

HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR HOME HISTORY

HOME HISTORIAN RESOURCES

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ASSOCIATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND GUIDELINES

American Association for State and Local History (AASLH): AASLH is the only comprehensive national organization dedicated supporting those who preserve and interpret state and local history. www.aaslh.org

National Register of Historic Places: Part of the U.S. National Park Service, NRHP maintains the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. www.nps.gov/nr

PreservationDirectory.com: The directory's goal – according to its Web site – is to foster the preservation of historic buildings, historic downtowns and neighborhoods, cultural resources and to promote heritage tourism by facilitating communication among historic preservation professionals and the general public. www.preservationdirectory.com/HistoricalPreservation/Home.aspx

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide

State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO): The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. This is a listing of the State Historic Preservation Officers affiliated with the Register. www.nps.gov/history/nr/shpolist.htm



RESEARCHING ARCHITECTURE

About.com – A Field Guide to American Houses: www.architecture.about.com/od/productreviews/fr/fieldguide.htm

Conducting an Architectural Investigation: www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Features/Find_The_History_Of_A_Home

Heritage Documentation Programs: Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP), part of the National Park Service, administers HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey), the Federal Government's oldest preservation program, and companion programs HAER (Historic American Engineering Record), HALS (Historic American Landscapes Survey), and CRGIS (Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems). www.nps.gov/history/hdp

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Architectural Style Guides and Dictionaries: www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/nrb39_VII.htm

RESEARCHING CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES, MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Conducting an Architectural Investigation: www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Features/Find_The_History_Of_A_Home

Library of Congress History of Household Technology Page: www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/householdtb.html

RESEARCHING IMPROVEMENTS/PUBLIC RECORDS

Ancestry.com: Ancestry.com is a site dedicated to family history and bills itself as “the worlds largest online resource for family history documents and family trees.” It boasts more than 1 million subscribers. www.ancestry.com

BRB Publications, Inc.: According to its Web site, BRB Publications, Inc. is the nation's premier publisher of sourcebooks used for locating public records. www.brbspub.com/freeresources/pubrecsitesStates.aspx

Bureau of Land Management: For copies of federal land records, home historians can access these legal descriptions from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). www.blm.gov

Heritage Quest Online: A valuable resource connecting home historians to a variety of records, including census data, historical accounts and articles. <http://www.heritagequestonline.com>

National Archives and Records Administration: Federal records of interest are held at the National Archives of the U.S. The main office is located in Washington, D.C. To aid researchers throughout the country there are additionally 14 regional archives across the country. <http://www.archives.gov>

NETRonline.com Interactive Knowledge Base: According to its Web site, NETR Real Estate Research and Information, LLC (NETR) provides real estate research (such as compiling title histories) and information services around the U.S. www.netronline.com

Vitalchek.com: VitalChek provides Americans with official government certificates of birth, death, marriage and divorce. www.vitalchek.com

RESEARCHING OWNER HISTORY

FamilySearch (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints): According to its Web site, FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world. It includes searchable records, resources, and services to learn more about family histories. www.familysearch.org

NewspaperARCHIVE: According to its Web site, NewspaperARCHIVE is the world's largest online newspaper archive. It contains news hundreds of years old, including obituaries and birth announcements. <http://www.newspaperarchive.com>

National Archives and Records Administration: Federal records of interest are held at the National Archives of the U.S. The main office is located in Washington, D.C. To aid researchers throughout the country there are additionally 14 regional archives across the country. www.archives.gov

National Center for Health Statistics Vital Records Links: This link connects home historians to Vital Records for all U.S. States, such as records of marriage, divorce, birth and death. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>

National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections: Noteworthy homeowners may have a manuscript, which may have relevant information to aid your research. The largest manuscript collection in the United States is held as the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. www.loc.gov

Survey of Federal Writers' Project Manuscript Holdings in State Depositories: These manuscripts, found under the authority of the American Historical Association, are local histories compiled when the Works Progress Administration created the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. These community histories focused on everyday life. Manuscript versions can be found in state or university archives.

RESEARCHING PROPERTY AND COMMUNITY

A Field Guide to American History (Douglass L. Brownstone, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1984)

Close-Up: How to Read the American City (Grady Clay, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973 and 1980)

Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845 (John Stilgoe, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982)

National Trust for Historic Preservation, All About Old Buildings: The Whole Preservation Catalog (Edited by Diane Maddex Washington D.C.: Preservation Press, 1985)

Nearby History: Exploring the Past around You (David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982)

Periodicals can be located through Art Index; The Architectural Index; Aver Index to Architectural Periodicals; Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts

Readings in Historic Preservation (James C. Massey, Washington, D.C.: National Preservation Institute, 1986)

University of California, Berkley Fire Insurance Map Page: www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/sanborn.html

RESEARCHING THE HOME EXTERIOR

About.com: A Field Guide to American Houses: www.architecture.about.com/od/productreviews/ft/fieldguide.htm

Conducting an Architectural Investigation: www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Features/Find_The_History_Of_A_Home

Library of Congress History of Household Technology Page: www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/householdtb.html

Sears Archives: According to its Web site, from 1908–1940, Sears, Roebuck and Co. sold about 70,000 to 75,000 homes through their mail-order Modern Homes program. This site may be able to help home historians track down information about their home if it was listed with the program. www.searsarchives.com/homes/index.htm

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RESEARCHING VISUAL DOCUMENTATION

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Heritage Documentation Programs: Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP), part of the National Park Service, administers HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey), the Federal Government's oldest preservation program, and companion programs HAER (Historic American Engineering Record), HALS (Historic American Landscapes Survey), and CRGIS (Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems). www.nps.gov/history/hdp

Panoramic Maps Collection: The panoramic map was a popular cartographic form used to depict U.S. and Canadian cities and towns during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html>

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University of California, Berkley Fire Insurance Map Page: Fire insurance maps provided detailed information such as the height of buildings and the number of stories; whether the structure had a basement; even the locations of doors and windows in buildings. Additionally, they provide information on the construction of the building. www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/sanborn.html

U.S. Geological Survey Maps, Imagery and Publications: www.usgs.gov/pubprod/maps.html

USDA-FSA Aerial Photography Field Office: www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/apfoapp?area=apfohome&subject=landing&topic=landing

READING SOURCES

Discovering the History of Your House and Your Neighborhood, Betsy J. Green, ©2002 by Santa Monica Press LLC

House Histories: A Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home, Sally Light, ©1989 by Golden Hill Press