

From the Ottawa County, Michigan, County Recorder's website:

Recording laws were established before governments were formed because protecting property was important to the pilgrims and other pioneers. Many colonists had left England and had objected to the feudal system of land owners. They wanted ownership of land and a system to protect their valuable asset.

Under French and English rule, all deeds were recorded by a notary in a book kept for the purpose. By law of June 18, 1795, of the Northwest Territory, the office of register was created.

### REGISTRATION OF DEEDS.

Registrar of deeds, his appointment, duties and salary.

How his fees shall be fixed and accounted for.

**54.** The Governor may appoint a Registrar of Deeds in and for the North-West Territories, who shall hold office during pleasure, and who shall reside and keep his office in a place to be named for that purpose in his commission, or at such other place as may be appointed for that purpose from time to time by the Governor in Council, and who shall register all deeds and other instruments relating to lands situate in any part of the North-West Territories, and which have been laid out and surveyed by the Crown : and the Governor in Council may order annual salary, not exceeding two thousand dollars, to be paid to the said registrar : and the Lieutenant-Governor and Council shall fix the fees to be paid for the registration of all such deeds and instruments, —which fees shall be collected by the registrar, and being first verified on oath, shall by him be paid over to the Lieutenant-Governor, at the end of every quarter in each year, on account of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada ; and the forms incident to, and effect of such registration shall be governed by laws to be made under this Act.

The first act of registering deeds under Michigan Territory was passed August 29, 1805; it provided that deeds might be recorded with the clerk of any court. An Act, passed on January 19, 1811, authorized the register of probate to record deeds; and by Act of November 4, 1815, deeds were required to be recorded in his office.

On April 12, 1827, the register was directed to provide a book for the recording of mortgages.

By Act of January 29, 1835, the office of register of probate was abolished, and the duties of the office were transferred to the county register of deeds, provided for in the same Act.

Northwest Territory  
Law of June 18, 1795