



# 10 Steps to Researching the History of Your House in Little Compton, Rhode Island

By Marian Pierre-Louis  
NortheastHouseHistorian.com

## Definition

**Grantor** – the person selling the property

**Grantee** – the person buying the property

**Land Evidence Records** = deeds

## Basic Research Strategy

### 1. Assessor's Office – Property data

- Access Little Compton Assessor Database
- The Assessor's Office will provide links to field/property cards, assessment values and assessor maps. It also provides the most recent book and page number to the deed of your house.
- Little Compton Assessors Database - <https://gis.vgsi.com/littlecomptonri/>
- Little Compton Assessor Maps - [https://www.axisgis.com/little\\_comptonri/](https://www.axisgis.com/little_comptonri/)

### 2. Land Evidence Records/Deeds

- If possible you want to research in-person in the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall (40 Common Street, Little Compton, RI 02837)
- In fall 2022, Little Compton switched to a new provider for their online land evidence records. Click on "Search Records as Guest." You can now access them at <https://www.searchiqs.com/RICOMP/Login.aspx>
- Some deed images are also found at the above link and as well as at FamilySearch.org
- For downloadable deed charts (pdf/docx) see <https://littlecompton.org/historical-resources/house-histories-resources/>

### 3. Census Records (also RI State Census Records)

- Find the occupants of your house in the census. Please note: the occupants might not be the owners!
- Federal Census Records are available every 10 years from 1790 to 1950 with the exception of 1890.
- RI State Census Records are available for 1865, 1875, 1885, 1905, 1915, 1925 & 1935
- Available from:
  - Ancestry.com (subscription service) <http://www.ancestry.com/>
  - [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) (free)
  - [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com), [FindMyPast.com](https://www.findmypast.com) and others

### 4. Probate

- You can find house/estate inventories and list of family members in wills.
- Little Compton probate records are located at Town Hall.
- Search the card index and then ask the staff for the file

## 5. Vital Records

- Provide birth/marriage/death dates and locations.
- Names of parents
- Available from [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org), [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), [www.AmericanAncestors.org](https://www.americanancestors.org).

## 6. Maps

- Ancestry.com, Hathi Trust, [www.DavidRumsey.com](http://www.DavidRumsey.com)
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps>

## 7. Rhode Island HPHC Publications

- 58 publications containing detailed information for each town for historic properties and neighborhoods
- Found at <https://preservation.ri.gov/historic-places/rihphc-publications>

## 8. City Directories & Residents Lists

- City Directories are available online at the major database sites like Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org

## 9. Tax Records

- Value of property through the years
- These can be a great indicator of when changes were made to a property
- Little Compton Tax Records start in 1869 and continue to present

## 10. Newspapers

Many old newspapers are available online through Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, NEHGS, GenealogyBank.com, Newspapers.com, Boston Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society (Worcester). See <https://theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html> for more.

## 11. Photos and Miscellaneous Items

Be sure to check with the Little Compton Historical Society for old photos of your home, its occupants, old maps and other miscellaneous information.

## Further Reading

These books are available from <https://littlecompton.org/product-category/books/> or your library network.

*Remember Me: A Guide to Little Compton's 46 Historic Cemeteries.* Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2018.

*Remembering Adamsville: Oral Histories Collected by the Little Compton Historical Society.* Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2013.

*The Stories Houses Tell: A Second Collection of Little Compton House Histories.* Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2022.

Lisle, Janet. *A Home by the Sea: The History of Little Compton, 1820-1950*. Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2012.