Cameron County  
Cherokee County  
Coleman County  
Denton County  
Edwards County  
Fannin County  
Goliad County  
Grayson County  
Hays County  
Hidalgo County  
Hutchinson County  
Jim Wells County  
Karnes County (NEWLY ADDED)  
Madison County  
Midland County  
Nacogdoches County  
Panola County  
Potter County  
Robertson County  
Rockwall County  
Rusk County  
Scurry County  
Smith County  
Taylor County  
Upton County  
Walker County  
Wichita County  
Wise County

Index searches are usually free, and viewing/copying/printing documents are \$1/page.

- B. Lexis, Westlaw and other online services also provide much of this online real estate, court documents, and other records with fees for each use, and fees for search periods as short as one day's access.
  
- C. The following 12 counties have their own online real estate records available either in the form of an index, or an index with images. User registration is usually required, and some do charge fees to view/print/save documents.

Bexar County	<a href="http://www.co.bexar.tx.us">www.co.bexar.tx.us</a>
Brazoria County	<a href="http://www.brazoria.tx.us.landata.com/">http://www.brazoria.tx.us.landata.com/</a>
El Paso County	<a href="http://www.epcounty.com/clerk">www.epcounty.com/clerk</a>
Galveston County	<a href="http://www.co.galveston.tx.us/County_Clerk/">http://www.co.galveston.tx.us/County_Clerk/</a>
Gregg County	<a href="http://www.co.gregg.tx.us/A2WebUI/">http://www.co.gregg.tx.us/A2WebUI/</a>
Harris County	<a href="http://www.cclerk.hctx.net/">www.cclerk.hctx.net/</a>
Jefferson County	<a href="http://jeffersontxclerk.manatron.com/">http://jeffersontxclerk.manatron.com/</a>
Johnson County	<a href="http://ira.johnsoncountytexas.org/realproperty/">http://ira.johnsoncountytexas.org/realproperty/</a>
McLennan County	<a href="http://countyclerk.co.mclennan.tx.us/indexinfo.aspx">http://countyclerk.co.mclennan.tx.us/indexinfo.aspx</a>
Nueces County	<a href="http://www.nueces.tx.us.landata.com/">www.nueces.tx.us.landata.com/</a>
Travis County	<a href="http://deed.co.travis.tx.us/">http://deed.co.travis.tx.us/</a>
Webb County	<a href="http://www.webb.tx.us.landata.com/">http://www.webb.tx.us.landata.com/</a>



D. [www.texasfile.com](http://www.texasfile.com)

1. This vendor provides real estate document information and images for 102 Texas counties at the present time.
2. Pricing: \$1.00 to preview your document, and \$2.00 to download or print it. You purchase credits online, which you spend for previewing documents, or printing/down loading documents. Minimum purchase for credits is \$10.00.

**EXHIBIT A: Summary of Online Real Estate Records**

	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>1. Web Address</b>	www.co.collin.tx.us/	www.dallascounty.org	http://dentoncounty.com	www.tarrantcounty.com/eGov/site/default.asp
<b>2. Available Records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumed Name</li> <li>- Foreclosure Notices</li>   <li>- Marriage</li> <li>- Real Estate</li> <li>- UCC Records</li> <li>- Birth and Death Records (summary information, but no certificates/images)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumed Name</li> <li>- Foreclosure Notices (under separate link, Clerk's home page)</li> <li>- Marriage</li> <li>- Real Estate</li> <li>- UCC Records</li> </ul> <p>(NOTE: Birth and Death Records, summary information only, are only available in the Records Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, public computers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumed Name</li> <li>- Foreclosure Notices (by separate link at bottom of page)</li> <li>- Real Estate</li> <li>- UCC Records</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: No online viewing or printing of plats.</p> <p>NOTE: Document images may be printed. Document images may be saved with a full featured Acrobat type of software.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumed Name</li> <li>- Foreclosure Notices (under separate link, County's home page)</li> <li>- Marriage</li> <li>- Real Estate</li> <li>- UCC Records</li> </ul>
<b>3. Dates of Records</b>	2-14-1974 to Present	<p><u>Index</u> – 1-1-1964 to within 3-6 days before the Present;</p> <p><u>Temp. Index</u> – Last 3 - 6 Days;</p> <p><u>Images</u>: 1-1-1974 to Present;</p> <p><u>Marriage</u>: 1-1-84 to Present</p>	<p>5-12-1854, to within 3-4 days before the Present</p> <p>NOTE: Be aware of the Courthouse fire in 1875, rendering these records prior to the fire incomplete.</p>	<p><u>Index</u> – 1-1-1970 to within about 10 days of the Present;</p> <p><u>Temp. Index</u> – Last 10 Days +/- ;</p> <p><u>Images</u>: Mid 1980s to Present;</p> <p><u>Marriage</u>: 1-1-84 to Present</p> <p><u>Assumed Names</u>: 1-1-84 to Present</p> <p><u>UCCs</u>: 1-1-1967 to Present</p>

	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>4. Steps To Take Prior to Viewing</b>	Temporarily unlock your <b>Pop-Up Blocker</b> , on your Web Browser (if you have such a pop-up blocker)	Recommend you read the “Learn Help Tips about ROAM”, in order to learn the basic and advanced search options. ROAM offers many ways to limit the “index fields” you are searching.	Temporarily unlock your <b>Pop-Up Blocker</b> , on your Web Browser (if you have such a pop-up blocker)	Download a Java program from the Clerk’s website, which you will install on your computer (same as Tarrant County); you might need to uninstall an old Java, and reinstall a new Java program.
<b>5. Steps to Take Prior to Printing</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>6. What You Get When You Print</b>	You click a PDF file, which opens, and which you can print.	You click a PDF file, which opens, and which you can print.	You click to open an image of the document, from which you print. However, to save the image as a PDF file, you must save the document using the “Basket” option at the top of the page. Then, after you Click the PDF icon of the document, you must use full featured Adobe Acrobat to save it.	You download either a PDF file or a TIFF file, which you can then print.
<b>7. Printing Charges</b>	None	None	None	None
<b>8. Printing Comment</b>	Document marked “Unofficial”	Document marked “Unofficial”	Clean, plain copy	Document marked “Unofficial”

**EXHIBIT B: Summary of Online Court Records**

**COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY COURTS**

	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>1. Web Address</b>	<a href="http://www.co.collin.tx.us/">www.co.collin.tx.us/</a>	<a href="http://www.dallascounty.org">www.dallascounty.org</a>	<a href="http://justice.dentoncounty.com/">http://justice.dentoncounty.com/</a>	<a href="http://cc.co.tarrant.tx.us/CivilCourts/ccl/default.asp">http://cc.co.tarrant.tx.us/CivilCourts/ccl/default.asp</a>

<p><b>2. Available Records</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You may search for cases, through the “Online Services” feature.</li> <li>– Click under “Online Services”, in the left column of the web page.</li> <li>– Click Case Search-Basic</li> <li>– Click or unclick the types of cases to search, enter the name, then Click.</li> <li>– Search terms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Party name</li> <li>– Attorney name</li> <li>– Case Number</li> </ul> </li> <li>– You may also Click “Case Record Inquiry-Advanced.” You will find the same cases, and filings, as under Case Search-Basic.</li> <li>TIP: Under “Case Record Inquiry-Advanced,” you must enter the exact (full) first name and last name, to obtain your search results (for Civil and Probate only). Or, enter * after the first name initial.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You may search for County and District Court cases. Select to search one of the following categories: Criminal, Civil or Probate. Under Civil, you may search County or District Courts cases.</li> <li>– After you click the relevant case type, you then obtain a summary style of docket sheet, containing party and attorney names, dates, and case disposition. Some cases also include a list of documents for the case.</li> <li>– <u>Document images are now available online. It is called “Public Access to Court Records.”</u></li> <li>– You must enter a case number using the Court abbreviation followed by the 2-digit filing year, and the 5 digit case number.</li> <li>– The images available are for 2010, and for some Courts, earlier years.</li> <li>– Images for sealed or confidential cases are not available online/in person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– You may search for civil and criminal cases, including family and probate, by clicking either Criminal Case Records, or Probate/Civil/Family Case Records, or JP Civil Case Records, at the top of the “Records Search” page.</li> <li>– Search terms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Party name</li> <li>– Attorney name</li> <li>– Case number</li> <li>– Date filed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— You may search for civil and criminal (misdemeanor) cases, including probate, by clicking along the left column of the page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Party name</li> <li>– Case number</li> <li>– Atty. name</li> <li>– Atty. Number</li> <li>– Docket search</li> <li>– Docket settings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>3. Courts You May Search</b>	– All Courts (but you must select/uncheck one of the types of courts to search, and then search within that group)	– Access (docket sheet) is available for these Courts: – Civil Courts – Probate Courts – Criminal Background Search  NOTE: No Justice Court information is online.	– All Courts (but you must select one of the three types of courts to search, and then search within that group)	– All County Courts (but you must select the type of courts to search, and then search within that group) NOTE: To search District Courts, you must subscribe to the District Clerk’s Web Access (a fee based access service).
<b>4. Dates of Records</b>	Not stated (did find cases back to 1940s)	Not stated (did find cases back to 1970)	Not stated (did find cases back to 1980s)	Not stated
<b>5. Records You May Retrieve</b>	– Docket style sheet. No document images may be viewed.	– Docket style sheet. – Court document images are now available online for a number of Civil and Criminal County Courts at Law (but not Tax Court, Probate Court, Misdemeanor Criminal Cases, or JP Courts).	– Docket style sheet.  – Attorney Webaccess: Document images may be viewed, by the attorney of record, when the attorney registers and pays \$50 one time registration fee, and \$200/year annual fee. Attorney then can download TIFF document images that have been scanned. This service is extended to an attorney, and not the law firm as a group. Only an attorney of record may subscribe to this service, and then only for the cases that attorney is registered with.	– Docket style sheet. No document images may be viewed, unless you enroll in the Web Based Access Service, for \$50 enrollment fee, plus a monthly fee beginning at \$35/month. This service provides unlimited access to scanned document images filed in cases. Once you enroll, you may view all scanned documents for all District civil and criminal courts. No County Courts at Law or Probate Court images are available online.

**EXHIBIT C: Summary of Online Court Records**

**DISTRICT CLERK, DISTRICT COURTS**

	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>1. Web Address</b>	<a href="http://www.co.collin.tx.us/">www.co.collin.tx.us/</a>	<a href="http://www.dallascounty.org/department/districtclerk/districtclerk_index.html">http://www.dallascounty.org/department/districtclerk/districtclerk_index.html</a>	<a href="http://justice.dentoncounty.com/">http://justice.dentoncounty.com/</a>	<a href="http://www.tarrantcounty.com/edistrictclerk/site/default.asp">http://www.tarrantcounty.com/edistrictclerk/site/default.asp</a>

<p><b>2. Available Records</b></p>	<p>Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Currently you may search an index page for civil cases. Once the computer returns a case, only the case number, parties, and dates are listed.</li> <li>– Click on “Public Access”, then “Online Case Information” on the left of the page.</li> <li>– Click “Continue”, for “Civil and Family Case Records”.</li> <li>– Select “Civil District Courts” or “District Family Courts.”</li> <li>– Enter either the “Case Number”, or click “Party Name.” Then enter the last name and first name of a party.</li> </ul> <p>TIP: You may enter the first name initial, followed by *.</p> <p><u>COURT IMAGES: Most District Courts images can be accessed through the District Clerk’s website (For 2010, and over time, earlier years). But see restrictions under Exhibit B, above.</u></p>	<p>Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Through Web Based Access Service, the public may subscribe to a computer based access service for District cases (Civil and Criminal).</li> <li>– Without enrolling in Web Based Access, you may access recent and upcoming Court docket schedules for cases, listed by District Court number.</li> </ul>
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	<b>COLLIN COUNTY</b>	<b>DALLAS COUNTY</b>	<b>DENTON COUNTY</b>	<b>TARRANT COUNTY</b>
<b>3. Courts You May Search</b>	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	– All Civil and Family District Courts (search for images for Criminal District Courts).	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	– Criminal Settings information is the only District Court criminal information available at no charge. No District Court docket sheets or images are available, except when you enroll in the Web Access program.
<b>4. Dates of Records</b>	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	Not stated	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	Note stated
<b>5. Records You May Retrieve</b>	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	– Docket style sheet. Some Court document images are available online and on the public computer in the 4 <sup>th</sup> floor Lawyer’s Lounge, Allen Courthouse.	Same as County Courts at Law, Exhibit B, above.	– No document images may be viewed. The public may enroll in the Web Based Access Service, for \$50 enrollment fee, plus a monthly fee beginning at \$35/month. This service provides unlimited access to scanned document images filed in cases, among other information for cases. – The downtown Ft. Worth public computer and 3 suburban courthouse computers are available for viewing document images (per the Clerk’s website).

END