

GSCCCA Real Property Systems

Historical Real Estate Re-Indexing Projects Guidelines

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Comments and questions regarding this document may be emailed to indexing@gsccca.org.

1. Purpose

This document is intended for vendors performing indexing and imaging services for the GSCCCA Historical Real Estate Records Re-Indexing Projects (Historical Projects). It provides the requirements for a vendor with a computer system compliant with the Guidelines (see Definitions) to produce *Index Data Files* and *Image Files* for the Historical Projects.

2. Definitions

This document is to be read in conjunction with the “GSCCCA Real Property Systems Guidelines” (Guidelines) available from the GSCCCA website. All capitalized terms in *italics* refer to the term as defined below.

Central Collection System: The computer system managed by the GSCCCA that collects real property *Index Data* and images from all Georgia *Clerks* to comprise the *Consolidated Georgia Real Estate Indexes*.

Clerk or Clerk of Superior Court: A Clerk of Superior Court in the State of Georgia. Depending on the context, the term may also include a *Clerk’s* designated deputies, personnel, agents or vendors who may be performing services on a *Clerk’s* behalf for the production and maintenance of official land records.

Consolidated Georgia Real Estate Indexes or Statewide Indexes: The legislatively mandated collection of real property *Index Data* and images from all *Clerks* in Georgia. The GSCCCA manages and maintains the computer systems and data for the *Statewide Indexes*.

Deed: An *Instrument* and its associated images and *Index Data* that are recorded in a *Clerk’s Deed Docket*, which is the *Docket* recognized by the GSCCCA as the primary collection of recorded deeds (and other recorded documents) and is separate from the *Lien* and *Plat Dockets*. Note that *Deeds* may include documents that are not legal deeds, such as liens, plats, etc. as long as they are recorded in the *Deed Docket*. It may also contain several local *Clerk* dockets or book series that are combined when transmitted to the GSCCCA per allowance via *Docket Surveys* produced in coordination with the GSCCCA to help ensure there are no book value conflicts within a *Docket*.

Docket: One or more series of books of a *Clerk’s* property records that are comprised of either the *Deed Docket*, the *Lien Docket*, or the *Plat Docket*. This document assumes that for purposes of interfacing with the Central Collection System, all of a *Clerk’s* official real property records are categorized, or mapped, and combined as necessary, into either the *Deed Docket*, the *Lien Docket*, and the *Plat Docket*. (When not capitalized and italicized in this document, the term *docket* may refer to general set of records or book series.)

Filed Date: The date and time that an *Instrument* was delivered to the *Clerk*, or *Clerk’s* agent, and in the control of the *Clerk*. (This is different from the record / recording date).

GSCCCA: The Georgia Superior Court Clerks’ Cooperative Authority. The GSCCCA is mandated by O.C.G.A. § 15-6-97 to maintain and manage the computer system that comprises the *Consolidated Georgia Real Estate Indexes* (*Statewide Indexes*). The official website of the GSCCCA is www.gsccca.org.

Image File: An electronic data file that contains image information of an *Instrument*. Typically, there will be a separate *Image File* for each page of an *Instrument*.

Index Data: Data such as party names, property information, instrument types, recorded book and page, cross indexes, *Filed Date*, etc. that is derived from *Instruments* for the purposes of building indexes to locate the *Instrument*.

Index Data File: An electronic file of real property *Index Data* created by *Real Property Systems* and transmitted to the *Central Collection System* for inclusion into the *Statewide Indexes*. Specifications for *Index Data Files* are provided in *Task 4* of this document.

Indexing Standards: The document titled: “Indexing Standards for Real and Personal Property for the State of Georgia”. This document describes how *Instruments* filed in the *Clerk’s* real property records are to be indexed for inclusion into *Official Clerk Indexes*, including how to index names, how to determine parties, selection of instrument type, property information, cross indexes, etc. This document is currently available at the GSCCCA website.

Instrument: A *Submitted Instrument* that has been deemed suitable by the *Clerk* for recording into the *Official Clerk Records*.

InstrumentID: The data field that ties together a group or set of *Index Data* for an *Instrument* for purposes of transmitting and identifying data with the *Central Collection System*. There is usually a single *InstrumentID* for each indexed *Instrument*, but in cases where an *Instrument* is indexed more than one time (such as to reflect multiple instrument types) then there will be a different *InstrumentID* for each set of *Index Data*. If there are multiple *Instruments* recorded by a *Clerk* on a physical page of their docket, then there will be a separate *InstrumentID* for each *Instrument* and each set of *Index Data* will have the same [Instrument.Book] and [Instrument.Page] values. *InstrumentIDs* are further described and placed in *Index Data Files* as specified in *Task 4*, and Appendix A. Correction/Addition Lines (per *Task 4*) will have the same *InstrumentID* as the data it is correcting or supplementing, thus *Real Property Systems* will have to internally maintain separate groups of *Index Data* with the same *InstrumentID* and can NOT assume each *Instrument* will be associated with a unique *InstrumentID*.

Lien: An *Instrument* and its associated *Image Files* and *Index Data* that are recorded in a *Clerk’s Lien Docket*, which is the *Docket* recognized by the GSCCCA as the primary collection of recorded liens and is separate from the *Deed* and *Plat Dockets*. Note that *Liens* may include documents that are not legal liens, such as notices, etc. as long as they are recorded in the *Lien Docket*. It may also contain several local *Clerk* dockets or book series that are combined when transmitted to the GSCCCA per allowance via *Docket Surveys* produced in coordination with the GSCCCA to help ensure there are no book value conflicts (i.e. different books with the same book value for the same *Docket*).

Notification(s) of Acceptance: The automated response from the *Central Collection System* to the *Clerk* indicating that a particular *Index Data File* has passed validation resulting in the *Index Data* from the file to be merged into the *Statewide Indexes* and requires the *Clerk* to merge the same data in the *Official Clerk Index* of the *Clerk*. These notices are currently sent to the *Clerk* via email as soon as the *Central Collection System* has completed validating the file.

Notification(s) of Rejection: The automated response from the *Central Collection System* to the *Clerk* indicating that a particular *Index Data File* has NOT passed validation, resulting in the *Index Data* from the file to NOT be merged into the *Statewide Indexes* and requiring the *Clerk* to continue to exclude the same data from becoming part of the *Official Clerk Index* of the *Clerk*. These notices are currently sent to the *Clerk* via email as soon as the *Central Collection System* has completed validating the file.

Official Clerk Records: The official public record real property index and images maintained by a *Clerk of Superior Court* and is used by the public to locate and obtain real property records.

Plat: An *Instrument* and its associated images and *Index Data* that are recorded in a *Clerk’s Plat Docket*, which is the docket recognized by the GSCCCA as the primary collection of recorded plats and is separate from the *Deed* and *Lien Dockets*. Note that *Plats* may include documents that are not legal plats, as long as they are recorded in

the *Plat Docket*. It may also contain several local *Clerk* dockets or book series that are combined when transmitted to the GSCCCA per allowance with docket surveys produced in coordination with the GSCCCA to help ensure there are no book value conflicts (i.e. different books with the same book value).

Submitted Instrument: A document submitted to a *Clerk* from a member of the public for recording into the *Official Clerk Records*. The term *Submitted Instrument* includes documents that may be subsequently rejected by the *Clerk* whereas the terms *Instrument* refers to a document deemed suitable by the *Clerk* for recording.

3. Background

The GSCCCA's Historical Projects were created to image and re-index older *Official Clerk Records* that were not indexed in accordance with the *Indexing Standards*. These records need to be re-indexed to conform to the *Indexing Standards*, so their index data and associated document images can be added to the *Consolidated Georgia Real Estate Indexes*.

Real Property records sent to the GSCCCA are categorized in one of three *Dockets* referred to as *Deeds*, *Liens*, and *Plats*. Records for the Historical Projects include *Deeds*, *Liens*, and *Plats* whose dates of filing with the *Clerk of Superior Court* are before the allowable date ranges specified in the Guidelines.

The Historical Projects require complete, manual re-indexing of records from images of the documents; no manipulation of pre-existing index data is allowed. The transfer of the *Image Files* and the re-indexed data to the *Central Collection System* is to be performed in a manner specified by the GSCCCA.

This document assumes that the official original indexes of the *Clerk of Superior Court* shall continue to be the *Official Clerk Records* of the *Clerk's* office, and the re-indexed data produced for any of the Historical Projects is not to replace any *Official Clerk Records*.

The first Historical Project created by the GSCCCA involved *Deed* docket filings filed between 1993-1998. After *Deeds* from all 159 counties were completed for these years, subsequent projects were created to capture older records and could also include *Lien* and *Plat Dockets*. As each subsequent project was developed, additional quality control rules and features were implemented by the GSCCCA which has caused the differences in the data requirements between the projects that is described in this document.

Any work done by vendors or *Clerks* for the Historical Projects, and any associated compensation from the GSCCCA, is governed by individual contracts between the GSCCCA, affected *Clerks*, and affected indexing vendors. The GSCCCA requires re-indexing vendors to use an indexing system that is appropriately certified by the GSCCCA, and all individuals currently performing re-indexing must also be appropriately certified by the GSCCCA (certified indexers).

Re-indexing vendors are expected to provide the GSCCCA with the IP (internet protocol) address of the device they will use to transmit *Index Data Files*, and an email address to receive *Notifications of Acceptance* and *Notifications of Rejection* that are returned to indexing vendors for each *Index Data File* transmitted to the GSCCCA. At any time, the GSCCCA may require re-indexing vendors to provide additional information or follow additional requirements to ensure the security and accuracy of data transmitted to and from the GSCCCA.

Various computer applications were created and operate at the *Central Collection System* to process *Index Data Files* for the various Historical Projects. The requirements to produce *Index Data Files* for each of these applications are described below.

4. Rules That Apply to Index Data Files For ALL Historical Re-Indexing Projects and Applications

Historical Project *Index Data Files* and *Image Files* are to be produced similar to that of non-Historical, or regular, daily data described in the Guidelines, except for the different requirements described in this document. As such, this document should be read in accordance with the Guidelines.

Index Data Files are to be in ASCII format and transmitted to the GSCCCA via FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to an FTP site designated by the GSCCCA. The GSCCCA will issue connection information to appropriate vendors performing re-indexing services.

Image Files of re-indexed *Instruments* are to be transmitted to the GSCCCA via the GSCCCA *Image API* service unless otherwise specified by the GSCCCA.

Unless otherwise specified, or for the purposes of correcting or adding previously skipped data in the GSCCCA system, data within an *Index Data File* is to be transmitted in reverse chronological order: starting from *Instruments* with latest applicable *Filed Date* of the segment of the Historical Project and proceeding chronologically backwards to older *Filed Dates*. *Index Data Files* containing an instrument with a *Filed Date* value outside the appropriate range of its project or segment should be rejected by the GSCCCA system or refused for compensation.

Each *Index Data File* should contain data filed chronologically earlier than the file that preceded it, with the exception of “Correction/Addition Records” (see Guidelines *Task 4*) and any omitted *Instruments* that should have been included in a previous *Index Data File*. Violations may result in a non-critical error / warning.

Index Data Files shall contain data in amounts or periods as chosen by the vendor such that all files must be smaller than 250kb in size (approximately 800 *Instruments*) and large enough so as not to cause the sequential number in the filename to exceed its number of characters.

The GSCCCA maintains “Docket Surveys” for each county in Georgia. The Docket Surveys are used to account for all the real property records of a *Clerk*, define which instrument types should be re-indexed into which *Docket* (*Deeds*, *Liens*, or *Plats*), and define the book values to use for re-indexing so that older book series do not have conflicting/duplicate book values with newer series for the same docket. Re-Indexing vendors shall reference these Docket Surveys and any instructions provided by the GSCCCA when performing re-indexing services. All applicable records for a Historical Project should be indexed with the exception of any already in the GSCCCA System.

Index Data Files accepted by the GSCCCA will have a *Notification of Acceptance* emailed to the email address of record for the vendor believed to have transmitted the file. Index data is typically held in “Quarantine”, a non-publicly accessible database, so that the GSCCCA can perform quality checks on the data. Vendors will be asked to correct any quality or mis-indexing issues. Once the data has met the quality standards of the GSCCCA, the data will be “released” from Quarantine and made publicly available and searchable on the GSCCCA website.

The GSCCCA indexing instructions to indexing vendors will specify, on a case-by-case basis, if “Indexer Identification” lines, aka “Z Lines” (as defined in the Guidelines) are required, optional, or not allowed to be included in index data files.

Within an *Index Data File*, data must be sorted in ascending order of *InstrumentIDs*. *InstrumentIDs* are to be assigned to instruments consistently for a year in ascending or descending order of *Filed Date*. For example, an *InstrumentID* of 1591997000001 should represent either the first instrument of a year (presumably filed in early January 1997) or the last (presumably filed in late December 1997).

Corrections to Historical index data accepted into the GSCCCA system are accomplished by “Correction/Addition Records” records as specified in the Guidelines and submitted to the GSCCCA using the same Historical Project and *InstrumentID* as the original data that requires correcting. Vendor indexing systems must be able to submit “Correction/ Addition Records” that change all fields of indexing data for an *Instrument* including the book, page, filed date, etc., when appropriate. “Correction/Addition Records” shall have the Description field begin with the “Added Date” as defined by the Guidelines.

Filenames

Index Data Files for all Historical Projects are to have filenames in “8 dot 3” format. The first 2 or 3 characters of the filename (depending on the particular Historical Project) specify the “Historical Project” (see below). The remaining 5 or 6 characters shall be a sequential number that starts at 1 and shall be 0-padded (Sequential File Number). The Sequential File Number shall be incremented each time a file for the “Historical Project” and county

is accepted by the GSCCCA system. If an *Index Data File* is rejected by the *Central Collection System*, then the expected sequential portion of the filename is not to be incremented.

After the first 8 characters shall be a dot (".") followed by the three-digit County Code (see below under "File Header").

File Headers.

The first line of every *Index Data File* is referred to as the Header. The Header is composed of various pieces of information, varying by Historical Project. This document specifies the pieces of information to be used in the Header of each specific Historical Project, and the pieces are selected from the following:

Checksum: the first 7 characters of every index data file shall be the hexadecimal sum of the ASCII values of all the characters in the file except for the Checksum itself, trimmed and/or 0-padded to always be 7 characters. (This is the same field used at the beginning of the current/daily index data files sent to the GSCCCA). The Checksum is followed by a comma and is the only field in index data files that does NOT have double quotes before or after it.

County Code: 3-digit code representing the county. Valid values are from "001" (for Appling County) to "159" (for Worth County). *Index Data Files* shall not contain data from more than one county.

Character Count: the total number of characters in the index data file, 0-padded, and trimmed to 8 characters. (This must be calculated before the Checksum and in doing so must assume that the Checksum is 7 characters.)

Docket: Either "DEED", "LIEN", or "PLAT" depending on the data in the file. No *Index Data File* shall ever contain index data for more than one docket.

Good From Date: The Good From Date in *Index Data Files* for *Historical Projects* takes the place of *Good Through Dates* used in daily data and represents the date that, should the file be accepted by the *Central Collection System*, all known records for the Historical Project for the County, Docket, and Series (if applicable) data range are included in the *Central Collection System*. It has the format "MM/DD/YYYY" but can be "*" in some Historical Projects, as described below, when the Good From Date is not known or not intended to be updated.

5. Rules that Apply to: "Extended Historical Deeds, Liens, and Plats": This is currently the application used for all new GSCCCA historical re-Indexing initiatives. (The inclusion of rules for the additional Historical Projects is provided herein for when those applications are used for correction to, or missing records, that need to be transmitted to the GSCCCA by those projects.)

Filename Specification: The filenames for *Index Data Files* for this Historical Project shall be composed of the following: the letters "HD", "HL", or "HP" respectively for *Deed*, *Lien* or *Plat Docket* index data. The third character of the filename shall represent the Series number or letter as assigned by GSCCCA and provided to the Re-Indexing vendor. The next 5 characters shall represent Sequential File Number for the series starting with "00001".

Filename Examples:

"HD100001.009" represents the first file of Deed data for an Extended Historical Series "1" for County 009.

"HL300004.001" represents the fourth file of Lien data for an Extended Historical Series "3" for County 001.

"HPA00100.159" represents the 100th file of Plat data for an Extended Historical Series "A" for County 159.

File Header Specification for Deeds: Checksum, 3-digit County Code, Good From date (or use "*" when Good From date is not known or not intended to be changed), Character count.

File Header Example for Deeds: 0D48893,"016","11/02/1972","00274039" for historical deeds.

File Header Specification for Liens and Plats: Checksum, Character Count, "LIEN" or "PLAT" as appropriate, County Code, Good From Date (or "*" when Good From Date it not known or not intended to be changed)

File Header Example for Liens: :029DCC1,"00059296","LIEN","013","01/01/2003"

File Header Example for Plats: :029DCC1,"00059296","PLAT","013","01/01/2003"

The GSCCCA will likely specify that one or more Indexer Identification Lines aka "Z Lines" (as defined in the Guidelines) are required per instrument.

Records may be required to be double blind keyed based on contractual agreement with the GSCCCA.

6. Rules that Apply to: "Regular Historical Deeds". This application was predominantly used for *Deeds* filed in years 1993-1998 except for Fulton County (filing years 1993 – 1999) and Gwinnett County (filing years 1776 – 1998).

Filename Specification: "H0"¹ followed by a 6-character Sequential File Number for the series starting with "000001".

Filename Example: The filename "H0000021.041" would represent the 21st file for county 041 (Dade County).

File Header Specification: Checksum, County Code, Good From Date in format "mm/dd/yyyy",

Character count.

File Header Example: 031F536,"048","11/03/1998","00062989".

7. Rules that Apply to: "92 Historical Deeds". This application is mainly used for *Deeds* filed in 1992.

Filename Specification: "H92" followed by 5-character Sequence File Number, then dot, then 3-digit county code.

Filename Example: "H9200031.009".

File Header Specification: Checksum, County Code, Good-From Date, Character count.

File Header Example: 0004C2D,"009","01/01/1992","00000376".

8. Rules that Apply to: "90-91 Historical Deeds". This application is mainly used for *Deeds* filed in 1990 and 1991.

Filename Specification: "H91" followed by 5-character sequence number, then dot, then 3-digit county code.

Filename Example: "H9100031.009".

File Header Specification: Checksum, County Code, Good-From Date, Character count.

File Header Example: 0004C2D,"009","01/01/1992","00000376".

One or more Indexer Identification Lines aka "Z Lines" (as defined in the Deed Indexing System Guidelines) are required per instrument.

9. Rules that Apply to: "Regular Historical Liens". This application is mainly used for Gwinnett County *Liens* filed between 1983-2003.

Filename Specification: "LH" followed by 6-character sequence number, then dot, then 3-digit county code.

Filename Example: "LH000864.067".

File Header Specification: Checksum, Character count, "LIEN", 3-digit county code, Good-From Date.

File Header Example: 02CC23B,"00056874","LIEN","067","01/01/2003".

¹ The "0" in the 2nd character of the filename is used to make sure filenames with very high Sequential File Numbers for this Historical Project do not conflict with others whose filenames start with "H92" etc.

10. Rules that Apply to: “Regular Historical Plats”. This application is mainly used for Gwinnett County Plats filed between 1983-2003.

Filename Specification: “PH” followed by 6-character sequence number, then dot, then 3-digit county code.

Filename Example: “PH000280.067”.

File Header Specification: Checksum, Character count, “PLAT”, 3-digit county code, Good-From Date.

File Header Example: 0010BC3,"00001411","PLAT","067","01/01/1913".