

# History of Your House

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## Overview

- How or where do I start?
- Types of resources
- Resources available at ACPL
- Information available at the local, county, state and national organizations or government

## Take a Good Look Outside of Your House

- Architectural style
- Materials used (siding, shingles, etc.)
- Windows, Doors, and Fireplaces - location
- Number of stories: one, one-and-a half, two, etc.
- Was there any additions/changes made to the house?

## Look around the yard:

- Location of House on property
- Cisterns (may also be in basement)
- Roof structure; Chimney(s) location
- Outbuildings, what are they and their location
- Foundation, check to see if areas of the foundation look different
- Trash pits
- Paths

## Inside Your House

- Materials used (flooring, fixtures, windows, etc.)
- Dates found in closets, etched in foundations
- Room layouts
- Ceilings, drop ceiling-may have space above
- Fireplaces

## Artifacts (items left behind from previous tenants)

- Possibly in the attic, basement, and/or garage
- Ceilings and/or Walls
- Photographs and documents
- Trunks
- Diaries/letters/papers
- Coins
- Toys/Games
- Books
- Dishes

## Artifacts - Outdoors

- Cisterns/Wells
- Bare spots - Locations of Outhouses (often moved); Old sheds/playhouses
- Bottles, coins, old toys, etc.

## Look at what was discovered

Bottles/Jars: Medicinal or Home remedies

Home-Brew Beverage containers - Beer? Dandelion Wine?

Crocks - types of food were stored?

Toys/Games

What year/manufacturer

Was it made by an individual

Built their own popular item?

## Talk to Neighbor

Ask them if they remember who lived in the house

Find out who lived in the neighborhood the longest

Ask them about past residents and neighbors

Memories of neighborhood events

Seek out previous owners or their relatives

## Dating Your House

When House was Built

Was there more than one house built on the property?

Was there any addition/expansion done to the house?

Was it remodeled? – Exterior and/or Interior

## Property Purchased

Legal Description (will **always** be the same)

Name of Subdivision

Block and Lot Numbers

## Resources:

Zillow (or other on-line real estate websites)

City Directories

County Directories

Gazetteers

## Land Records

Deeds - Grantee/Grantor Index;

Abstracts of Title

## Maps

Birds Eye View

Plat Maps (Rural Areas)

May include map of cities – no names

Sanborn Fire Insurance

## Families that lived there

Census Records

Society Pages and Obituaries

Tax Records

## Resources at ACPL

### Genealogy Center

- Databases
- Community Album - photos of houses
- Quest papers
- Books
- Abstracts of Title
- Builders of Greater Fort Wayne
- Fort Wayne Architects & Firms
- Books about individual architects
- Family Histories
- Cemetery Index/Transcription
- Abstracts
- Index to Deeds

### City and/or County Directories or Gazetteers

- Fort Wayne City Directories (1927 to current; cross index of streets)
  - 977.202 F77p; 1858-1998
  - 977.201 AL5acd; 1999-present

- Allen County (Early editions will show the Rural Route [R.R.] district codes.)
  - 977.201 AL5pol; 1906
  - 977.201 AL5po; 1965-1968; 1972-1998 (cross-indexed)

- Interim Report – Fort Wayne

- City Directories – microfiche, microfilm, and books

### Map Boxes (Blue)

- Fort Wayne and Allen County
- Indiana
- Canada, England, Europe and Germany

### On-Site Databases and Web Sites

- Ancestry.com
- MyHeritage
- Find My Past
- Newspapers.com
- PERiodical Source Index (PERSI)
- Family Search
- Allen County Resources (free database)

### Reader Services – Vertical Files

- Fort Wayne Houses, History and Holidays – Drawer
  - Fort Wayne, Historic Houses, etc.
  - Vertical Files
  - Indiana Collection
  - Indiana Collection Picture File

Arts, Music & Media

House History

Architectural

Interior Design

Hoopla – eBooks/Audio books

Search: House History

Search: Architecture

House (if Haunted)

Questions/Resources

When House was constructed?

Research date(s) when property was purchased

When was the house built?

Was there more than one house built on the property?

Was there any addition/major remodeling done to the house?

Talk to neighbors to find if any tragedy happened in the house?

Research newspapers

Accidents/tragic events

Obituaries

Who Lived in the House?

City/County Directories

Census Records

Cemeteries

Death Records, Cause of Death

### **Bibliography**

929 L62H House Histories: A Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home\*

929 G82DI Discovering the History of Your House and Your Neighborhood\*

929 H81 House and Homes: Exploring Their History\*

929 H84H How Old is This House? [A Skeleton Key to Dating and Identifying Three Centuries of the American Houses]\*

929 SCH82R Researching House History

\*Additional copies of these titles are available elsewhere in the Allen County Public Library

## Local/County, State and National Resources

### Local/County

Allen County Public Library  
The Genealogy Center  
900 Library Plaza  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 421-1225  
Web: <https://acpl-cms.wise.oclc.org/genealogy>  
Email: [genealogy@acpl.info](mailto:genealogy@acpl.info)

ARCH, Inc.  
818 Lafayette Street  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 426-5117  
Web: <https://archfw.org/>  
Email: [information@archfw.org](mailto:information@archfw.org)

Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society  
302 East Berry Street  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 426-2882  
Web: <http://www.fwhistorycenter.org>  
Email: [administration@fwhistorycenter.org](mailto:administration@fwhistorycenter.org)

Allen County – Building Department  
200 East Berry Street, Suite 180  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802-1811  
(260) 449-7131

City of Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Community Development Division  
Historic Preservation Office  
200 E. Berry Street, Suite 320  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 427-1127  
Web: [www.fwcommunitydevelopment.org/  
historic-preservation](http://www.fwcommunitydevelopment.org/historic-preservation)  
Email: [cd@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:cd@cityoffortwayne.org)

Web: [https://www.allencounty.us/building-  
department](https://www.allencounty.us/building-department)  
Allen County Assessor  
1 E Main Street, Suite 415  
Rousseau Centre  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 449-7123  
Web: [www.allencounty.us/assessors-office](http://www.allencounty.us/assessors-office)  
Email: [assessor@co.allen.in.us](mailto:assessor@co.allen.in.us)

Allen County Recorder's Office  
1 E. Main Street  
Room 100  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 449-7165  
Web: [www.allencountyrecorder.us/WhatWeDo.aspx](http://www.allencountyrecorder.us/WhatWeDo.aspx)  
Email: [recorder@allencounty.us](mailto:recorder@allencounty.us)

Allen County Treasurer Office  
1 E. Main Street, Suite 104  
Rousseau Centre  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802  
(260) 449-7693  
Web: [www.allencounty.us/treasurers-office](http://www.allencounty.us/treasurers-office)  
Email: [Treasurer@co.allen.in.us](mailto:Treasurer@co.allen.in.us)

## State

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Historic Preservation and  
Archaeology  
Web: <https://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/8150.htm>

Indiana Historical Society  
Eugene and Marilyn Glick History Center  
450 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Phone: (317) 232-1882  
Web: [indianahistory.org/](http://indianahistory.org/)

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana  
1201 Central Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
(317) 639-4534  
(800) 450-4534  
Web: [www.indianalandmarks.org/](http://www.indianalandmarks.org/)  
Email: [info@indianalandmarks.org](mailto:info@indianalandmarks.org)

Indiana State Library  
Genealogy  
315 W. Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
(317) 232-3675  
Web: [www.in.gov/library/genealogy.htm](http://www.in.gov/library/genealogy.htm)  
Ask a Librarian: <https://www.in.gov/library/ask.htm>

## National

National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 354-2211  
Web:  
[https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/  
index.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm)  
Email (Reference): [nr\\_reference@nps.gov](mailto:nr_reference@nps.gov)

The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
2600 Virginia Avenue NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20037  
Email – [info@savingplaces.org](mailto:info@savingplaces.org)  
Phone: 202-588-6000  
Toll-Free: 800-944-6847  
Web: <https://savingplaces.org>