

Researching the History of Your Home

Exploring the history of your home can be a fascinating and fulfilling project. As you undertake your research, you will experience the excitement of learning more about the previous owners, the neighborhood and the community. The staff of the Downtown Reference Department of the St. Joseph Public Library is here to help you every step of the way.

Questions you may consider as you begin to explore your home's past...

- When was the house built?
- Who was the architect or builder?
- What style is it?
- What did the house look like originally?
- Who was the original owner or occupant?
- How does the house fit into the history of the neighborhood and city?

Answers to these questions will come from a variety of sources. At the Downtown Reference Department, the following sources can prove to be remarkably helpful as you conduct your research.

General Information

Reference Department

Location

Downtown Library
927 Felix
St. Joseph, MO 64501

Telephone

816-232-8151

Hours

Monday-Wednesday
9 a.m.-9 p.m.
Thursday-Saturday
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday
Closed

City Hall

Location

1100 Frederick Ave.
St. Joseph, MO 64501

Telephone

Historic Preservation 816-271-4797

Hours

Monday- Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Call for appointment.

Buchanan County Courthouse

Location

411 Jules Street
St. Joseph, MO 64501

Telephone

Recorder of Deeds 816-271-1437



St. Joseph Public Library

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at the
**St. Joseph
Public
Library**

*Downtown Library
Reference Department
927 Felix Street
St. Joseph, Missouri
64501*

MAPS/ATLASES

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

These maps show what buildings existed in a specific area at a certain time. The original shape of the building is illustrated, allowing you to pinpoint any remodeling that might have occurred. Using these maps also makes it possible to trace the development of an entire neighborhood.

Format: Book & Microfilm

Location: Reference Room

Date: Book, 1911 w/updates. Microfilm, 1883, 1888, 1897, 1904, 1911

ATLASES

Atlas of the City of St. Joseph, 1884

Atlas of Buchanan County, MO 1877, 1913, 1942

These atlases include lot numbers for all housing additions of St. Joseph. Major parcels of land are labeled with the owner's name.

Format: Book

Location: Reference Room Atlas Case

DIRECTORIES

CITY DIRECTORIES

Forerunners of telephone books, city directories list people at their home address. Occupations, names of spouses, and marital status may also be included. Starting in 1898 (though inconsistent), buildings were indexed by address, so you can find who was living at an address in a given year.

Format: Book; microfilm

Location: Field Room and Reference Room

Date: Paper: 1859 to date, with some gaps.

Microfilm: 1859 to 1940, with some gaps.

ST. JOSEPH BLUE BOOK

This "Social Register of St. Joseph" included names, addresses and phone numbers for the city's most prominent citizens.

Format: Book

Location: Reference Storage R 917.7845 Sa2

Date: 1893-94, 1903, 1905

NEWSPAPERS

The following St. Joseph newspapers are available on microfilm: the Daily Gazette, the News-Press, the Weekly Gazette, the Gazette-Herald, the Morning Herald, Weekly Herald, the Morning Herald and Daily Tribune, the Morning Daily Herald, the Daily Herald, the Evening News, the Daily News, the News & Press, the News-Press/Gazette, the Weekly West, and the Weekly Free Democrat.

Format: Microfilm

Location: Reference Room

Date: Titles span different dates, the entire collection covers roughly 1845 to present.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

The library has several files of newspaper clippings on historic homes and historic districts of St. Joseph, as well as files on two historic St. Joseph architects, Edmond Jacques Eckel, and Harvey Ellis. Also on file are surveys of several historic St. Joseph neighborhoods.

Format: Clipping files

Location: Reference Room

BOOKS

The Architecture of St. Joseph

Published by the Albrecht-Kemper Art Museum, this work features black-and-white photos of the city's most well-known residences.

Format: Book

Location: Reference Room (Ready Ref.)
R 720.977813 R21

Date: 1974

Toni Prawl Books

Local historian, Toni Prawl, has written extensively about the architects and architecture of St. Joseph.

Historic Architects of St. Joseph

Location: Ref. Room (Ready Ref.) R 720.9 HIS

Date: 1989

E.J. Eckel: The Education of a Beaux Arts Architect and His Practice in Missouri.

Location: Ref. Room (Ready Ref.)

R 720.924 PRA

Date: 1994

SCRAPBOOKS

Historic Houses and Buildings in St. Joseph and Platte Co.

Format: Scrapbook

Location: Reference Room (Ready Ref.)

Date: 1940's-1950's

Scrapbook of St. Joseph Gardens, Buildings and Trees.

Format: Scrapbook

Location: Reference Room (Ready Ref.)

Date: 1930's-1940's

SOURCES OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

CITY HALL

Historic Preservation Office

Here you will find building permit records from 1888 to the 1960's. These records include the permit date and the names of permit applicants. The office also has National Register nominations for several St. Joseph properties/districts. Also available are building inventories for several neighborhoods, including Hall Street, Robidoux Hill, Cathedral Hill, Museum Hill, Patee Town, Harris Addition/Clay Street and Downtown. There is a 24-48 hour wait for permit requests.

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Recorder of Deeds

Land records dating back to 1839 can be found here. The land record for your property lists the original buyer and seller but does not have information about the house itself.

YOUR NEIGHBORS

Talking with people who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time could yield valuable information.