



If walls could talk...

Researching the History of Your House in Johnson County

The Regional Reference Collection is located at the Central Resource Library branch of the Johnson County Library. This collection has a variety of materials available to assist you in researching the history of your Johnson County house.

WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Who built the building and when?
2. What material type is the building?
3. What style is it?
4. What did the house look like originally?
5. Who was the original owner?
6. How does the structure relate to the community, state or national history?

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- **Photographs** (of the house itself and the people who lived there)
- **Architect or Builder**
- **Architectural Style**
- **Dates** (Construction date and the years people lived or worked there)
- **Owners and Residents** (who they were, what they did)
- **Stories** about neighborhoods, structures and the people associated with it
- **Legal records** – will, deed, title, mortgage, utility records, building permits, subdivision history, census records

WHERE TO LOOK:

- **City Directories and Telephone Books**

The Central Resource Library has city directories for the metro, including Kansas City, Kansas from 1887 - current; Kansas City, Missouri from 1887 - current; Olathe from 1962 – current and Johnson County from 1955 – current. In addition, telephone books are available for the Kansas City metro from 1954 – current and Johnson County from 1976 – current.

- **Published city or county histories**

Many cities or counties publish histories about the area. Check to see if your property is mentioned.

- **Kansas Vertical File**

The Kansas Vertical File is a collection of newspaper clippings from the KC Star and other local newspapers arranged by topic areas such as neighborhoods, city histories and historic buildings.

- **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**

The Regional Reference collection has Sanborn Fire Insurance maps on microfilm dating before 1950. The maps include cities and towns in Kansas and Missouri.

- **General Maps and Atlases**

The Library maintains a map cabinet with general topographical maps of different locations within the metro area for various timeframes. In addition, the 1874, 1902 and 1922 Johnson County atlases are available in print at the library or online at www.jocohistory.net.

- **Photographs**

Search www.jocohistory.net for photographs of similar buildings or people related to your house.

- **Your neighbors**

Talk to your neighbors or the previous owners of the house to obtain clues of the builder, time period or other needed information.

- **The house**

Look in the closets, attics, drawers and other forgotten storage areas for paperwork such as a title, deed, land transfer, mortgage or other records.

Guides on how to conduct house research, available for checkout from the library:

728.37 Light

House histories: A guide to tracing the genealogy of your home.

Conduct research on your house using the clues it provides.

907.2 Green

Discovering the history of your house and your neighborhood.

Learn to write a narrative story about a piece of land or house using this manual by Betsy Green.

Architecture style books available for checkout from the library:

720.9 Glancey

Glancey, Jonathan. **Architecture.**

Glancey gives a basic introduction to the history and basic elements of architectural styles worldwide.

720.97 Sachs

Sachs, David H. & Ehrlich, George. **Guide to Kansas Architecture.**

This title provides a county by county overview of significant architecture in the state of Kansas.

720.973

Williams, H. L. **A guide to old American homes, 1700-1900.**

As the title implies, a guide to homes in America from 1700-1900.

724.5 Tinniswo

Tinniswood, Adrian. **The arts & crafts house.**

Tinniswood explains the history and design of the arts and crafts style of home.

728.0973 Foster 2004

Foster, Gerald. **American houses: a field guide to the architecture of the home.**
Use this guide to decide what architectural style was used on your dwelling.

728.0973 McAlester

McAlester, Virginia. **A field guide to American houses.**
McAlester presents early to contemporary American houses and how to identify them within your neighborhood.

728.27

Wood, Ernest. **Historic homes of America.**
Wood looks at some of the historic homes throughout America.

728.37 Abrams

Wilson, Richard. **The colonial revival house.**
Overview of the colonial revival house as written by Richard Wilson.

728.37 Houses 2002

Howe, Jeffrey. **The houses we live in: an identification guide to the history and style of American domestic architecture.**
Compare the many styles of American architecture through the color photographs and history detailed in this guide by Jeffrey Howe.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records
<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>

House Histories articles from about.com
<http://genealogy.about.com/library/weekly/aa070802a.htm>

Cindi's List of general resources for conducting house history research
<http://www.cyndislist.com/houses.htm>

Kansas State Historical Society House History checklist
<http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/househistorychecklist.pdf>

Kansas State Historical Society Researching old buildings
<http://www.kshs.org/resource/oldbuildings.htm>

Researching the history of your house bibliography by David Langenberg
<http://www2.lib.udel.edu/subj/hist/resguide/house-bib.htm>

Charles Rupert's Old House History
<http://www.oldhousehistory.com/>

LOCAL RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

Office of the Appraiser, Johnson County

11811 S Sunset Dr, Suite 2100

Olathe, KS 66061

913-715-9000

Monday-Friday 8-5pm

<http://appraiser.jocogov.org/>

Records and Tax Administration

111 S Cherry St, Suite 1200

Olathe, KS 66061

913-715-0775

Monday-Friday 8-5pm

<http://rta.jocogov.org/>

Automated Information Mapping System (AIMS)

111 S Cherry St, Suite 3500

Olathe, KS 66061

913-715-1600

<http://aims.jocogov.org/>

Johnson County Museum

6305 Lackman

Shawnee, KS 66217

913-715-2550

Tuesday-Saturday 10-4:30pm, Sunday 1-4:30pm

<http://www.jocomuseum.org/>

Olathe Public Library

201 E Park

Olathe, KS 66061

913-971-6850

Monday-Thursday 9-9pm, Friday 9-6pm,

Saturday 9-5pm, Sunday 1-5pm

<http://www.olathelibrary.org/>

Johnson County Archives and Records Management

19310 W 159th St, Suite 1000

Olathe, KS 66062

913-715-0400

Monday-Friday 9-4:30pm

<http://archives.jocogov.org/>

Kansas State Historical Society

6425 SW 6th Ave

Topeka, KS 66615

785-272-8681

Tuesday-Saturday 9-4:30pm

<http://www.kshs.org/>

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Materials Available:

- Real estate values
- General building information
- Statistics by city

- Land records of ownership
- Tax rolls, include legal description, ownership
- Mortgages and Liens
- Military discharges

- Commercial maps
- Residential maps
- Tax identification number
- Utility locations
- School districts

- General historical maps and photos
- Family histories and oral histories
- Preservation study of Johnson County buildings

- Photograph collection
- Kansas Room
- City directories
- Local histories

- Marriage records
- Probate court records
- Records of inventory
- Records of settlement
- Plat books
- Birth, death and divorce records

- Newspapers
- Photographs
- State census