How to Research a House
in Kane County

GBPLD

KANE COUNTY OFFICES

Recorder of Deeds Office
Kane County Government Center, Building C,
719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva
(630)232-5935   http://www.kanecountyrecorder.net
- Find the approximate age of a house.
- View records of property transactions, as early as 1837.
- Bring the legal description or parcel identification number, as seen on the property tax bill.

Tax Extension Office
Kane County Government Center, Building B,
719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva
(630)232-5965
http://www.co.kane.il.us/coc/Tax/TaxExtension.asp
- View current and past property documents.
- View current and past tax bills.

Elgin Township Assessor
729 S. McLean Blvd, Suite 100, Elgin
(847)741-5110   http://www.elgintownship.com/assessor.aspx
- View the most recent property information.
- Data includes: year built, lot size, square footage, sale amounts, and more.

Clerk of Circuit Court's Office
Probate Division, 540 S. Randall Rd., St. Charles
(630) 232-3413   http://www.cic.co.kane.il.us
- Probate records (wills) may include a deed, estate details, and taxes.

CITY OF ELGIN OFFICES
City of Elgin Planning Department
City Hall, 150 Dexter Ct., Elgin
(847)931-5910
- Use Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps to uncover details not available elsewhere such as building shape, materials of construction, number of stories, etc. These maps are also available at Gail Borden Public Library. Map dates include 1897, 1903, and 1913.
- Use subdivision maps to help identify when land was subdivided.

GAIL BORDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY
House research assistance and materials are available at the Main Library. If you would like to make an appointment with a librarian, please call the Information Desk at 847-429-4680.

Elgin Area Memories
This free online archive complied by Gail Borden Public Library, the Elgin History Museum, and local organizations, provides collections of historical information, pictures and a link to the state run Illinois Digital Archives.

Elgin and Kane County Directories
A city directory is the earliest form of a phone book. Directories can be used to find name of others living at the same address, and often provide clues as so where a resident was employed. For people researching house information for "code" purposes, it may provide clues about a house being previously subdivided.
- Elgin directories dating back to 1875
- Early directories list occupants alphabetically
- Beginning in 1900, names are also indexed by address
- Kane County directories available for years 1859-60, 1867, 1887-88, 1887-90
- Some years are available in print version

Elgin and Kane County Maps & Atlases
- 1860 Kane County Map 911.77323 Map (Locked Case Reference)
- 1872 Combination Atlas Map of Kane County 912.77323 Combination (Archives Reference)
- 1876 Map of Illinois Counties in 1876 911.773 (Archives Reference)
- 1876 Illinois Land Atlas Index (to above) 929.3773 (Genealogy)
- 1880 "Bird's Eye View" Map of Elgin in Old Elgin: A Pictorial History 977.323 Alft (Reference)
- 1887 Sanborn map of Central Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1891 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1892 Kane County Atlas 912.77323 Atlas (Archives)
- 1897 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1903 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1907 subdivisions and plot outlines in Plat Book of the City of Elgin 912.77323 Plat (Locked Case)
- 1913 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1920 Kane County Farm Plat map 912.77323 Farm (Genealogy)
- 1939 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1955 Kane County Farm Plat book 912.77322 Kane (Locked Case Reference)
- 1960 Kane County Farm Plat Book 912.77322 Kane (Locked Case Reference)

Elgin Newspapers
Newspapers can be useful for checking obituaries of former residents or owners, reports of building construction, mentions within social or gossip columns as well as providing a feeling for the history and the spirit of the time.
- Local newspapers dating back to 1850's on microfilm
- Refer to the Local Newspaper Index if searching for a keyword, name, or location
- The index is not complete though, so narrowing down a date and searching microfilm may be necessary

Annual Reviews of Local Construction
- Published 1886-1893, 1900, 1903-06, 1908 by Elgin Daily Courier
- Published 1901, 1902, 1907 by the Elgin Daily News
- Available as photocopies for reference or on microfilm
- Includes miscellaneous clippings of building reports from other years

Elgin and South Elgin History Books
- *Views of Old Elgin- 3 Volumes* by Carlos H. Smith (1915) 977.323 Smith (Locked Case Reference)
- *The History of Elgin from 1835 to 1875* by Lord & Bradford (1875) 977.3232 History (Locked Case Reference)
- *James T. Gifford and the Founding of Elgin, Illinois* by Stella Ainsworth (1922) 977.323 Gifford (Locked Case Reference)
- *Elgin Today: Historical, Descriptive, Biographical* by Lowrie & Black (1903) 977.3232 Elgin (Locked Case Reference)
- *Elgin Past and Present, Historical and Biographical* by R. Waite Joslyn (1927) 977.3232 Joslyn (Locked Case Reference)
- *The Story of Elgin's First Twenty-Five Years* by Elgin Area Historical Society (1962) 977.3232 Story (Locked Case Reference)
- *Elgin: A Nice Place to Live* by Curtis Smith (1982) 977.323 Smith (Archives)
- *Elgin: An American History 1835-1985* by Mike Alft (1984) 977.323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *Elgin Area Landmarks* by E.C. Alft (1975) 917.7323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *The Elgin Historic District* by E.C. Alft (1980) 977.323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *Old Elgin: A Pictorial History* by E.C. Alft (1991) 977.323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *Elgin: Days Gone By* by E.C. Alft (1992) 977.323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *Elgin, Illinois Pictorial and Descriptive* by Artistic Pub. Assoc. (1886) 917.73 Elgin (Archives)
- *The Elgin National Watch Historic District: A Summary and Inventory* by Historic Certification Consultants (1998) 977.3232 Historic (Nonfiction)
- *Looking Back: A time to Remember* by The Courier (1997) 977.3232 Courier (Nonfiction)
- *Elgin, Illinois From the Collection of the Elgin Area Historical Society* by Jim Edwards (1999) 977.323 Edwars (Nonfiction)
- *Historic Resources in the Northeast Neighborhood* by Historic Certification Consultants (1996) 977.3232 Historic (Nonfiction)
- *National Register of Historic Places: Elgin Historic District* by City of Elgin (1982) 977.3232 National (Archives)
- *Photographs of Elgin Houses in the 1920's* by Gifford Park Association (1995) 920.977323 Photographs (Archives)
- *Picturesque Elgin* by McGregor & Whitstruck (1902) 917.7323 Picturesque (Locked Case Reference)
- *Elgin Heritage, Architecture* by Elgin Heritage Commission (1987) 728 Elgin (Nonfiction)
- *Elgin Design Guideline Manual* by Elgin Heritage Commission (1997) 720.288 Elgin (Nonfiction)
- *South Elgin: 150 Years of Heritage 1835-1985* by Ralph Tredup (1989) 977.323 Tredup (Nonfiction)
- *South Elgin: A History of the Village from its Origin as Clintonville* by E.C. Alft (1979) 977.323 Alft (Reference)

Kane County History Books
- *Architecture and Historic Urban Neighborhoods on the Fox River* by Carol Zellie (1977) 720.9773 Zellie (Nonfiction)
- *Built for Farming: A Guide to the Historic Rural Architecture of Kane County* by Kane County Development Department (1991) 720.977323 Built (Nonfiction Oversize)
- *Midwestern Vernacular: Farm Structures in Kane County, Illinois* by Jean Hervert (1980) 720.9773232 Hervert (Nonfiction Oversize)
- *Kane County, Illinois Historic Preservation Plan* by Kane County Development Department (1989) 977.3 Kane (Archives)
- *The Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois* by W. Le Baron, Jr. (1878) 977.323 Past (Locked Case Reference)
  See also 977.323 Past Index
- *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Kane County* by Munsell Publishing Co. (1904) 977.3 Kane 1904 (Locked Case Reference) See also 977.3 Kane 1904 Index
- *History of Kane County, Ill* by R. Waite Joslyn (1908) 977.3 Joslyn V.1 & V.2 (Locked Case Reference) See also 977.3 Joslyn 1908 Index
- *Kane County in Vintage Postcards* by Jim Edwards (2001) 977.323 Edwards (Reference)

Cook County and Hanover Township History Books
- *Family maps of Cook County, Illinois : with homesteads, roads, waterways, towns, cemeteries, railroads, and more* by Gregory A. Boyd (2006) 912.7731 Boyd (Genealogy Reference)
- *Public domain sales land tract record listing, Cook County* (1983) 929.37731 Public (Genealogy Reference)
- *History of Cook County, Illinois from the Earliest Period to the Present time* by A.T. Andreas (1884) 977.31 And (Reference)
- *Hanover Township: Rural Past to Urban Present* by E.C. Alft (1980) 977.31 Alft (Nonfiction)
- *Hanover Harvesters: A Pictorial History of Hanover Township 1850-1955* by Nancy Gher 977.31 Gher (Nonfiction)

ORGANIZATIONS

ABODE
http://www.elginabode.com

Elgin Area Historical Society
www.elginhistory.org
360 Park Street, Elgin, IL 60120
847-742-4248
Elginhistory@foxvalley.net

Elgin Genealogical Society
http://www.elginroots.com/
P.O. Box 1418, Elgin, IL 60121-1418
E-mail: Info@elginroots.com

Elgin Heritage Commission
http://www.cityofelgin.org/index.aspx?NID=146
150 Dexter Court, Elgin, IL 60120
847-931-5660

Elgin's Original East Side Neighborhood
http://www.kanecountyguide.org/index.php/
component/cpx/?task=resource&id=115734&tab=1
403 Division Street, Elgin, IL 60120
President Bill Witte: 847-468-0869

Gifford Park Association
http://www.gifford-park-assoc.org/
P.O. Box 928, Elgin, IL 60121
847-421-4022
President Dan Miller: dmiller155@aol.com

Kane County Genealogical Society
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilkcgs
P.O. Box 504, Geneva, IL 60134
kcginfo@gmail.com

NENA (NorthEast Neighborhood Association)
https://www.facebook.com/NENAofElgin
P.O. Box 1446, Elgin, IL 6012

House Numbering Changes

Elgin's House numbering system changed at least 3 times in the late 1800's. The first occurring in 1870's, followed by 1884, and lastly in 1894. The 1884 change adopted new baselines at Chicago St. (and Bridge St., now West Chicago St.) for north/south numbers, and the Fox River for east/west numbers.

Revised baselines for east/west streets were adopted in 1894. Liberty Street became the baseline on the east side, and the line followed by Vandalia, Union and McClure was the divider on the west side. Thus, the same house on the same location may have had three different house numbers, not to mention a different street name (below). Some alterations may have taken place in smaller, isolated instances since the 1894 event.

Street Name Changes

In April of 1894, the following street name changes were made:

Arbor St. and Preston Ave. changed to Preston Ave.
Bridge St. changed to West Chicago St.
Cleveland Ave. changed to Buckeye St.
Division St. and Pearl St. changed to Division St.
Hill St., Edward St. and Ashton Ave. changed to Hill Ave.
James St., William St. and Illinois St. changed to Illinois Ave.
Race St. changed to Water St.
Summit St. and Willow changed to Summit St.
West National St. and Walnut Ave. changed to Walnut St.

Other street name changes include:

Alexander changed to River Bluff
Broadway changed to North State
Dexter St. changed to National St.
Ettner Ave. changed to North Porter St.
Galena Road changed to West Highland Ave.
Grove changed to Lynch
Lemonade changed to Wilcox
Main St. changed to State St.
Mill changed to Douglas Ave.
Milwaukee changed to East Highland Ave.
North Division changed to Jefferson
Pinacle changed to Franklin
Railway Ave. changed to Wellington Ave.
River St. (west side) changed to Hendee St.
River St. (east side) changed to Grove Ave.
Summit St. changed to State St.

Gail Borden Public Library
270 N. Grove Ave.
Elgin, Il 60120
www.gailborden.info

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