

A Checklist for Property Research in Cleveland & Cuyahoga County

[Online Users Click Here for Helpful Internet Sites](#)

Current property valuations and ownership can be found on the
[Cuyahoga County Auditor's Website](#)

Digitized property transfer records dating to the 1890s can be found on the
[Cuyahoga County Recorder's Office Website](#)



CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Prepared by the History & Geography Department
Cleveland Public Library
Revised January 1, 2010

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A Checklist for Property Research in Cleveland & Cuyahoga County

Where to Start?

The resources outlined in this guide can be used to conduct simple research, such as looking up an address in an old city directory, or more complex research, such as tracing the chain of ownership of a property, finding old photographs for a restoration project, locating previous owners, etc.

Property researchers must first give some thought to what they want to know about their subject property. Are you looking for something very specific, such as the building permit for a house, or do you want to know “everything?” The next thing to consider is how much time you are willing to invest in your research. Often, people start with a simple question that leads over time to a comprehensive research project with many rewarding discoveries.

If you are new to historical property research and would like expert guidance, please refer to the selection of books listed at the end of this guide.

How is this Guide Organized?

Resources in the Cleveland Public Library, Main Library, are listed first. They are organized by building (Louis Stokes Wing and Main Library Building), starting with the History and Geography Department. Many of the resources in this guide require assistance from a knowledgeable staff person. You are encouraged to ask questions of the staff in the various agencies listed.

Throughout the course of your research, you will find it very helpful to keep a written log of every piece of information you find and where you find it. It is also helpful to note the date and the source on the back of every photocopied record and to paperclip related papers together.

Information about Cleveland Street Names and Address Numbers

In 1906, most street names and all street address numbers in the city of Cleveland were changed to conform to a new citywide plan. During the latter half of the 19th century, many villages and townships were annexed to the city of Cleveland. At the time of annexation, each of these places—such as Glenville and Ohio City—had its own system of street names and numbers. When these places became a part of Cleveland, the multiple systems in use made navigation in the growing city difficult. It was not uncommon to have multiple streets with the same name. In 1905, Cleveland City Council approved a standardized plan for all existing street names and numbers.

To convert a particular address to its post-1906 equivalent, use the book *Old and New Street Numbers*, available in the History & Geography Department and also online: <http://cplorg.cdmhost.com/u/?p128201coll0,387>

It is important to keep in mind that some street name and address changes did occur prior to the adoption of the 1905 plan. These changes are harder to track but can be uncovered with diligent research in sources such as the proceedings of Cleveland City Council.

Note also that many buildings, especially commercial buildings, have more than one address number. The address on a building may not be the address under which the original construction permit was applied for. It sometimes helps to check a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the entire range of a building’s addresses, including the side street addresses of corner buildings.

- **Cleveland City Directories (1837-1980).** Consists of an alphabetic listing of residents, businesses, public buildings, schools, societies, etc. for Cleveland and some suburbs. Entries for residences include name, occupation, and other information. Business listings vary, but sometimes include incorporation date, officers, etc. **Starting with the 1929 directory, properties are listed by address at the end of each volume**, enabling the researcher to quickly determine the adult occupant(s) of a property. Check each volume to determine geographic coverage. No directory for Cleveland proper was published in the following years: 1838-45, 1847-48, 1851-52, 1853-55, 1858-59, 1862-63, 1933, 1945-46, 1948-50, 1952, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1973, and 1975-76.

The History & Geography Department has the following directories in paper copy:

Cleveland City Directory: 1881-1929 (incomplete) and 1936-1977

Cleveland East & West Suburban City Directories: 1964-1980

PHOTOCOPYING: To preserve original directory volumes, patrons are permitted to make photocopies and scans *only from the microfilm copy of the directories*, available in Microform Center (Main Library Bldg, 1st floor).

ONLINE ACCESS: CPL *does not* have online digital copies of Cleveland city directories. *Ancestry.com* has several digitized Cleveland city directories; however patrons need a personal subscription to access this database. The similar-but-not-the-same *Ancestry Library Edition* database, *provided free by the Library*, does not contain these directories. There are scattered individual digitized directories available online, findable through a Google search.

NOTE: The following resources are available on microfilm in the Microform Center:

- 1.) All Cleveland City Directories, 1837-1980 (includes all Cleveland East and West Suburban editions)
- 2.) All Cleveland Telephone Directories, 1880 to the present
- 3.) All Cleveland Suburban City Directories (individual directories for Cleveland suburbs), 1924-1974
- 4.) All City Directories published in the United States before 1860
- 5.) A large selection of City Directories from throughout Ohio (1861-1960s) and the United States (1861-1883)

- **Haines Criss-Cross Directory (1960 to last year).** A listing, *by address*, of residences and businesses in the Cleveland area. Information varies, but basically includes name, address and telephone number. History & Geography's set of criss-cross directories covers 1960 to last year, but also includes two early directories from 1923 and 1926. The Business, Economics & Labor Department houses the current year's criss-cross directory.
- **Index to Cleveland and Ohio Regional History & Biography (1900s-1975).** An index to a variety of sources (books, magazines, etc.) on all aspects of Cleveland and Ohio history and biography. (On microfiche.)
- **Newspaper Clipping Files: Cleveland and Ohio (1920s-1975).** Articles on all aspects of Cleveland and Ohio history, including files on well-known houses and buildings. (On microfiche.)
- **Biography Clipping File: Cleveland & Ohio (1920s-1975).** Articles on *prominent* Clevelanders. (On microfiche.)
- **Cleveland News Index (1976 to date).** An index to Cleveland newspapers. Available only in paper copy in the History & Geography Department for 1976-1982. Available only as an online database, 1983 to date.
- **Annals of Cleveland (1818-1876, 1933-1938).** An index to Cleveland newspapers, the *Annals* can be searched by building name, architect name or any other pertinent piece of information.
- **Old & New Street Numbers book (Ref F499 .C675 O42 1905x).** In 1905/1906, most street names and all street address numbers were changed according to a standardized street naming and numbering plan. Use this book if: 1.) You have a pre-1906 address of a house/building and want to know what it was changed to in 1906, or 2.) You need to determine the pre-1906 address of a house/building.
Online Access: This resource is available online. The URL is <http://cplorg.cdmhost.com/u/?p128201coll0,387>
- **Dedicated and accepted Cleveland streets card file (Ref F499 .C675 D33 2005).** A "dedicated street" is a public thoroughfare or right of way dedicated or deeded to the city. Most roads were accepted by Cleveland City Council. Some older roads were accepted by the then-existing towns and villages which were later annexed to the city of Cleveland, and whose existing roads became the responsibility of Cleveland. Each date of acceptance should theoretically correspond to an issue of the official proceedings of the Cleveland City Council (*The City Record*) in which the official action of accepting each street was recorded.

- **Hopkins Plat Maps (1912-1957).** Plat maps can help to date a building and to provide information about property allotments, allotment numbers, shapes of structures, property dimensions and sometimes ownership. Map Collection owns city books, 1912-1938; county books, 1914-1957.
Online Access: A selection of CPL's original Hopkins Plat Maps is available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.
- **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1874-1973).** Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps can help to date a building and to provide information about changes to a property, such as porch additions or removals. Sanborn maps also show building material (brick, stone, or wood frame), number of stories, and other details about the structure. Map Collection owns original paper copies of Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1886 (corrected to 1894) to 1919 (corrected through 1941) and an extensive microfilm collection of maps covering Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and *cities and counties throughout the State of Ohio* dating from 1874 to 1973.
Online Access: A selection of CPL's original Sanborn Insurance maps is available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.
A comprehensive set of black and white Sanborn Insurance maps for the state of Ohio is available through the "Sanborn Insurance Maps" database available through the Library's Website and remotely to CLEVNET cardholders.
- **Real Estate Atlas of Cuyahoga County (1978) (Ref HD268.C6 R421x).** This resource includes all of the tax maps, as well as the title sheets, for Cuyahoga County as they appeared in 1978. The title sheets can be used to determine property ownership in 1978 and dating back one or two changes in ownership. (The title sheets are photocopies of the title sheets in the Map Room of the County Auditor's Office.) If you wish to do ownership research before and after this book's coverage, you will need to view the records at the County Auditor's Office. See the County Auditor's section below for more information.
- **Real Estate Atlas of Cuyahoga County (1980 and 1982 partial) (Ref HD268.C6 R421x).** The 1980 edition includes only title sheets for properties east of the Cuyahoga River. The 1982 edition includes the title sheets for all properties in the county but does not include the map sheets.
- **Real Estate Solutions Residential Property Information (1987 to last year) (Ref HD268.C6 R42x).** Current edition is in the Business Economics & Labor Dept. See Business, Economics & Labor Department section of this brochure for a description of this item.
- **Realty Atlas Tax Maps (1963, 1981, 1985, 1988, 1994, 1996, 1997-1999 & 2001 to date) (Ref G1398.C9 R42x).** These tax maps for Cuyahoga County can be used to determine permanent parcel number (PPN) for residential and commercial property. The PPNs for residential property can be cross-referenced to current ownership records in the Business, Economics and Labor Department (BEL). See BEL's section in this guide for more information.
- **Atlases & Maps of Cleveland & Cuyahoga County.** The Map Collection houses an extensive collection of maps, including land ownership maps, of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County dating back to the 1790s. Of particular note is the **1874 atlas of Cuyahoga County**, featuring superb engravings of residences, hotels, stores and landmarks. (Note: History Dept. owns an **index** to the landowners included in this important map. Call Number F497.C9 I53 1983x) Consult the Map Collection staff to see if any of these would be helpful to you.
Online Access: A selection of Cleveland area maps is available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.
- **Forest Hill Architectural Home Plans, Maps, and Subdivision Technical Drawings, 1930-1960.** This collection consists of 786 plans relating to the historic Forest Hills subdivision in East Cleveland. Included are architectural plans for homes; maps and technical drawings by architect Andrew J. Thomas for the Abeyton Realty Corporation; landscape, grading topographical, lot, street layout, water supply, gas layout and drainage plans; and Ohio Bell Telephone Company plant engineering street plans.

MAP COLLECTION, continued

- **Aerial Photographs.** Map Collection owns a complete set of aerial photographs for Cuyahoga County (1951, 1977, 1978, 1988 and high altitude, 1989-1991) and City of Cleveland (1991).

Online Access: Aerial photographs for Cuyahoga County for 1951 (originals also owned by CPL) and 1959 (originals not owned by CPL) are available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.

- **Cleveland Parks Collection, 1888-1945.** A large collection of technical drawings for the developments of Cleveland city parks featuring landscape designs, lighting designs, grading, topographical, and drainage plans for large neighborhood parks, the park and boulevard system, the Group Plan, University Circle, the Cleveland Cultural Gardens, playgrounds, cemeteries, and recreational centers.

Online Access: A selection of maps is available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPT. (Louis Stokes Wing, 5th Fl.)

(216) 623-2860
social.sciences@cpl.org

- **List of Electors/List of Voters (Cuyahoga County, Ohio)**
(Ref. JK 5591 .A1 C89x)

These printed volumes include the names and addresses of all registered voters in the city of Cleveland and some suburbs. Arranged by voting ward* and precinct, then alphabetically by name. CPL owns: 1892 (wards 1-40), 1894 (wards 1-42), 1908 (wards 1-26, also including Bedford and Lakewood after ward 26), 1909 (wards 1-26), 1910 (wards 1-26), 1911 (wards 1-26; also including Bedford and Lakewood after ward 26), 1912 (wards 1-26, also including Bedford, Lakewood, Newburgh and Rocky River after ward 26), 1916 (only includes Bedford, East Cleveland, Lakewood and Village of West Park), 1917 (wards 1-26, also including Bedford and Lakewood after ward 26), 1922 (wards 1-32), 1931 (wards 1-33). Volumes for 1908-1917 include separate column for women.

[NOTE: Volumes for 1909-1912 are shelved with folios.] Other volumes available at the Cuyahoga County Archives. *****For help with ward maps, ask in Map Collection (Louis Stokes Wing, 6th floor).*****

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION (Louis Stokes Wing, 4th Fl.)

(216) 623-2871
photos@cpl.org

- **Photographs.** The Photograph Collection houses approximately 100,000 photographs of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County subjects, from a variety of sources. Recent additions include the Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals photographs, which date to 1929, and Cleveland Urban Renewal photographs from the 1960s-70s.

Online Access: A selection of CPL's Cleveland-area photographs is available on the library's website. Go to www.cpl.org, select DO RESEARCH, then CPL IMAGE COLLECTIONS.

**CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
BUSINESS, ECONOMICS & LABOR DEPT. (Louis Stokes Wing, 2nd Fl.)**

**(216) 623-2827
business@cpl.org**

- **Real Estate Solutions Residential Property Information (current) (Ref HD268.C6 R42x).** This microfiche resource, updated regularly with print supplements, can be used to determine information such as a physical description of the subject property, purchase price, previous purchase price, tax valuation, lot size, etc. It is searchable by permanent parcel number, owner's name and address. **Previous editions back to 1987 are housed in the Map Collection.**
- **Haine's Criss-Cross Directory (current year only).** See History & Geography Dept. for older volumes.
- **Cleveland Corporation Files (Ref HD 2798.O5 C42 1988x).** 193 microfilm reels of news clippings and other information, including files from the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, dating to the early 1900s.
- **Who's Who File of Cleveland Businessmen**
Periodical and newspaper clippings on prominent Cleveland civic leaders and business men and women. Clipped from a wide variety of local and national journals from the 1930s through the mid-1970s. Alphabetical by name.

**CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
MICROFORM CENTER (Main Bldg., 1st Fl.)**

**(216) 623-2910
microform.center@cpl.org**

- **Cuyahoga County Auditor's tax duplicates, 1819-1869. (F497.C9 C88 1819a)** Documents land ownership in Cuyahoga County. No records for 1820-1822. Printed guide to holdings is in History Dept. (F497.C9 T39 2002).
- **Cleveland Telephone Directories (1880 to date).** Includes all available residential (White Pages) and business (Yellow Pages) directories.
- **City Directories** [See History & Geography Department section for description.]
 - 1.) All Cleveland City Directories, 1837-1977
 - 2.) All Cleveland East Suburban (1964-79) and Cleveland West Suburban (1964-80) City Directories
 - 3.) All Individual Cleveland Suburban City Directories as follows:
 - Bay Village:** 1939, 1940, 1944, 1950
 - Bedford:** 1924 and v.1-7 (1929-1952)
 - +Includes **Bedford Township** starting with v. 5 (1948) and **Bedford Heights, Oakwood and Walton Hills** starting with v.7 (1952).
 - Berea:** v.1 (1948), v.2 (1951), 1954, 1958, 1959, 1961, 1963
 - +1954 edition includes **Brook Park, Middleburg Hts, Strongsville, Olmsted Falls, and Westview.** 1958-63 include **Middleburg Hts.**
 - Chagrin Valley:** 1973-74
 - Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, Shaker Heights, University Heights and South Euclid:** v.1-8 (1949-1960) and 1961-63
 - +**Lyndhurst** is included starting with v. 6 (1958)
 - Euclid:** 1942 and vols. 1-11 (1947-1962), and 1963
 - Fairview Park, Parkview, North Olmsted, Westlake:** 1953
 - Garfield Heights:** 1954-55, 1956-57, and 1962
 - Lakewood,** including **Bay Village, Fairview Park and Rocky River:** v. 1-10 (1949-61) and 1962, 1963
 - +**Westlake** is included starting with v. 7 (1958) and **North Olmsted** starting with 1962
 - Lyndhurst:** 1952-53, 1954-55
 - Parma:** 1941, **Parma & Parma Heights:** v.1-12 (1946-62), 1963
 - Rocky River:** 1954-55
 - 4.) All City Directories published in the United States before 1860
 - 5.) A large selection of City Directories from throughout Ohio (1861-1960s) and the United States (1861-1883)
- **Cleveland City Council: Council Proceedings, 1873-1913*. The City Record, 1914 to date.** The official record of Cleveland City Council, this publication describes the overall physical improvements done throughout the city, including streets, sidewalks, lighting, etc.

*Note: council proceedings for 1836-1872 are available only in the Public Administration Library at City Hall. See separate description of the Public Administration Library in this brochure.

MICROFORM CENTER, continued

- **Cleveland (Ohio). Board of Assessors of Real Property: The Official Record of the First Quadrennial Assessment of Real Property for the City of Cleveland (1912) (Available on Reel 6 [item #72] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** Contains Maps of the Thirty-Nine Districts and Key Map of Cleveland giving the Assessed Land Values, also a List of Owners, and the Total Value of Every Piece of Property in East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Lakewood, Newburgh City, South Newburgh and Brooklyn Heights. Original Volumes are in the Public Administration Library.
- **Ohio City. Office of the Recorder: Assessments, 1838-1848 (Available on Reel 600 [item #35] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** Provides the names of Ohio City residents and their addresses for 1838-1848. Original volumes are in the Public Administration Library.
- **Ohio City Council: Minutes, 1837-1854 (Available on Reel 4 [item #38] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** The official record of the City Council of Ohio City. Includes city ordinances and resolutions, tax duplicate and journal. Original volumes are in the Public Administration Library.

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY FINE ARTS & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPT. (Main Bldg., 3rd Floor)

(216) 623-2848
fine.arts@cpl.org

The Fine Arts Department maintains an extensive architecture collection, comprised of books, periodicals, vertical files and architectural plans. The following are key resources for local architecture research:

- **Oviatt Architecture Index.** An index to the *Ohio Architect and Builder*, 1903 to 1918. A valuable source of information for important buildings constructed during this period.
- **Architectural plans.** The Department has architectural plans for a small number of local buildings, including extensive coverage of the work of local architect **Clarence Mack**.
- **Forest Hill Architectural Home Plans, Maps, and Subdivision Technical Drawings, 1930-1960.** SEE: Map Collection (page 5).
- **Newspaper Clipping Files: Art & Architecture.** Dating to the 1920s, this file includes clippings and other publications related to art and architecture in Cleveland.
- **Index to Cleveland Art and Architecture.** Dating to the 1920s, this card-file index, arranged alphabetically by subject, includes references to a wide variety of sources.

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES (Louis Stokes Wing, 10th Fl.)

(216) 623-2936
archives@cpl.org

The Archives is a part of the Library's Planning & Research Dept., a non-public department that supports the work of the Library's administration. The Archives houses all existing records (including approx. 1,000 boxes of correspondence and more than 20,000 photos) documenting all aspects of the operation of the Cleveland Public Library back to its founding in 1869. The Archives features an extensive collection of architectural plans, photographs, postcards, slides, architect correspondence, administrative reports, annual reports, Library board minutes, etc., relating to **every building ever built, owned or rented** by the Cleveland Public Library, back to 1869-- including storefront rentals.

Note: The Archives *does not* house records relating to any buildings other than those occupied by the Cleveland Public Library. The Archives is staffed on a part-time basis; public access is **by appointment only**. Please call or e-mail the department if you are conducting research on a current or former Library building.

**CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY –
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LIBRARY
(Located in Cleveland City Hall – Room 100)
601 LAKESIDE AVENUE, CLEVELAND, 44114**

**(216) 623-2919
publicadmin@cpl.org**

- **Cleveland City Council: The City Record, 1836-1872. Council Proceedings, 1873-1913. The City Record, 1914 to date.** The official record of Cleveland City Council, this publication dating to 1836 describes the overall physical improvements done throughout the city, including streets, sidewalks, lighting, etc. (Some years available only on microfilm.)
- **Ohio City. Office of the Recorder: Assessments, 1838-1848 (Available on Reel 600 [item #35] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** Provides the names of Ohio City residents and their addresses. Public Administration Library also owns the original volumes.
- **Ohio City Council: Minutes, 1837-1854 (Available on Reel 4 [item #38] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** The official record of the City Council of Ohio City. Includes city ordinances and resolutions, tax duplicate and journal. Public Administration Library also owns the original volumes.
- **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1886, 1887, 1896, 1903.** On microfilm. All are *uncorrected* versions.
- **Cleveland (Ohio). Board of Assessors of Real Property. The Official Record of the First Quadrennial Assessment of Real Property for the City of Cleveland (1912) (Available on Reel 6 [item #72] of the Cleveland Documents Microfilm Project).** Contains Maps of the Thirty-Nine Districts and Key Map of Cleveland giving the Assessed Land Values, also a List of Owners, and the Total Value of Every Piece of Property in East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Lakewood, Newburgh City, South Newburgh and Brooklyn Heights. Public Administration Library also owns the original volumes.
- **Old & New Street Numbers book (Ref F499.C675 O42 1905x).**

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY OTHER MAIN LIBRARY DEPARTMENTS

Information about specific kinds of buildings can often be found in the subject department where information about the type of work they do is found. For example, to find information on:

Theaters: Visit the Literature Department.

Hospitals: Visit the Science & Technology Department.

Factories, Businesses, Department Stores: Visit the Business, Economics & Labor Department.

Schools, Sports Facilities, Prisons: Visit the Social Sciences Department.

CLEVELAND CITY HALL, LANDMARKS COMMISSION
601 LAKESIDE AVENUE, ROOM 519, CLEVELAND, 44114
Robert Keiser, Secretary (rkeiser@city.cleveland.oh.us)

(216) 664-2531

Property research records at Cleveland City Hall pertain only to buildings in the city of Cleveland. Records for buildings built in areas that were later annexed to the city of Cleveland may not be recorded here. If you are researching a building outside the city of Cleveland, consult your local city hall for similar information and records.

- **Cleveland Landmarks Commission files.** Information about Cleveland landmark buildings, sites and historic districts.
- **Ohio Historic Inventory Forms.** The Commission maintains an information sheet for many Cleveland buildings deemed of historic importance, mostly commercial or public buildings.
- **National Register Forms.** The Commission maintains an information sheet for each Cleveland building submitted for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Architect/Project Index.** An alphabetic list of architects and their projects in Cleveland, compiled by the Landmarks Commission. Includes a biographical profile of each architect.
- **Cleveland Street Name Changes Card File Index.** An alphabetic index to historical street name changes.

CLEVELAND CITY HALL, DEPT. OF BUILDING & HOUSING
RECORDS ROOM – (Room 517)
601 LAKESIDE AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

(216) 664-4355

- **Building Permits.** Building permits provide pertinent information dealing with the building or alteration of Cleveland structures, after 1888, including the dimensions of the structure, location, estimated cost of construction, the architect, the builder, the owner and the purpose of the building or alteration. The “Index of Building Permits” is a set of red books prepared in the 1930s by Works Progress Administration (WPA) staff. This index gives the permit numbers, location and a very brief description of every permit issued before the 1930s. The index is arranged alphabetically by street name.
- **Demolition Permits.** Demolition permits dating to the late 1800s for buildings demolished in Cleveland.

CLEVELAND CITY ARCHIVES
205 West St. Clair Avenue (West of Ontario Street)
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113
Martin Hauserman, Archivist (mhauserman@clevelandcitycouncil.org)

Phone (216) 664-3054 - Fax (216) 420-8139
Access is by appointment only.

- **Blueprint Collection.** The Archives houses more than 12,500 sets of blueprints for public and commercial buildings and a small number of houses, dating to the early 1900s. **To determine if blueprints exist for a building, you must submit a written request. This is done by indicating in an e-mail or letter that you are making a “public records request for blueprints” for the address in question.** Address the request to City Clerk, Clerk of Council, Cleveland City Council, 601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 220, Cleveland, Ohio, 44114. Fax: 216-664-3837. It will take a week or so to retrieve the plans from storage. Plans may be photographed by you or you may arrange with Archives to have them reproduced professionally at your expense.

**CITY OF CLEVELAND, DEPT. OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
1201 LAKESIDE AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR (SALES PERMIT DEPARTMENT)
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114**

(216) 664-2586

- **Public Utilities Records.** Utilities installation information for houses in Cuyahoga County from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. Besides recording information such as the number of baths and water closets found in every house, some individual files disclose the number of rooms listed in different structures at the time of installation, metering, etc.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY AUDITOR'S OFFICE – MAP ROOM (Room 310)
CUYAHOGA COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE (Room 216)
CUYAHOGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
1219 ONTARIO AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113**

(216) 443-7000

(216) 443-7318

County records enable the researcher to determine ownership, terms of sale and other details about a property. The **three basic steps** involved in county records research are as follows:

- 1.) Determine address and permanent parcel number to be searched.
- 2.) Make a complete list of the names of previous owners and the dates of property transfer using the map record books in the County Auditor's Office Map Room (Room 310). Records date to the early 1800s. The earliest books are available in the Map Room on microfiche only. The original volumes are available at the Cuyahoga County Archives.
- 3.) Take the information gathered in step #2 to the County Recorder's Office (Room 216) to view the actual property deeds that were signed and filed each time the subject property changed ownership. Property deeds will give you the allotment transfer price, the fully signed terms agreed upon by the old (grantor) and new (grantee) owner(s), the dimensions of the property sold and any unusual legal stipulations considered part of the property transfer. The deed records make no reference to buildings on the property sites involved. However, the transfer price frequently hints as to the value of a structure located on a particular piece of property at a given period in time.

Note: The County's current records, as well as many of its older holdings, are gradually being made available on the Internet. See the ELECTRONIC RESOURCES section at the end of this brochure for more information.

A detailed description of property research through county records is available on the Cuyahoga County website: centralservices.cuyahogacounty.us/archives/property.htm

PERMANENT PARCEL NUMBERS

The permanent parcel number (PPN) is a number assigned to each piece of property in the county. It is composed of three parts: a map book (tax district) number, a map book page (section) number and an assessor's parcel number. For example: 001-02-03 would be in tax district 1, section 2, property number 3. These numbers correspond to the books in Map Room of the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office and do not change.

You may obtain the permanent parcel number from several sources, including a deed, tax bill or reappraisal notice. The staff in the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Map Room (Room 310) can help you find the number. If the property in question is a residence, you may also look up the number by address or name of property owner in the County Auditor's website: auditor.cuyahogacounty.us/repi/default.asp

CUYAHOGA COUNTY ARCHIVES
2905 FRANKLIN AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113

(216) 443-7250

- **Auditor's Maps, ca. 1860-1950.** The Archives owns the original copies of the County Auditor's land ownership maps (also available on microfiche at the County Auditor's Office). Auditor's Maps document land ownership and dates of title transfer. See Cuyahoga County Auditor's Section for more information.
- **County Property Cards.** Two surveys of all tax-assessed properties in Cuyahoga County were done by the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office in the 1930s and the 1960s. The more recent survey cards include a small photograph of the subject property. Both surveys provide information on building dimensions and layout, lighting, plumbing, property owner, rental income, roofing, tiling, estimate construction date and the assessed value of the property. An address and permanent parcel number (see section on Cuyahoga County Recorder's Office) are needed to request these cards.
- **Cuyahoga County Auditor's Tax Records (tax duplicates) & Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Tax Records, 1820-1870 (incomplete), 1870 and after.** Tax duplicates are tax records issued one or twice a year depending on the year in question. These bound volumes offer information concerning individual property ownership and property value. Divisions in tax books were made according to owner, allotment, allotment number, ward or township depending on the year, county or township involved. The Treasurer's records also indicate the amount of real estate tax paid and the date of payment.
- **Cleveland City Directories, 1837-1967.** See description in Cleveland Public Library, History Dept. section.
- **Hopkins Plat Maps (various dates).** See description in Cleveland Public Library, Map Collection section.
- **Biography Clipping File: Cleveland and Ohio (1920s-1975).** Articles on *prominent* Clevelanders. This is the original paper file from the Cleveland Public Library, which has this resource on microfiche cards.
- **County Building Commission Journals, including Cuyahoga County Court House, Soldiers and Sailors Monument and certain other county buildings and bridges.**

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
2121 EUCLID AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44115
William Barrow, Librarian (w.barrow@csuohio.edu)

(216) 687-2449

web.ulib.csuohio.edu/speccoll/

- **The Cleveland Press Collection (1920s-1982).** Approximately one million newspaper clippings and half a million photographs, documenting Cleveland, Ohio and world events, arranged alphabetically by name or subject.
- **The Cleveland Union Terminal Collection.** Contains the construction records, maps and photographs chronicling the construction of the Terminal Tower complex in the 1920s. Includes information on the hundreds of buildings and houses demolished to assemble land for the project.

WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY
10825 EAST BOULEVARD, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106

(216) 721-5722

www.wrhs.org

The Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS), a **fee-based private library**, maintains the largest collection of local history documents available in Cuyahoga County. WRHS's online catalog of holdings is available through its website. Unique records of particular interest to those doing property research include:

- **Aerial photographs, covering Cleveland and northeast Ohio, 1925-1975.**
- **Architectural plans for various buildings in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, including the Walker and Weeks Collection.**
- **Manuscript collections for prominent Cleveland families.**
- **Photographs of all aspects of Cleveland neighborhoods, Cuyahoga County and Ohio.**
- **Maps and atlases of the city of Cleveland.**

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Research Databases Available Through Cleveland Public Library's Website

Ancestry Plus (In-library use only. No remote access.)

U.S. Census images 1790-1930. Censuses are taken every ten years. Censuses from 1870 forward have detailed information about the occupants of a household. Note: the 1890 Census was destroyed by fire.

Cleveland News Index (1983 to date)

An index to Cleveland newspapers and periodicals. See online description for exact coverage.

Plain Dealer (1991 to date) (available remotely to CLEVNET cardholders)

Full-text access to the Plain Dealer.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Ohio (available remotely to CLEVNET cardholders)

Detailed maps at building level for more than 400 Ohio communities from 1868 to the 1960s.

Resources Available Through The Internet

Cleveland Landmarks Register

planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/landmark/landlist.htm

A comprehensive list of Cleveland historic districts and landmarks, as designated by the City of Cleveland.

Cleveland Memory Project

www.clevelandmemory.org

A treasure-trove of photographs, books, memorabilia, etc. relating to Cleveland.

Cleveland Restoration Society

www.clevelandrestoration.org

Offers a variety of resources and programs for owners of historic properties in the Cleveland area.

Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office &

www.cuyahogacounty.us/index.asp

Cuyahoga County Recorder's Office

County Auditor search includes current ownership information (can be searched by address, price, etc.) County Recorder search includes records of deed transfer dating to the 1890s.

Historic American Buildings Survey &

Historic American Engineering Record

memory.loc.gov/ammem/hhhtml/hhhome.html

These collections document achievements in architecture, engineering and design in the United States and its territories. Includes digitized images of more than 350,000 measured drawings, photographs and histories for more than 35,000 historic structures and sites throughout the United States. Continuously expanded and updated.

National Register of Historic Places

www.cr.nps.gov/nr

Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture.

Ohio Memory Project

www.ohiomemory.org

A treasure-trove of photographs, books, memorabilia, etc. relating to Ohio. Includes a collection of images of the Great Lakes Exposition of 1936-1937 from the collection of Cleveland Public Library.

Old House Web

www.oldhouseweb.com

A variety of information resources for owners of older houses.

State Of Ohio Historic Preservation Office

www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/

Founded 1967, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office is the official historic preservation agency of the State of Ohio.

A SELECTION OF BOOKS

Fine Arts Department (Main Building, 3rd Floor)

Blumenson, John J. G.

Identifying American Architecture : a Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945
(Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press, 1995)

Fodor, Alan Charles, editor

Those Wonderful Old Houses : a Handbook for Homeowners, Recommendations for Maintaining and Rehabilitating a House in a Historic District
(Cleveland, Ohio : Ohio City Near West Development Corporation, 2003)

Light, Sally

House Histories: a Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home
(Spencertown, N.Y.: Golden Hill Press, 1989)

McAlester, Virginia

A Field Guide to American Houses
(New York : Knopf, 1984)

History & Geography Department (Louis Stokes Wing, 6th Floor)

Houses and Homes : Exploring Their History

(Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1987)

Miggins, Edward M., editor

A Guide to Studying Neighborhoods and Resources on Cleveland
(Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Public Library, 1984)

Miller, Carol Poh

The Cleveland Old House Handbook : a Guide to Maintaining Your Historic House on the Near West Side
(Cleveland, Ohio: Neighborhood Housing Services of Cleveland, 1979)