

HISTORY OF THE SALT LAKE COUNTY RECORDER

(Includes information from the Utah State Archives)

The foundation of what was to become the recorder's office was laid in 1215 A.D. with the signing in medieval England of the Magna Charta that provided for state protection of land ownership. The practice of recording real estate documents developed in English law from that time and traveled to the New World with the colonists. Public land registrars were appointed in colonial America to keep accurate records. A system of registration was necessary to prove the rights of persons who first made claims to property.

In the Utah territory Brigham Young established a method for recording land records in "An Ordinance in Relation to County Recorders," approved 1 March 1850. A county recorder in each county was commissioned to record "all transfers or conveyances of land or tenements, and all other instruments of writing and documents suitable, necessary and proper" to such conveyances. In short, the recorder was to keep a record of every action or transaction that involved real property. Documents were to be recorded in "good and well bound books, suitable for the purpose." The books were to be indexed in alphabetical order and were to be free to examination. The government of the Territory of Utah created the office of the Salt Lake County Recorder in 1852.

The earliest Utah deeds were typically called transfers. The earliest county recorders' books contain copies of surveyors' certificates and transfers. As time passed, recorders added various types of deeds, patents, mining claims, etc., to create an ever-increasing variety of official land records.

The functions of the Salt Lake County Recorder continue to be fundamentally the same. Today, however, those functions are more specifically established by state statute. And, rather than being recorded in "good and well bound books", records are kept by various electronic means. All records in the Recorder's Office are public and are open to inspection during regular office hours.

The Recorder was originally elected to a four-year term. In 1886, the law was changed and the term was changed from four years to two years. In 1921, the law was changed again and the recorder was to be elected to a four-year term.

The following is a listing of the Salt Lake County Recorders:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years served</u>
Thomas Bullock	1852-1856
Leo Hawkins	1857-1859
Franklin B. Woolley	1859-1862
John W. Woolley	1862-1864
Edwin D. Woolley	1863-1876

Angus M. Cannon	1876-1884
George M. Cannon	1884-1890
John H. Rumel, Jr.	1890-1893
Joseph Lippman	1893-1895
W. Scott Crismon	1895-1896
James C. Jensen	1897-1900
Thomas Alston	1901-1902
Walter J. Meeks	1903-1904
Percival O. Perkins	1905-1908
Frederick J.A. Jaques	1909-1912
Clarence M. Cannon	1913-1914
George H. Islaub	1915-1918
Berkley Olson	1919-1920
Lillian Cutler	1921-1926
Aurora H. Hiatt Duncan	1827-1931
Helen F. Reiser	1932-1934
Jessie Evans Smith	1935-1938
Cornelia S. Lund	1939-1946
Hazel Taggart Chase	1947-1958
Nellie M. Jack	1959-1962
Hazel Taggart Chase	1963-1970
Jeradean Prichett Martin	1971-1974
Katie L. Dixon	1975-1994
Nancy Workman	1995-2000
Gary Ott	2001-