

Researching the history of your Wilmette home

Use this checklist as a starting point for researching your Wilmette home. It is not necessarily an exhaustive list, so be sure to search for other sources and list them under "other sources." As you discover information, record it on the attached worksheet. Please share what you've learned! Please consider sharing a copy of your house's story with the library.

In your house and neighborhood:

- Deed to your property and/or other paperwork from purchasing the property
- Materials left by previous owners (such as house plans or notes)
- Talk to previous owners (or their children) and long-time neighbors

At Wilmette Community Development Office (at Village Hall)

- Building Permits (1920-present)
- Architectural Inventories (East Wilmette in 1992, Gross Point area in 1991, and Indian Hills in 1995)

At Wilmette Public Library local history room:

- Sanborn Fire Insurance map, *Chicago, Illinois*: Volume J, 1914-1936
- Sidwell's *Official Atlas of New Trier Township*, 1950-1955
- House History Binders (by street address; primarily clippings and zoning paperwork)
- City and Telephone directories (various years; 1893-present)
- Other maps and atlases of Wilmette
- Architectural Inventories (parts of Wilmette 1972, Indian Hills in 1995)
- Wilmette ownership index (1936-1962)
- Photographs (search in online digital collection or in Index to photographs binder)
- "Architects," "Architecture," or "Indian Hills" files in Vertical Files
- Online Resources:
 - Wilmette Library Local History Digital Collection (includes indexed Wilmette Life, digitized telephone directories, photos, and other local history materials; search by address, street name, or owner's name)
 - Ancestry.com (for previous owners: census records and Evanston/Wilmette city directories)
 - Chicago Tribune Historical (for real estate listings, property transactions, or other mentions of your address)

At Wilmette Historical Museum:

- Real Estate Listings (1940s-1970s)
- Street directories and telephone books (various years)
- House Files (by street address)
- House Walk programs
- Abstract of titles
- Maps and atlases
- Other materials about homes, architects, and local architecture

In Cook County:

- Original property abstract from Cook County Recorder of Deeds
- Physical description of your house from Cook County Assessor's Office (online)
- Building Journals, maps, and more in print at Newberry Library, Chicago History Museum, Chicago Public Library
- Street directories and telephone books at Evanston Public Library and Glenview Public Library

Online:

- Library of Congress (search for digitized Wilmette maps and other materials)
 - Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from Cook County (for years 1894, 1905, 1938, 1950)
- Historic and Architectural Resources Geographic Information System (HARGIS) from IDNR
- Building Journals digitized online at HathiTrust.org or Archive.org
 - The American Contractor* (1879-1918)
 - The Economist: a weekly financial, commercial and real estate newspaper* (1888-1946)
 - The Architectural Record* (1891-2022)
 - Inland Architect and Builder* (1883-1887) / *Inland Architect and News Record* (1887-1908)
 - The Construction Record / The Construction News*
 - American Architect and Building News* (1876-1908)
 - Real Estate and Building Journal* (1866-1909)
 - Western Architect* (1902-1931)
- Histories of Cook County digitized online at HathiTrust.org or Archive.org
- Illinois Digital Archives (maps, photographs, and more)
- Land Patents from Bureau of Land Management (original land patents, mostly from 1830's-1850's; search by township/range/section)

Other Sources:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Wilmette Public Library

Questions?

Contact Genealogy and Local History Librarian
EvaAnne Johnson at ejohnson@wilmettelibrary.info.

The History of Our Home

Current address: _____

Name of Property (if applicable): _____

Legal description of the property: _____

Previous address (if street or address changed): _____

Square footage of house: _____

Architecture

Year Built: _____ Years Renovated or Additions Added: _____

Architect(s) and/or Contractors: _____

Architectural Style: _____

Historic home distinction & year: _____

Distinctive features of the home: _____

The Property

Current size of the property: _____

Distinctive features of the property: _____

Other structures on the property: _____

Previous structures on this property: _____

Year(s) the property was subdivided: _____

What was there before the property was subdivided: _____

Owners & Residents

Current owners and years of ownership: _____

Current residents and years of residence (if different from owners): _____

Original owner/builder of the house: _____

Previous owners/residents and years: _____

My house's story

Other historical facts about my house (attach additional pages if needed):

Interesting folklore, unproven anecdotes, or stories about my house (attach additional pages if needed):

Information compiled by: _____ Date: _____

Photos of our home

Attach copies of photos of your home, past and present, with approximate dates. Use additional pages if needed.