



RESEARCHING AND RENOVATING YOUR HOME



**Akron-Summit County
Public Library**

330-643-9041

Special Collections Division
60 S. High Street, Akron, Ohio 44326-0001

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YOUR OLD HOUSE: RESEARCHING AND RENOVATING YOUR HOME

How old is my house? Who built it? Who lived here? How did this neighborhood develop? How can I restore and renovate it? These are some of the questions new or established homeowners may have about their homes. Researching the history of your house can provide answers to these questions, and may possibly reveal other interesting facts about the house you live in. There are a number of sources at the library and in our community that can assist with your quest for clues and answers to your house's history. This pathfinder includes a selective list of resources that may be found at the Akron-Summit County Public Library, as well as other resources in our community. For assistance with any of these resources or help finding additional information, please contact the Special Collections Division at the Main Library, 330-643-9030, or e-mail: speccollections@akronlibrary.org

SOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

City Directories

City directories are an excellent resource for learning more about the people who lived in your house. City directories, usually published annually, are divided into two sections. The resident section includes an alphabetical listing of people living in the community, and lists the head of the household, place of employment and/or occupation, and name of spouse. Earlier directories may also include the names of children. City directories can help you to establish an approximate date of when the house was built. The address section is arranged alphabetically by the name of the street, and lists residents by address. City directories may also provide clues to the ethnic makeup of a neighborhood. A quick scan of street listings may reveal that most residents were of a particular ethnic or cultural group. One caveat of city directory

research is that street numbering systems often changed during the early part of the century.

Akron City Directories: 1871-present (including most years for Cuyahoga Falls and Barberton)

Haines Criss Cross Directories: 1943-present

Biography File

In this file may be found copies of newspaper articles about local individuals that have appeared over the years in the *Akron Beacon Journal* and other publications. It is arranged alphabetically.

Obituaries

Obituaries can be an extremely valuable source of biographical information about local residents. The Akron-Summit County Public Library maintains the entire *Akron Beacon Journal* on microfilm from 1841 to the present, as well as indexes to obituaries for the following years:

1841-1913	On catalog cards
1841-1939	Microfilm index to the <i>Akron Beacon Journal</i>
1929-1939	<i>Akron Beacon Journal</i> Index
1940-present	<i>Akron Beacon Journal</i> obituary index prepared by Special Collections

Ohio Death Certificates

Special Collections has all Ohio Death Certificates available on microfilm for 1908-1944, including indexes.

County and City Histories

In the late Nineteenth Century, many county histories were published. These books frequently included biographical sketches about members of a community. These are sometimes referred to by historians as “mug books” because residents often paid to have their biographies and portraits included. Nevertheless, they can be a good source of biographical information. The Special Collections Division maintains an extensive collection of city and county

Renovators.com

www.renovators.com

This Old House

www.thisoldhouse.com

PERIODICALS

These titles are available in the Magazines and Newspapers Division of the Main Library. Some may also be available at branch libraries. Check the online catalog for a complete list of holdings.

Old House Interiors

Old House Journal

Period Living and Traditional Homes

Preservation

Renovation Style

This Old House

Victorian Homes



Progress Through Preservation

550 Copley Road
Akron, Ohio 44320
330-374-3787
330-762-1411

A nonprofit organization whose goal is to raise the consciousness of preservation in Akron and Summit County by actively encouraging the preservation, maintenance, restoration, and adaptive reuse of buildings, sites, and neighborhoods that are of historic or architectural importance. Monthly meetings with guest speakers are held at various local historic sites. In addition to cooperating and participating with other community organizations and local governments, PTP recognizes our community's preservation efforts, sponsors conferences, tours and workshops, and publishes a monthly newsletter.

USEFUL WEB SITES

Bob Vila.com

www.bobvila.com

National Park Service Technical Preservation Services for Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs

www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm

Old House Journal Online

www.oldhousejournal.com

Period Homes

www.period-homes.com

Preservation Tech Notes: Case studies for Historic Preservation

www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm



histories for Summit County, as well as other counties in Ohio and other states. Additional full text city and county histories may also be accessed through the library's subscription (available at Main Library only) to Heritage Quest Online.

Family Histories

Special Collections maintains a large collection of compiled family histories. Check the online catalog or consult with a Special Collections staff member for more information about this collection.

Estate Records

Estate records can provide valuable information about former house owners. The Special Collections Division has Summit County estates on microfilm for the years 1840-1949.

Census

Since 1790, the United States has taken a census of its citizens. Prior to the 1850 census, only the name of the head of household was listed. Beginning in 1850, the Census listed every individual in each household, and depending upon the year of the Census, much additional information about its residents. The library has the entire Federal Census for Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Alabama on microfilm, as well as partial collections for New York, Virginia and other states. The library also subscribes to the online databases AncestryPlus and Heritage Quest Online. Both include census indexes and images for most census years and states.

Land and Property Records

Special Collections has the following resources that may be helpful to house researchers:

Summit County grantee and grantor indexes, 1840-1914
Index to grantors, Trumbull, Portage, Medina and Stark Counties, 1795-1840



Atlases, Plat Books and Maps

Special Collections maintains a collection of 19th and 20th century Summit County maps, historical atlases and plat maps. See a Special Collections staff member for a complete list of these holdings. A list is also available on the Special Collections web page: www.akronlibrary.org/main-sc.html

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970

These detailed maps, produced by the D.A. Sanborn Company, depict commercial and residential sections of cities in the United States. Each map illustrates the site, size and shape, building material, and use, of homes, commercial buildings and factories. These maps are available from the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) Web site which may be accessed at the Akron-Summit County Public Library's Web site link to research databases or from home at www.oplin.org.

OTHER GENEALOGICAL AND LOCAL HISTORICAL SOURCES IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Special Collections Division maintains many other genealogical and local historical sources in multiple formats that may provide additional information about former homeowners. For further assistance, check with the reference staff or see the Special Collections Web site at: www.akronlibrary.org/main-sc.html

COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL RECORDS

Summit County Fiscal Officer

175 South Main Street

Akron, Ohio 44308

www.co.summit.oh.us/fiscaloffice/index.htm

This county office maintains records pertaining to taxes, real estate and property. Recent records may be accessed through their Public Access Web Services (PAWS) Web site: www.co.summit.oh.us/



HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Cleveland Restoration Society and Preservation Resource Center of Northeastern Ohio

Sarah Benedict House

3751 Prospect Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2705

216-426-1000

www.clevelandrestoration.org

This organization provides technical assistance, educational programs and publications to individuals and organizations pursuing historic preservation opportunities.

Heritage Preservation Services

National Center for Cultural Resources National Park Service

1201 Eye St., NW, 2255

Washington, D.C. 20005

www2.cr.nps.gov/

National Register of Historic Places

National Park Service

1201 Eye St., NW, 8th Floor (MS 2280)

Washington, DC 20005

202-354-2213

www.cr.nps.gov/nr/

National Trust for Historic Preservation (Midwest Office)

52 West Jackson Blvd, Suite 350

Chicago, IL 60604

312-939-5547

www.nationaltrust.org

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

567 East Hudson Street

Columbus, Ohio 43211-1030

614-298-2000

www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/



out your plans. The following titles may be found in our Science and Technology and History and Humanities Divisions:

643.7 Bradford, Derek
C737 *The complete home renovation manual*

643.7 Decker, Phillip J.
D295r *Renovating brick houses*

643.7 Jackson, Albert
J12c *Complete restoration manual*

690.24 Kitchen, Judith L.
K62o *Old building owner's manual*

643.7 Miller, Judith
M615p *Period details*

643.7 Nash, George
N249ro *Renovating old houses*

643.7 Poore, Patricia
O1443 *The Old-House Journal guide to renovation*

643.7 Vila, Bob
V71t *Bob Vila's This Old House*

fiscaloffice/webapps.htm. Others may be obtained by visiting or writing their offices:

Auditor's Division (4th Floor)

330-643-2636

- Tax maps
- Real estate assessments
- Property appraisal
- Estate taxes
- Personal property taxes
- Mobile home taxes

Recorder's Division (3rd Floor)

330-643-2587

- Deeds
- Mortgages
- Plats
- Easements
- Financial statements
- Land contracts

Treasurer's Division (3rd Floor)

330-643-2587

- Real estate taxes, tax certificate liens

OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES

University of Akron Archival Services

Polsky Building

Lower Level

225 South Main Street

Akron, Ohio 44325

330-972-7670

The University of Akron Archives collects, preserves, and makes available the personal papers and historical records of govern-



ments, businesses, and civic organizations in Summit and eight other counties in northeastern Ohio. Among its diverse resources are many that might be helpful in researching the history of a house. One example is an extensive collection of Summit County Auditor's/Treasurer's Tax Duplicates, some of which predate the formation of Summit County in 1840. These duplicates, dating mostly from 1840 to 1940, include valuations of real and personal property. In some cases the existence of a new structure is indicated; other times inferences can be made when there is a significant increase in valuation of the property.

Another collection with considerable information about the history of Akron architecture is the James A. Pahlau Collection. This local collector has amassed a large quantity of books, articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, and some architectural drawings.

The **Summit County Historical Society's** collection of photographs and archival materials, on deposit at the Archives, also includes many references to homes and other structures.

Any interested people are welcome to use the holdings of the University's Archives.

BOOKS

House History Research

These titles may provide additional suggestions for researching the history of your house.

720.28 *Akron Historic Landmark Survey*
Ak733a

728.3707 Houck, Maurcia DeLean
H835i *If These Walls Could Talk: An Easy Guide To Tracking Your House's History*

307.336 *Houses and Homes: Exploring Their History*
H842h

728.37 Light, Sally
L723h *House Histories: A Guide To Tracing The Genealogy of Your Home*

Architectural Style

Architectural styles vary greatly among American cities and neighborhoods. A number of factors contribute to this. In Akron, for example, one will find that many homes in Goodyear Heights are of the English cottage architectural style. The reason for this is that F.A. Seiberling, the founder of Goodyear and developer of Goodyear Heights had a preference for that style. The Library has many resources that can help you ascertain the style of your home. Following is a selective list of titles available at the library.

728.973 Carley, Rachel
C281v *Visual dictionary of American domestic architecture.*

728.28 Howard, Hugh
H849h *How old is this house?*

720.321 Phillips, Steven H.
P563o *Old House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide To American Domestic Architecture*

728 Van Buren, Maurie
V221h *House styles at a glance*

Restoration and Renovation

Restoring or renovating an old house can be a rewarding experience. The Akron-Summit County Public Library maintains an extensive collection of books to help you plan, design, and carry

