



photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society

YOUR HOUSE HAS A HISTORY

A Step-by-Step Guide to Researching Your Property



CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner

YOUR HOUSE HAS A HISTORY

You own a lovely home that you're proud to call your own. But someone owned it before you. Someone built it, cared for it, and made changes through the years to it. And now you're interested in finding out the "who, when and what" of your property.

Researching your house can be fun, fascinating and completely engrossing. This pamphlet will help you begin, offering advice on how to identify basic information about your house and your neighborhood. It is designed to take you systematically through the process.

Using the sources discussed here, you can identify: the date your house was built, if an architect is associated with its design, who had it built, and the changes that have been made to it over the years. Be sure to read the appendix as well, where detailed information on resources can be found.

However, beware! Research can become addictive. It can also be frustrating. You may exhaust every source possible and still not find the answers to your questions. But no matter how many questions remain unanswered, you will have unearthed some interesting information, learned a little more about your community, and become familiar with some important public institutions in the city.

So, have fun, and good luck.

TIP:

Getting Started

To best organize your time while conducting this research, read through this pamphlet and identify all the resources you want to consult while at a particular library or historical society.

We suggest that you first locate a copy of your building permit (see page 4). Once you have located this, more information - on a wider variety of topics - can be found at the Chicago Historical Society. But there are many other research resources available to you.

Abbreviations used in this pamphlet refer to:

<i>CHS</i>	<i>The Chicago Historical Society</i>
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Chicago Public Library</i>
<i>UIC</i>	<i>University of Illinois at Chicago</i>
<i>AIC</i>	<i>Art Institute of Chicago</i>
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Commission on Chicago Landmarks</i>

What you need to know to begin

Before you launch your research, it would be good to have a general idea of your house's style and the approximate date of its construction.

If your house is newly purchased, the real estate listing undoubtedly had a date typed into the appropriate box. While you shouldn't assume that this date is correct, it may help get you started.

The architectural style of your house can also provide you with clues to its approximate age so you know where to begin your research. There are many books available to help you formulate an intelligent guess as to style and date. Some good stylebooks are:

A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia and Lee McAlester (1984)

American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, Marcus Whiffen (1974)

The American House, Mary Mix Foley (1980)

A Field Guide to American Architecture, Carole Rifkind (1993)

Identifying American Architecture, John J.G. Blumenson (1977)

What Style is It? A Guide to American Architecture, John C. Poppliers, S. Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz (1983)

Some common styles in Chicago and their most distinctive features

Front Gable or Worker's Cottage (beginning 1870s) - narrow house, steep roof, off-center front door

Romanesque Revival (1880-1900) - large arched openings, masonry walls, towers with conical roofs, asymmetrical façade

Italianate (1860-1900) - widely overhanging eaves, decorative brackets, tall, narrow arched windows

Queen Anne (1880s-1990) - steep roof usually with a prominent gable, porches, variety of building materials

Prairie (early 1900s) - low pitched hipped roof, wide overhanging eaves, horizontal detailing

Bungalow (early 1900s) - low pitched roof, wide eaves, brick walls, and bay window with art glass

American Four-Square (1900-1930) - cube shape, hipped roof, broad front porch, little ornament

Colonial Revival (1880-1955) - cube shape, gabled roof, symmetrical, prominent front door



Worker's Cottage



Queen Anne



American Four-Square

TIP:

Dating Architectural Styles

Most new styles in architecture were first seen on the East Coast. In A Field Guide to American Houses, for instance, the Italianate Style is dated as early as 1850, although it didn't become popular in Chicago until the 1870's.

**Commission on
Chicago Landmarks**
33 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1600
(312) 744-3200

Each Tuesday has been set aside as the Commission's open research day. The commission's reports on historic buildings and neighborhoods are also available here for a small fee.



Step One

Checking the Chicago Historic Resources Survey

The very first place to look for information on your house is in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. A copy of this book is in every branch of the Chicago Public Library and can also be viewed at the Commission on Chicago Landmarks office. An electronic version of the survey is available on the City of Chicago's website at: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/CHRS.html>. If the survey lists the date and architect for your building, you're in luck. That means a permit was found by Commission researchers and additional information may be on file in the Commission Offices.

TIP:

Before Moving On To Step Two

If your house is not listed in the survey, you'll need to locate the building permit yourself (Step Two). While this can be quite simple, it can also be challenging. Persevere however, as the information gained will be well worth the effort.

Chicago Historic Resources Survey

In 1996, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, published the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, a listing of over 17,000 city structures that are of national, state or local architectural or historical significance. Street addresses, architects (if known), date(s) of construction, building styles and types, Permanent Real Estate Index Numbers (or "PIN," the identification numbers that Cook County and the City of Chicago use to keep track of land parcels) and Form Numbers (tracking for research information in the Commission offices) are all included and indexed for easy identification. The Historic Resources Survey may be viewed in any of the Chicago Public Library branches, local historical societies or in the Commission offices.



Step Two

Finding a copy of the building permit filed when your house was constructed

Looking up the permit granted when your house was built will provide you with the date of application (usually within a few weeks of the beginning of construction) and may offer information on the names of the owner, builder, and architect, the building dimension, type of construction and legal description of the property. Cost of construction may also be included, but may have been understated to keep the cost of the permit down.

Copies of historic building permits are available in the Documents and Maps Department at Daley Library at the University of Illinois of Chicago (UIC) or in the city's Freedom of Information Office, Department of Buildings in City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St. (see next page).

For ease of access, we suggest that you first try the UIC library. However, if your house was built after June 1954, they will not have a copy of your permit and you must go to the Freedom of Information Office.

If you are requesting a copy of a permit through the Department of Buildings you must complete a *City of Chicago Department of Buildings Customer Service Request Form*. This form is available in the Freedom of Information Office, or it can be downloaded as a PDF file from:

<http://www.cityofchicago.org/buildings/Forms/index.html>. The Freedom of Information Office is a division of the Department of Buildings and retrieves building permit records for the general public. Once you have filled out the form, your request will be processed by the department staff within seven working days after its receipt.

If you are doing your research at UIC, looking up your permit is a two-stage process:

First

Look up your address (alphabetically by street name and then number) in the Address Index Card File. This will tell you in which ledger book

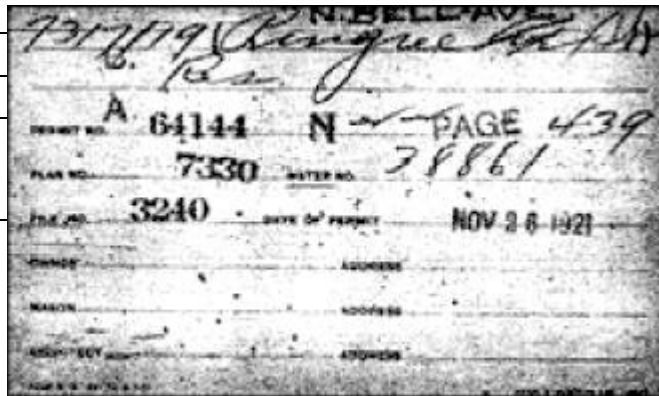
your address can be found. The book number follows a bold-faced N or W or S, depending on the section of the city; the number is also right before PAGE. The book number approximately correlates to the year of the permit. If a second address is noted on the index card, copy that one as well. This is the address used prior to street renumbering in 1909.

Second

Look up the building permit for your house in the appropriate ledger book as indicated on the address index card.

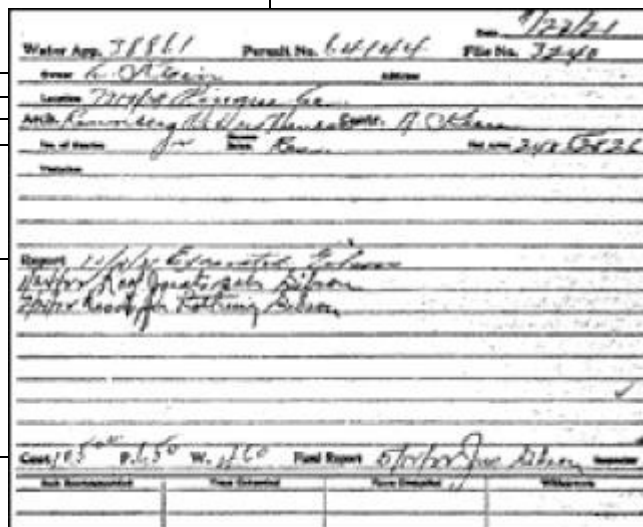
NOTE: Most of the time you'll be dealing with microfilm for one or both of these steps.

address of property
 type of building
 permit number and page in ledger book
 file number and date of application
 (construction usually began within a few weeks of the date shown)



The Address Index Card (above) refers to a building permit that can be found on page 439 of Ledger Book "N 22" (below).

permit number
 name of owner
 address of property
 name of architect and contractor
 building dimension
 summaries of building inspections during construction
 cost of construction (often understand to keep down the price of the permit)



University of Illinois at Chicago Library
801 S. Morgan St.
Documents & Maps Dept. and Special Collections
both on 3rd floor
(312) 996-2738, Documents and Maps
(312) 996-2742, Special Collections

The library is in the middle of the campus. The closest CTA stop is "Halsted" on the Blue Line. Library hours are: Mon-Thurs., 7:30AM-10 PM; Fri., 7:30AM-7PM; Sat., 10AM-5PM; Sun., 1-9PM

Note: Special Collections has more restricted hours and library hours change with the academic year, call or consult the UIC website to confirm hours.

The Documents Department is on the third floor, to the south of the elevators and stairwell.

All Address Index Cards and building permit ledger books are on microfilm in the Documents and Maps Department. Both are located in the file cabinets to your left beyond the librarian's desk as you enter the room. All of the file drawers are carefully marked as well as the microfilm boxes. Don't hesitate to ask questions of the librarians, particularly when it comes to setting up the microfilm machine.

Freedom of Information Office, Department of Buildings
City Hall, Room 1109
121 N. LaSalle St.
(312) 744-3419

The Vagaries of Permit Research

Here are some tips about building permits that might be helpful if you're having trouble locating yours or if it doesn't have all the information you need;

Two different ledger book systems were used from 1872 to 1955

Permits from 1872 to 1911 are listed chronologically in ledger books by sections of the city (north, south, northwest, etc.). The system is somewhat ambiguous, and is sometimes difficult to use when you're not sure how to classify the section of the city for the property that you are looking up. Keep looking, however, because in the vast majority of cases the permit can be found.

From 1912 to 1955 the ledger books were more comprehensive. In addition to the information found in the older-style ledger books, they listed the architect and summaries of the building inspector's notes during construction (e.g. completion of excavation, foundations, framing, roof, etc.). This system is easier to use than the older one because the ledgers are indexed by book and page numbers (see page 4).

The Address Index is missing some addresses between 1872 and 1911

Some addresses may not have been indexed, or cards are missing altogether. This is especially true of permits between 1872 and 1875. If you cannot find your address index card, try the following:

- 1) If your location is a corner property, look up the address for both streets. Sometimes a property will be listed simply by its intersection (e.g., Dearborn and Randolph). These listings appear at the beginning of each street file.
- 2) Look through the ledger books based on other information. For example, you might look up a permit in the six month period after a property was sold (see step 4, pages 11-13), on the assumption an owner would undertake new construction soon after a property sale.

Also, keep in mind that permit records are most likely not available for those areas that were not part of Chicago at the time of a building's construction (see map on page 7). In this case, try neighborhood historical societies where pre-annexation documents are sometimes kept.

Some street addresses changed in 1909

In 1909, the City of Chicago changed its street address system for the north and west sides. While the 1909 changes are noted on the Address Index Cards, you may need to find your house's original address to complete your research. The Lakeside Directory for 1909 published a conversion list of old and new number (see Directories, page 13).

Records are not always accurate

While the streets and addresses may be in order, they may not be arranged by direction, so pay close attention to whether the N., S., E., and W. portion of the address is noted and correct.

Look at adjacent street numbers, your house may have been included in a large lot development (especially if it's on a corner).

A slightly different number from your present address may have been recorded.

Some permits included a range of numbers if they were part of a single development area.

On occasion entries are out of order.

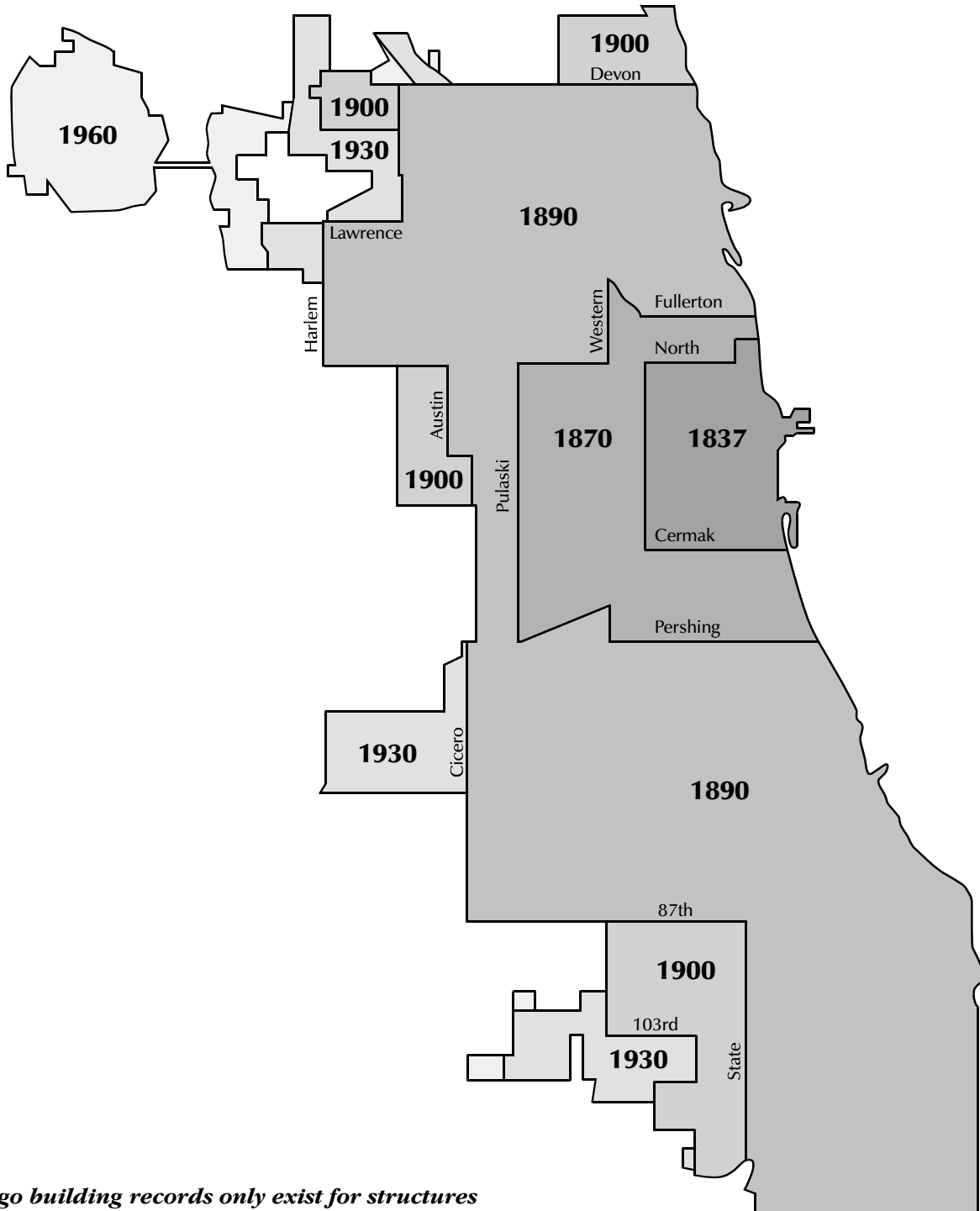
If you can not find your street address in the index, ask for the books or microfilms from your house's approximate building data and look through all the permits.

TIP:

If You Cannot Find Your Permit...

read through the rest of this guidebook for information on other resources which can be used as clues to piece together the date, builder, architect and first owner of your home. Or, you can hire a research consultant to do the work for you. Contact the Chicago Historical Society or Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois for more information on the availability of consultants.

Annexation Map of Chicago



Chicago building records only exist for structures built after the Great Fire of 1871. Building records also don't exist for houses built prior to their neighborhood's annexation by the City of Chicago. The above map shows the annexation dates for various neighborhoods. In rare cases, these building records may be found at local historical societies.

**Chicago Historical Society
Research Center**
Clark St. and North Ave.
(312) 642-5035 x356

Its hours are:
Tues-Sat., 10 AM-4 PM

When you enter the CHS, ask for a pass to use the Research Center. Take it with you to the 3rd floor (elevators are to your left beyond the stairs).

The center combines a number of collections: books, prints and photographs, archives and manuscripts and the architecture collection. Most collection items are available during regular hours but some material may require a special appointment. If you have questions, feel free to call the center before visiting it.

The research specialists in the center will ask you to fill out a form and will explain how to use the collection. The specialists are also familiar with Chicago materials in other institutions and can refer you to them.

The research center's stacks are "closed" which means that you must identify the item you want, fill out a "call slip" for it and wait for the staff to bring it out to you. There are also many basic reference books on open stack in the reading room.

If you have any questions, just ask. The Chicago Historical Society encourages visitors to make the most of the research center's collections.

Chicago Public Library

The greatest amount of information related to building research is at the downtown Harold Washington Library Center. See appendix, pages 16-17, for information on holdings, branches and accessibility.

TIP:

Steps Three, Four, Five and Six and the Chicago Historical Society

Steps Three, Four, Five and Six are best carried out at the Chicago Historical Society where you can begin to research your house's construction history (what was added to it and when); discover information on its architect, builder, and first owner; learn about your neighborhood's development; and, if you are lucky, obtain copies of photos of your house or street.



Step Three

Research information on the construction of your house (and any additions), its architect (if known), and its builder.

With a copy of your house's building permit in hand, you may already have this information - or you may have only a starting point for further research. Below is a listing of a variety of resources available at the Chicago Historical Society that you can use to continue your research.

Construction on your house

Fire Insurance Maps (Atlases)

Fire insurance maps offer a wealth of information. They indicate lot sizes, the outlines of buildings, their heights and materials, any changes made to lot or buildings, and when those changes were made (approximately). By comparing maps of the same neighborhood in different years, you can plot the changing character of that neighborhood.

Several companies (Sanborn, Rascher, Robinson, etc.) published fire insurance maps. These maps were periodically updated until 1949. The dates of these revisions are listed in the front of each book.

Different holdings for these maps can also be found in the UIC library, the CHS, and the Chicago Public Library (CPL) (Note: permit records for your house may not be available in the City of Chicago permit records if your house was in an area that was not annexed to the city at the time it was built.). The UIC library and the CHS have holdings available online depending on the year of the map; these are black and white, so the colors used to indicate building materials that appear on original fire insurance maps can't be distinguished. Similarly, the CPL and UIC fire insurance maps that are available on microfilm are on black and white. The advantage to the microfilm is that it can be copied, while the originals at the CPL and CHS are large and cumbersome, so special arrangements for copying must be made. Additionally, the UIC Special Collections Department has color scans of their original fire insurance maps, consult the Special Collections librarian for the availability of these images.

Fire Insurance Map Holdings

	<i>Originals</i>	<i>Online</i>	<i>Microfilm</i>
<i>CHS</i>	●	●	
<i>CPL</i>	●		●
<i>UIC</i>	●	●	●

photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society

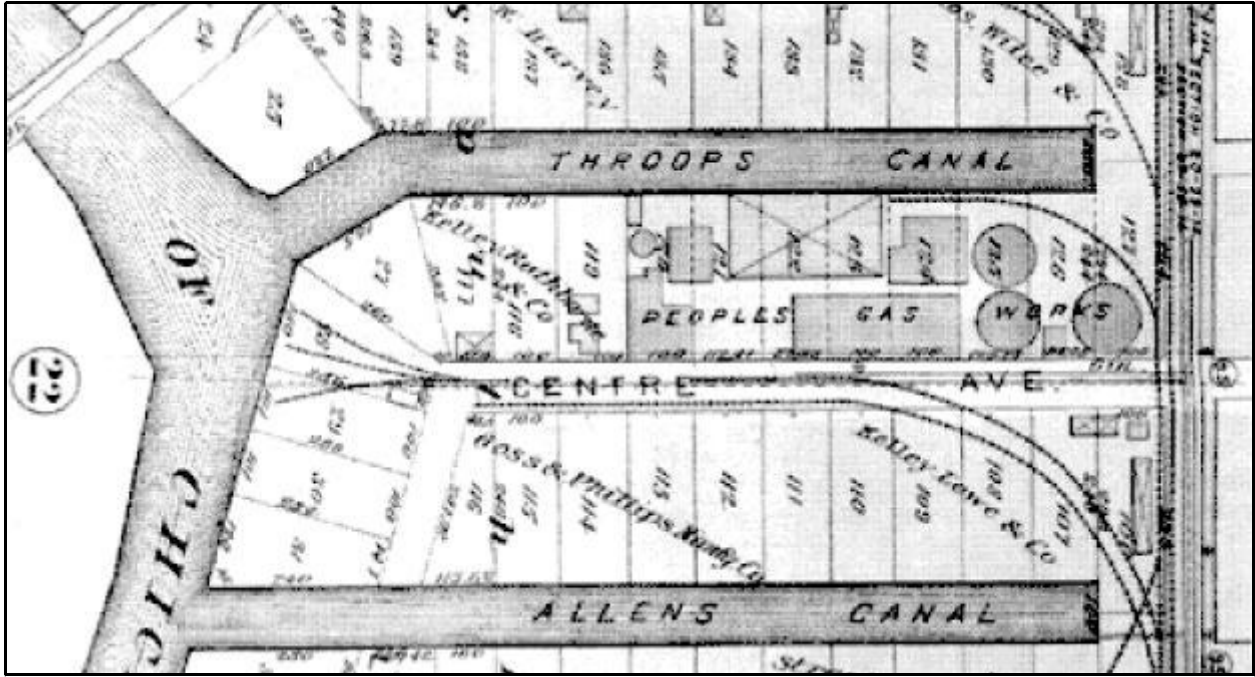
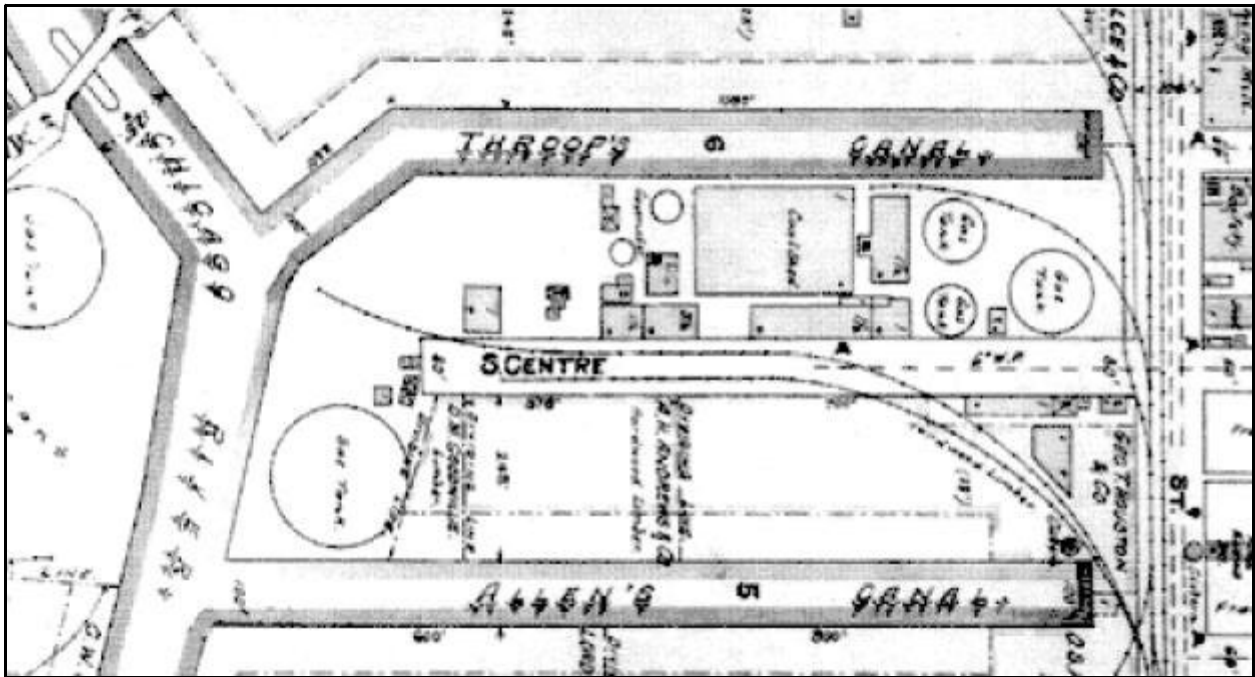


photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society



Fire Insurance Maps of 1886 and 1895

The Ryerson and Burnham Library
The Art Institute of Chicago
Michigan Ave. at Adams St.
(312) 443-3666

Hours: Tues., 10:30 AM-7:45 PM;
Wed.-Fri., 10:30 AM-4:30 PM;
Sat. 10 AM-4:45 PM. (These hours
change in the summer)

The Ryerson and Burnham
Library at the AIC is located on
the south side of the ground floor,
just opposite the stairway down.

This is a wonderful source of
information on the architecture
of Chicago and its designers and
builders. In order to use the
library, however, you must either
be a member of the Art Institute
or obtain an "Info Pass" referral
from your local library. While
this is not as easy as simply
walking in, it is not at all difficult,
and the resources here are
fascinating. Look up the name
of your architect/builder in the
Burnham Index. The procedure
is then much the same as at the
Chicago Historical Library in
terms of filling out call slips (see
page 8).

THE ECONOMIST.		701
BUILDING DEPARTMENT.		
<p>Paul Gerhardt has designed for John E. Dean a four-story apartment house, to be built on Cottage Grove avenue, south of Forty-seventh street. It will front 50 feet, with a depth of 100, and will be constructed of pressed brick. The interior will be finished in oak, and heated with steam. It will cost \$20,000. He is also at work on plans for a four-story apartment house, 50x120, to be erected at the southeast corner of Fifty-sixth street and Calumet avenue, by G. A. Gaughan. It will be 50x120, of stone and brick, the interior being finished in hardwood. It will contain 20 apartments of four, five and six rooms, and will cost \$40,000.</p>	<p>1817 Melrose street, for which plans have been completed by John D. Atchison. They will be constructed of pressed brick and stone, and the interiors will be elaborately finished in hardwood and heated with steam. They will cost \$75,000.</p>	
<p>E. E. Roberia has designed for H. W. Wagner two two-story brick flat buildings, 28x45 and 28x50, to be erected at 211 South Ridgeway ave-</p>	<p>Oscar Cobb has completed plans for a three-story factory, which Squibs Dagee & Co. will build at 175 and 177 Clybourn place. It will be constructed of brick and stone, and will cost \$15,000.</p>	
<p>There is a revival in church building in Chicago. The Eighth Presbyterian Church is about to begin the construction of a new building at the northeast corner of Washington boulevard and Hobey street. Plans have been completed by Architects Brown, Burton & Davis, of Cincinnati. It will cost \$25,000. S. M. Seator has designed for Bethesda Baptist congregation a \$5,000 church to be built at Armour avenue and Thirty-fourth street. The First Methodist Congregation</p>		

photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society

Detail of a construction report from The Economist, 1901

Construction reports

Various newspapers and building trades magazines regularly reported construction news based on reports received from architects' offices and building permit applications. Look in these publications for the weeks immediately before or following your permit date (or use a wider search if you still don't know the exact date).

Construction reports can be found in real estate columns in the Saturday or Sunday editions of newspapers and periodicals or in "contracts for bid" sections of:

Inter Ocean (for the years 1872-1914)
The Chicago Tribune (1880-1939)

More limited information may be found at the CHS, CPL, UIC, or Ryerson and Burnham Library in:

American Contractor (1897-1916; CHS)
Landowner (1869-77; CHS)
American Architect & Building News (1876-1938; AIC, UIC and CPL)
The Brickbuilder (1892-1916; CHS and CPL)
The Economist (1888-1946; AIC and CHS)
Real Estate and Building Journal (1872-1897; 1905-1909; CHS)
Inland Architect (for the years 1883-1898; AIC, CHS and CPL)

Information on architects

If your permit indicates an architect, you can look his/her name up in the card catalogue in the CHS or in the Ryerson and Burnham Library. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey (page 4) has an index of architects and their extant buildings identified in the survey. Other resources which can be found at either library are:

American Architects by Lawrence Wodenhouse (1976)
Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)
by Henry and Elsie Withey (1956/1970)
Chicago Architects Design (1982)
History of Chicago (Vol. 3) by A.T. Andreas (1884-86)
Industrial Chicago: The Building Interests (vol. 1) (1891-96)
MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (1982)



Step Four

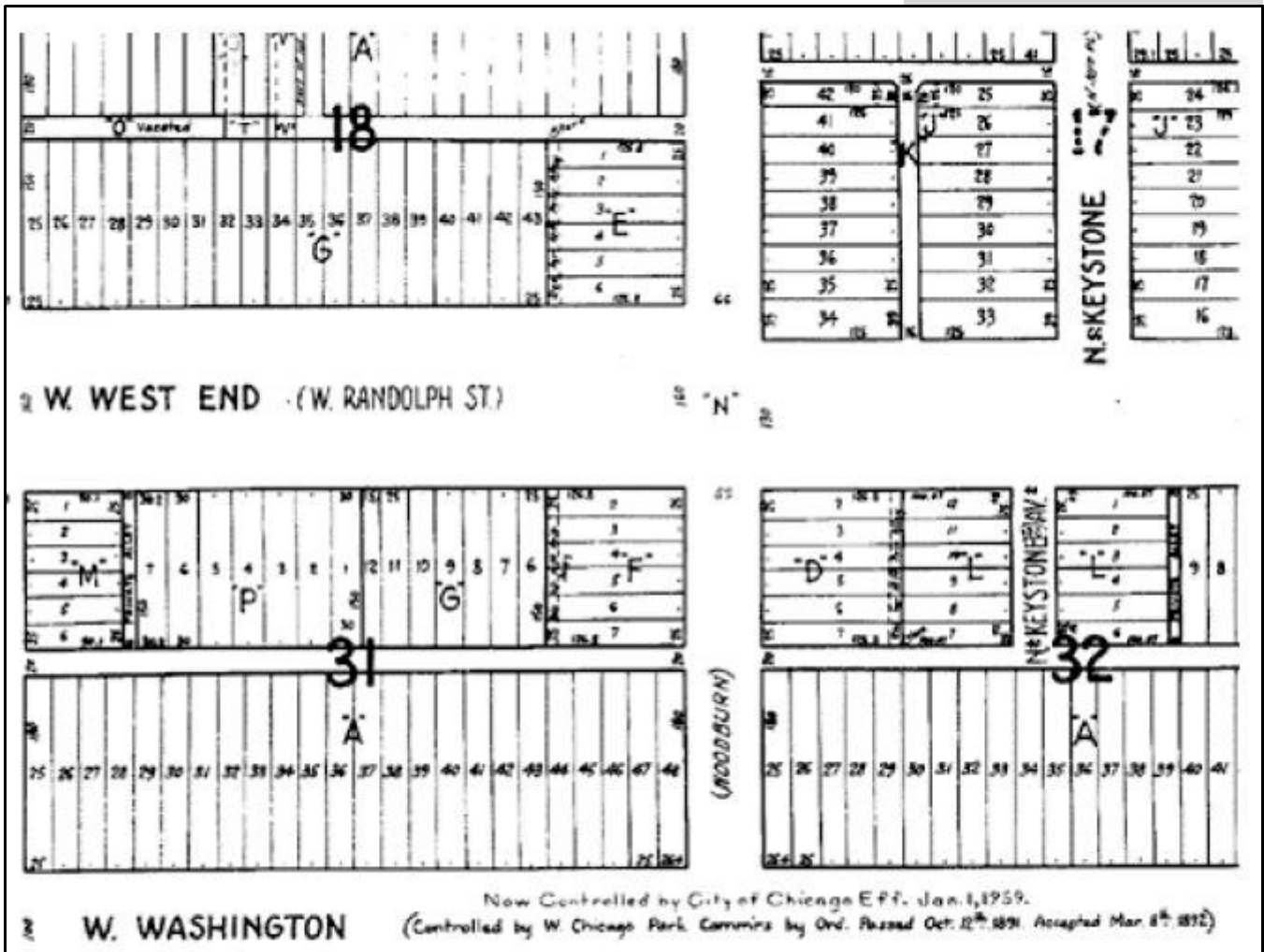
Finding information on the previous owners of your house

In most cases, your permit will have given you the names of the original owners of your house. If your permit didn't note an original owner, or if you're interested in finding out about others that lived in your house, you can find this information in City and County records.

In order to discover who lived in your house before you, you must have the legal description of your property. This should be on the permit or on your deed. Using your PIN, this information can be obtained from Office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, see the staff for assistance. If you would like to see a map of your property with a legal description, go to the city's Department of Transportation, Bureau of Inspection, Division of Maps and Plats City Hall

*Department of Transportation,
Bureau of Inspection,
Division of Maps and Plats
City of Chicago
City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 905
(312) 744-4996*

*Hours: Mon.-Fri.,
8:30 AM-4:00 PM*



Legal Description of Property Map

**Cook County
Recorder of Deeds
County Building
120 N. Clark St.
1st Floor
(312) 603-5050**

*Hours: Mon.-Fri.,
8 AM-5 PM*

**Newberry Library
60 W. Walton St.
(312) 255-3510**

*Hours:
Reading Rooms, Reference and
Bibliographical Center are open
Tues.-Thurs., 10 AM-6 PM;
Fri. and Sat., 9 AM-5 PM*

*The Newberry is a private
research library founded in
1887. While the Newberry is not
like a public library, the time it
takes to get a readers card is
painless and well worth it. Be
sure to bring a photo ID and
proof of current address with
you on your first visit. Ask the
receptionist at the desk
immediately at the front door
for a registration form. Fill it
out, show your ID and you'll be
instructed to go to the reference
and Bibliographical Center on
the third floor. The reference
desk is at the door. Ask the
registrar who sits there to help
you complete your Newberry
registration and start your
research.*

**National Archives
Great Lakes Region
(Chicago)
(773) 5810-7816 x138**

Your next step is to go to the first floor of the same building, to the Office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds. Once inside, search for the stairway down and descend to the basement.

In this large room is a series of low cabinets filled with identically bound books. Index books can be found on the tops of the cabinets. Use the index to identify which of the bound tract books to look in to find information on transactions relating to your property. The index is arranged by the township and range number (the "38-14" numbers from the example above). After finding the section number (e.g. "15") look for the subdivision name. This will refer you to the number for the appropriate tract book.

There is an index page in the front of each tract book that will direct you to the correct subdivision. Then look for the appropriate block and lot you're interested in. In a variety of handwriting from recorders of deeds through the decades, you'll find the names of sellers and buyers, types of transactions, and other miscellaneous information. Some of the transaction abbreviations used are not self-explanatory. Ask at the front desk if you need help deciphering them.

Be aware that the information found on these pages make up the clues that you need to track down the stories of the people who lived in your house, so don't overlook anything that you may want to follow up on later.

If there is some transaction on your tract's page that piques your interest and you want to look at the complete transaction document, copy down the tract page numbers in the left margin and take them into the room next door where you fill out a form to receive the appropriate microfilm. On the microfilm you will find more details of the legal transaction which may give you clues for further follow up.

Learning More About The Owners of Your House

Once again, the Chicago Historical Society is the best place for you to start this research once you know who the previous owners were. If you are following in the footsteps of a prominent Chicagoan, try looking up his/her name in:

the CHS card catalogue
Book of Chicagoans and its successor,
Who's Who in Chicago, published in nine editions from 1905-1950
by the A.N. Marquis Company
History of Chicago (1884-86), by A.T. Andreas
History of Cook County, Illinois (1884), A.T. Andreas

If the first owner of your house wasn't a Who's Who sort, you can still discover some information about them in city directories, telephone books, and census reports as well as in *Chicago and Cook County Sources: a Genealogical and Historical Guide* (1986) by Loretto Dennis Szuc (CHS). All of these can be found at the CHS except the census reports. For these, go to the Newberry Library.

Directories

Various types of directories are useful for providing information about houses and their occupants. They were published by various companies, but there are two basic types: alphabetical (by name) and reverse (by address). See description at right.

Census Records

Census Records are a fascinating way to learn more about the people who lived in your house. For instance, you can discover the names of everyone in the house and their relationships to each other. Census reports came out every 10 years beginning in 1840. Due to privacy concerns, the Census Bureau delays issuing complete records for 70 years. Consequently, the 1920 census is the last one to have been issued. Also, the entire 1890 census was destroyed in a fire.

The most complete set of census records can be found in the Newberry Library and the National Archives.

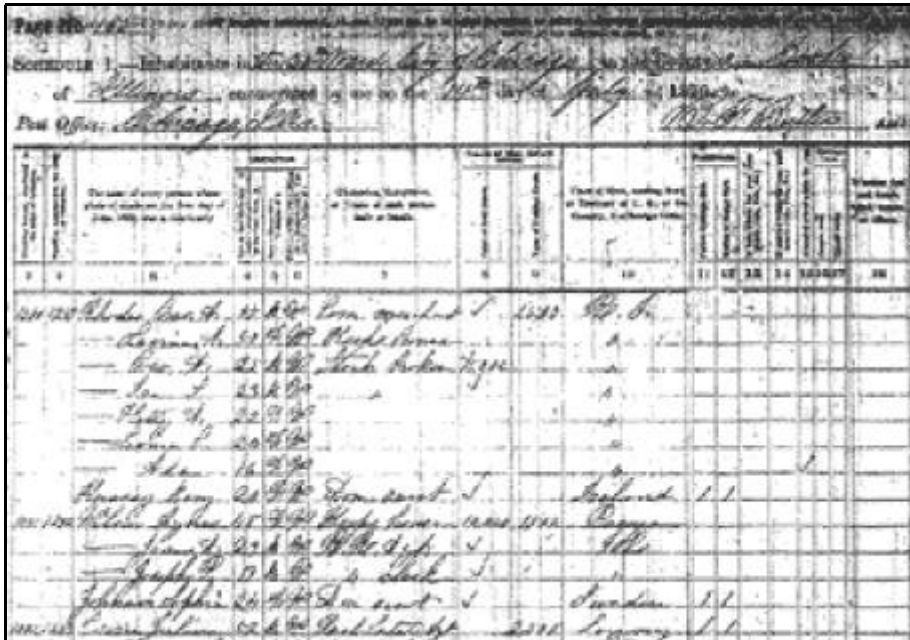


photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society

Census Record for 1870

Types of Directories

Alphabetical Directories

There are two kinds of alphabetical directories: "city directories" (published 1839-1917, 1923, 1928-29) and telephone directories (published from 1883 to present). City directories list occupations.

Reverse Directories

These books are arranged by address, not names of the occupants. If you are having trouble finding a date of construction for your house, you can look up the address in a reverse directory to see when it first appears. However, there is no complete set of them covering a long period of time. The CHS has three major titles:

Polk's Directory (1928)
Chicago Cross Reference
Associations Directory
(1950, 1952-53)
Haines Directory (1978 to
present)

Social Directories

These useful resources are available at the CHS. Entries are listed both alphabetically and by location. The directories, however, only covered the socially prominent areas of the city. The two titles at CHS are on the reference shelves in the research center.

Elite Directory (1884/85-1891/92)
Chicago Blue Book (1890-1916)

TIP:

Directories for older outlying neighborhoods

Directories for older outlying neighborhoods that were originally suburbs are more difficult to find for the years before annexation (see map on page 7). If the owner of your house lived in a suburb and worked in the city, he/she may be listed in one of the city directories, but there would be little more than their name. There are four places to check if you live in an annexed suburb:

Your local historical society (see appendix)

The CHS (look under your neighborhood name and then "directories; in the card catalogue)

The CPL's Special Collections Divisions, Neighborhood History Research Collection census records.



Step Five

Finding early or original plans, drawings and photos of your house

Finding copies of the original plans, old drawings or views of your house is not easy to do and you will be very lucky to uncover anything at all. But you can also be pleasantly surprised.

The best place to start is with former owners. They would be more likely to have photos of your house 10, 20, 30 years ago than any of the city's institutions. There are however, a few public collections where you can look for photos and plans.

If your house was built after 1955, the plan is on microfilm along with the permit at the Department of Buildings.

The AIC and the CHS both have a small collection of plans for older structures, which are usually indexed by architect (since these are found in departments other than the library, please ask for information)

Older photographs of individual houses are generally not available, but streetscape views of some blocks can be found. Visit the Prints and Photographs Collection of the CHS to find these.



photo courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society



Step Six

Your Neighborhood's History

Tracing your neighborhood's history may be the easiest and most rewarding of your searches. Many neighborhoods have formal or informal historical societies. Look in the appendix for the names and addresses of some. At the CHS, look up the name of your community area in the card catalogue.

You can also look in the Neighborhood History Research Collections of the Special Collections Division of the Chicago Public Library.

Most libraries will carry one or more of the following general Chicago histories;

Chicago and its Makers by Paul Gilbert and Charles Lee Bryson (1929)
Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis by Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade (1969)
A History of Chicago by Bessie Louise Pierce (3 volumes; 1937, 1940, 1957; reprinted 1975)
History of Chicago by A.T. Andreas (3 volumes; 1884-86)
Chicago, 1910-29: Building, Planning and Urban Technology by Carl Condit (1973)
Chicago, 1930-70: Building, Planning and Urban Technology by Carl Condit (1974)
The Chicago School of Architecture: A History of Commercial and Public Building in the Chicago Area, 1875-1925 by Carl Condit (1964)
History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago by Frank D. Randall (1949)

Other books with more specific information on neighborhoods may be found in most libraries, although not all can be found in any one place. Some of these are:

Bird's Eye Views and Guide to Chicago by Rand, McNally & Co. (1898; CHS only)
Chicago: A Historical Guide to the Neighborhoods, the Loop, and South Side by Glen E. Holt and Dominic Pacyga (1979)
Chicago and Its Suburbs by Everett Chamberlin (1883)
Chicago, City of Neighborhoods by Dominic Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett (1986)
Forty-four Cities in the City for Chicago by the Chicago Plan Commission (1942)
History of Cook County, Illinois by A.T. Andreas (1884)
Historic City: The Settlement of Chicago by the Chicago Department of Planning (1976)
Ethnic Chicago edited by Melvin G. Holli and Peter d'A. Jones (revised 1995)

Two other useful reference with brief histories of Chicago neighborhoods are:

Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1990 (Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1995)
Chicago Politics Ward by David K. Fremon (1988)

For old photographs of your neighborhood, consult your local historical society, the CPL, or the CHS (see above re: house plans and views)

A good mystery...

Historical research is often compared to reading a good mystery. By now you should know who did it, where, with what, and maybe why. But your search may have just begun. Our city, and its world renowned architecture, have a rich and engrossing history. The people and institutions you've used to do your research are ready to help you continue. Make good use of our public libraries, our museums, our government agencies and our universities. They are a wealth of information preserved for us and our children.

Resource Centers

The following list is based on a comprehensive survey of the city's resource centers. Although other research facilities were found, lack of staff to handle the requests led them to decline our invitations to be included.

Art Institute of Chicago

Burnham Library of Architecture
111 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60603
312/443-3666
T 10:30-7:45; W, Th, F 10:30-4:30; (Sa 10-4:45 Sept.-May)
www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/index.html

Library located on main floor to the right of the grand staircase. The Library closes for one month during the summer - call to determine dates. Library open to museum members and other with Chicago Library System Infopass. Appointment required for access to archival materials and photographs.

Library materials do not circulate; use pencil, not pen in the library, personal computers are allowed. Photocopies may be requested for \$.35 per page, color photocopies and photographic prints are also available at the reference desk, consult reference librarian for ordering information.

Burnham is one of the foremost architectural libraries in the country with extensive archival collections. Information is available on Chicago architecture in general through the Avery and Burnham periodical indexes, trade periodicals (focus on Chicago), photos (not indexed), books, microfilmed blueprints and drawings primarily of commercial buildings by prominent firms, maps (Sanborn on microfiche), historic builders' brochures and advertisements.

Chicago Historical Society

1601 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60614
312/642-5035
T-Sa 10-4:30
www.chicagohs.org/collections/index.html

Research Center materials do not circulate; use pencil, not pen, in Reading Room; tape recorders and personal computers allowed; some material cannot be photocopied and you must take notes instead; staff can photocopy some materials twice a day @ \$.25 per page, \$.50 for copies of photographic prints - complete photocopying request form; you may photocopy microformed materials on their reader-printer machines so bring change; photography not permitted; tracing allowed with plastic protectors provided; photo reproductions for a fee.

The CHS Library has an impressive collection of Chicago history resources with complete runs of some daily newspapers, periodicals and directories. Their holdings include books, pamphlets, periodicals (1870s on), newspapers (complete runs of many Chicago dailies from the 1840s to date; less complete collections of local, ethnic, special interest newspapers from 19th century forward), newspaper clippings (1930s forward), maps and atlases (scattered Sanborn maps beginning with 1886), city directories (complete run from 1880s to date), dissertations, printed artifacts, photographs

(historic and contemporary; including architecture and neighborhood life) organized by subject (use address for individual buildings).

Charles F. Murphy Architectural Collection contains achieves of Chicago architectural firms; indexed by architect (not street address); primarily commercial and industrial structures.

Chicago Public Library System

www.chipublib.org/cpl.html

Neighborhood history collections have generally been centralized in two locations: the Sulzer Regional Library for north side neighborhoods and the Harold Washington Library Center for west and southside neighborhoods. The Woodson Regional Library on the southside maintains a collection focusing on African-American history. These collections are detailed below.

In addition, some branch libraries may provide space for local historical societies' collections or may have accepted such collections into their holdings. Other branch libraries may have small collections on local history, and you may wish to consult them for such resources.

Chicago Lawn Library

6120 S. Kedzie Ave.
Chicago, IL 6029-4638
312/747-0639
Contact: John Telli
jtelli@chipublib.org
By appointment only.

Collection of the Chicago Lawn Historical Society housed here. Neighborhood history collection includes historic photographs, maps, and contemporary newspaper articles.

Conrad Sulzer Regional Library

4455 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625-2192
Contact: Gloria Price
312/742-4455
M 2-5 and 7-9; TH 10-1 and 3-5
Patrons are encouraged to call for appointment.

The Chicago History Collection and Newspapers & Magazines Department are on the 2nd floor; the Historical Room is on the Mezzanine level.

Historical Room Hours: By appointment: M-The 9-9; F-Sa 9-5. Drop-in: 1st Su of month 9-11:30, 2-5; Most materials in Historical Room are rare and housed in closed stacks; patrons work with special collections librarian.

The Ravenswood-Lake View Historical Association has worked with the Sulzer Library to establish collections on northside Chicago neighborhoods. Relevant collections include:

1. Chicago History Collection (2nd floor Adult Reference Services)
2. Newspapers & Magazines Department (2nd floor)
3. Neighborhood History Research Collections (in the Historical Room)

In the Chicago History Collection there are city histories, biographies of Chicagoans, histories of ethnic groups, books about institutions, neighborhoods, architecture, politics,

social conditions, etc.; large pamphlet/clipping file on Chicago history subjects.

In the Newspapers & Magazines Department there are city directories (1839, 1843-1917, 1923, 1928/9), Cook County census materials (1840-80, 1900-20) without Soundex, Chicago Tribune (1960-present with index from 1972 on), Chicago Sun-Times (1976-to present with index 1976-84), Lerner neighborhood papers on North Side (1905-present), Nadig papers on Northwest side (1940-84), local periodicals. Guide at reference desk.

The Neighborhood History Research Collections has resources on neighborhood histories of Chicago's north side (roughly Fullerton north) in the form of photos organized by street or area, Sanborn maps (north of Irving Park and east of the Chicago River, select years from 1894-1988), books, community newspapers ca. 1900 on, indexed collection of ephemera, clipping files, archives; collection focuses on Ravenswood and Lake View but also includes Northwest Side neighborhoods of Edison Park, Jefferson Park, Portage Park, and Norwood Park. Guides to collection available.

Woodson Regional Library

9525 S. Halsted St.
Chicago, IL 60628
312/747-6900
M-The 9-9, F & Sa 9-5, Su 1-5
Contact: Reference Desk
See 1st floor Reference Desk; Enter and go to left.
ID required: collection non-circulating.

Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature: includes books, periodicals (e.g. *The Defender* 1905-present), black business directories (1920s on, e.g. *Simm's Blue Book* and *National Negro Business and Professional Directory*).

Harold Washington Library Center

400 S. State St.
Chicago, IL 60605
M-TH 9-7

Business/Science/Technology Division
312/747-4400

The Business Information Center is on the 4th Floor. Periodicals will be at periodicals service desk or in microforms room on same floor. Real estate, engineering, and specialized building trade journals (1860s to present; some indexed via computer or printed sources), maps (Sanborn 1894-1970), directories.

General Information Services Division
312/747-4300, ext. 7

See the General Information Services Reference Desk on the 3rd floor. Chicago, ethnic, community, and suburban newspapers including complete retrospective files of Chicago Daily News, Chicago Sun Times, Chicago Tribune (on microfilm). See serials list at any periodicals desk for periodical holdings, both contemporary and historic.

Government Publications Department
312/747-4500

See Government Publications Reference Desk on the 5th floor. Maps and statistics; specialized indexes to locate publications available in department.

Municipal Reference Collection
312/747-4526

See the Municipal Reference collection Desk on the 5th floor. Street maps from different eras (allows one to trace street name changes), address conversion chart (for 1909 citywide changes), neighborhood histories in form of fact books, newspaper clipping files, books.

Social Sciences and History Division
312/747-4600

See Reference Desk on 6th floor; some materials in microfilm resource room, 5th Floor. Chicago histories, city and business directories (1844-1929), telephone directories (1892 to date; some on microform), Census population schedules (1850-80), history and social science periodicals (see serials list).

Visual and Performing Arts Division
312/747-4800

See Art Information Center on 8th Floor. Books on architectural history, building types, architects' biographies; vertical file w/ pamphlets, clippings, citations to other sources, organized by building names and neighborhoods.

Special Collections Department
312/747-4875

See Special Collections Reference Desk on 9th Floor. Neighborhood History Research Collection of 43 separate archival collections on 18 neighborhoods in Chicago (strengths of collection are on south and west sides); each archive has "Finding Guide" organized by subject. Neighborhoods/areas include: Austin, Belmont-Cragin, Calumet Region, Chatham-Grand Crossing, Englewood, Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Hyde Park, Lawndale-Crawford, Logan Square/Avondale, Lower West Side, Portage Park, Pullman, South Chicago, South Shore, Streeterville, West Side, Woodlawn, and general city-wide focusing on Downtown; resources vary but may include biographical data, general history, photographs, and information on local institutions, businesses, organizations. Also small collection of late 19th and early 20th century maps.

Edgebrook Branch Library

5331 W. Devon Ave.
Chicago, IL 60646
312/744-8313
M-Th 9-9, F-Sa 9-5

Contact reference librarian for selected materials from the Edgebrook Historical Society.

Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division

Commission on Chicago Landmarks
33 N. LaSalle, Room 1600
Chicago, IL 60602
312/744-9140
FAX 312/744-9140
T 9-4 for research by public
www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks

See Front Desk. Research notebooks on designated city landmarks and districts; National Register nomination forms for Chicago sites; *Chicago Historic Resources* material.

Edgebrook Historical Society

6173 N. McClellan
Chicago, IL 60646-4013
773/774-4651
FAX 773/631-2379
Jodi McDowell, President
Call to arrange appointment.

Non-indexed photographs of neighborhood, community newspapers 1953-57, miscellaneous clippings, oral histories on some homes.

Edgewater Historical Society

5358 N. Ashland
Chicago, IL 60640
773/506-4849
Sa 1-4, by appointment only.
www.edgewaterhistory.org

Photographic collection organized by location and/or subject, house tour research files (10 years' worth), contemporary plat map, contemporary clippings file, neighborhood development files organized by location, postcard collection of Edgewater Beach.

Historic Pullman Foundation

1000 E. 111th Street
Chicago, IL 60628-4614
773/785-8181
FAX 773/785-8182
M-F 10-4; Research by appointment only
Visitor's Center
11141 S. Cottage Grove Ave.
Chicago, IL 60628
773/785-8901
www.pullmanil.org (with links to other Pullman-related sites)
\$15 donation request will be made; request must be made in writing (form available).

Maps, photographs indexed by subject, books, drawings, clippings file, address change file.

Hyde Park Historical Society

See University of Chicago, Regenstein Library

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701
217/785-4512
M-F 8:30-5:00
www.state.il.us/hpa (National Register nomination forms can be downloaded from the website.)

National Register nomination forms, Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

Illinois Labor History Society

28 E. Jackson Blvd., Room 1012
Chicago, IL 60604-2215
312/663-4107

Call for appointment; office open M-F 9:30-3:30
www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs

Neighborhoods figuring prominently in labor history include Des Plaines, Pilsen, Wicker Park/Bucktown, East Side and areas like old Chicago stockyards, Michigan Ave. Resources include books on labor history, photographs organized by event.

Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD)-Chicago Branch

Northeastern Illinois University
Ronald Williams Library
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60615-4699
773/442-4506
M-F 9-4. No ID needed; closed stacks
www.cyberdriveillinois.com

Go to lower level reference desk.
City document repository including maps (Sanborn 1907-72) and atlases (1872-1910), city directories (1846-1861), wills (1880-1908).

Irving Park Historical Society

4200 W. Irving Park Road
Chicago, IL 60641
773/777-2750
First and third Sundays of each month, 1-4.

Subdivision maps showing neighborhood's development (1894-1954), historic and contemporary photographs (large collection from ca. 1900), research on homes featured in house walks (about 60 homes) plus other significant homes, selected clippings organized by subject, some books and photocopied histories on neighborhood; newsletter produced since 1984 - newsletter collection at Independence branch library.

Mt. Greenwood Historical Society

Mt. Greenwood Public Library
11010 S. Kedzie Ave.
Chicago, IL 60655-2222
312/747-2805
773/881-8168
FAX 312/747-0148
M-Th 9-9, F-Sa 9-5; Collection open to public.
Contact: Janet McBride
mtghistorical@yahoo.com

Newspaper clippings organized by subject, photos (historic and contemporary), oral histories, Census material (1910, 1920, no Soundex).

National Archives-Great Lakes Region (Chicago)

7358 S. Pulaski Rd.
Chicago, IL 60629
773/581-7816 x138, Genealogy and microfilm
M-F 8-4:15
Extended hours (microfilm research only) T 8-8:30
<http://www.archives.gov/facilities/il/chicago.html>

Federal population census schedules from 1790 through 1920; other federal material, including military and court records.

The Newberry Library

60 W. Walton St.
Chicago, IL 60610-3305
312/943-9090, ext. 3 (Local and Family History Collection)
or ext. 4 (General Collection and Special Collections)
T-The 10-6; F-Sa 9-5
www.newberry.org

Free Private library; bring drivers license/picture ID to security kiosk in first-floor lobby, explain that you wish to do research on house history; they issue research pass and instructions on where to go from there.

Local and Family History collection includes complete run of city directories (initial to present); phone books (initial to 1980); complete Chicago Census material (from 1920 back); criss-cross directories; street numbering change guide; guide to old vs. new street names; indexes to Chicago deaths (1944 back); index of registered voters (1888-92).

Limited collection of periodicals in General Collection (19th and 20th century); limited collection of maps in Special Collections (Sanborn maps, 19th-and 20th century street maps).

Norwood Park Historical Society

Noble-Seymour-Crippen House
5624 N. Newark Ave.
Chicago, IL 60631-3137
773/631-4633 Museum
Susan Kroll, President and Acting Museum Chairman
Thomas Spenny, Landmark Committee Chairman
Sa 12-4 and by appointment

Archives on history of Chicago's far northwest side and overlapping history with local suburbs (Des Plaines, Park Ridge, Niles, Norwood Park township) include photos (in process of indexing by address), books, local newspapers (1973-present), newspaper clippings organized by subject, some social directories, people files.

Ravenswood-Lake View Historical Association

See Chicago Public Library, Conrad Sulzer Regional Library

Ridge Historical Society

10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643-2618
773/881-1675
Su & Th 2-5; otherwise by appointment.
Eugene Delves, President
www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org

Beverly Hills and Morgan Park communities: Photos of Chicago Historical Society's 1909 postcards of "every home in Morgan Park" organized by street, early newspapers (up to 1916), clippings file organized by street, architects files, people files.

Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society

6424 N. Western
Chicago, IL 60645-5422
773/764-4078
773/764-2401
FAX 773/274-7297
W, F 10-5, TH 7-9 p.m.; all other times by appointment.
Mary Jo Doyle, Executive Director
www.rpwrhs.org

Historic photographs organized by zone (4 blocks apiece), previously researched home histories organized by PIN numbers, newspaper clippings, maps, books, audio and video oral histories.

South Suburban Genealogical and Historical Library

www.rootsweb.com/~sghs/ (has links to other organizations and historical societies.)

Southeast Historical Society

(formerly East Side Historical Society)

9801 South Ave. G
Mail: 3658 E. 106th St.
Chicago, IL 60617-6611
In Chamber of Commerce office, Joseph Mulac, President
773/721-7948 (East Side Chamber of Commerce)
773/221-7349 (Stanley residence)
Th 1-4:30; Sept.-June first Sunday of month, 12-3, or by appointment
Frank W. Stanley.
SHS's archives and the James P. Fitzgibbons Historical Museum are located in the Calumet Park Fieldhouse.
www.neiu.edu/~reseller/sehsintro

Community history of East Side, Hegewisch, South Chicago, South Deering with focus on steel industry: photos (19th century to present) organized by subjects, books, artifacts, maps, directories (name and occupation), national trade and labor periodicals (historic), newspapers (Southtown 1960-87), clippings organized by subject, videotapes of oral histories.

Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies

618 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605
Asher Library 312/922-8248
M-Th 9-7; F 9-2:30 in winter; F 9-3 in summer; Su 11-4:30 year round.
The library is on the 5th Floor.
www.spertus.edu/library.html

Library is open to the public, but only members of Spertus Society can check items out. "Chicago Collection" has books and periodicals (contemporary and historic) on history of Jews in Chicagoland; accompanying index card file organized by subject includes some neighborhood and area history citations.

Chicago Jewish Archives
312/322-1741
By appointment only.

Limited number of photographs (indexed by subject), clippings (indexed by subject), miscellaneous items, e.g. oral histories which may contain information on neighborhoods.

Swedish American Museum Center

5211 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60640-2101

773/728-8111

FAX 773/728-8870

T-F 10-4; Sa-Su 11-4; call to confirm.

Contact Curator

www.samac.org (includes links to other sites pertaining to Swedish and immigrant history.)

Non-circulating library with books on Swedish immigrant history (no photos, maps, etc.; books only).

University of Chicago

Regenstein Library
Department of Special Collections
1100 E. 57th St.

Chicago, IL 60637

773/702-8705

M-F 8:30-4:45; Sa 9-12:45 except in August/Sept. and holidays.

www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl (includes links to other sites pertaining to local archives and resources available at the University of Chicago.)

Go to Library Privileges Office in Regenstein's main lobby. For library access, get day pass from the Library Privileges Office (in Regenstein's main lobby); bring 2 pieces of identification (one with photo); ask there for directions in the Department of Special Collections.

Hyde Park Historical Society's collection is housed in the Special Collections Research Center.

1. Hyde Park Historical Society Collection includes information on Hyde Park and Kenwood neighborhoods: books, maps, periodicals, local newspapers, real estate ownership index (1950s), clippings, photos organized by area and subject (historic and contemporary), oral histories; see finding aid.
2. Hyde Park Neighborhood and Community Organizations Collection has books, miscellaneous printed material; see finding aid.
3. Archival Photofiles, Buildings and Grounds Series has HydePark, Kenwood, Woodlawn photos organized by subject (historic and contemporary); see finding aid.

University of Illinois at Chicago

University Library
801 S. Morgan

Chicago, IL 60607

www.uic.edu/depts/lib

Documents & Maps Department

312/996-2738

8-5 M-F; evening and weekend hours vary with academic year-call for information.

Go to Documents and Maps Information Desk, 3rd floor, center section. Fire insurance maps (select years from 1886-

1988; most on microfilm); complete files of Chicago building permits (1872-1954; on microfilm; ask for guide created by reference librarians); Census population schedules (1840-1920; on microfilm).

Special Collections Department

312/996-2742

M-F 10-4:40

Go to the third floor, south end. Several significant collections are housed here:

1. Jane Addams Memorial Collection: original manuscripts, documents, books and artifacts; includes information on near west side such as maps, photographs organized by subject, surveys of neighborhood;
2. Lawrence J. Gutter Collection of Chicagoana: rare books, maps and prints which document growth and development of Chicago;
3. Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council Records including publications, photographs of slum conditions (1890-1950), housing surveys (1930s and 1940s primarily), photos organized by subject.

Additional Websites:

Chicago Metro History Education Center

www.uic.edu/orgs/cmhec/2_historicalcollections.html

Links to other websites related to Chicago history collections.

Graham Resource Center:

www.itt.edu/libraries/grc/maingrc.html

Information on the Graham Resource Center at Illinois Institute of Technology. The Resource Center's collection is non-circulating and consists of over 4,000 books, periodicals and other materials. Additionally the Resource Center houses IIT's Mies Van Der Rohe archive. Call for hours and access information.

The Illinois History Resource Page:

alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~sorensen/hist.html

Includes a wide variety of links to Illinois and Chicago history-related websites.

Mount Prospect Historical Society:

www.mphist.org/museums.htm

Information on local city and suburban historical societies.

Northwestern University Library Art Collection:

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/art/>

The Northwestern University Library website has links to other sites related to architectural history. The library is available to the public and contains over 10,000 titles related to architecture and other resources.

Urban Experience in Chicago:

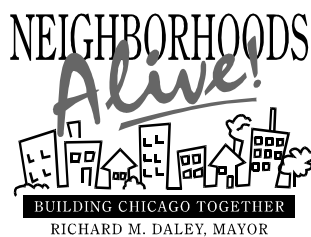
www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/

Information including photographs and primary documents on Jane Addams, Hull-House, immigrant history and general Chicago history.

Research Notes

This research guidebook was originally published in 1988. It was subsequently revised, with additional text and illustrations in 1998 (written by Alison Zebr; layout by Steve Fors), and in 2003 (revisions by Margaret Klein, Department of Planning and Development and Matt Overton, Catalyst Consulting Group).

Single copies available, by mail, for \$2 (covering postage and handling) from:



*City of Chicago
Department of Planning and Development
Landmarks Division
33 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60602*

*For more information, visit our web site at:
www.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks*