

FOR RESEARCHERS: WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

If you are researching one of these structures and wish to learn even richer stories about the people who built and lived in them, you may consider consulting these sources.

THINGS TO CHECK:

PHOTOGRAPHS – These can be valuable for showing changes made to a building over time or lack of change. Searching for photographs is best done by looking up both the address of the structure and any names of people associated with the structure. Also, consider searching through general street views that may include your building.

CITY DIRECTORIES – These can help you learn more about the people associated with your building. They work just like phone books, search for a name in the main directory or the address of your building in the street index. You can find out where a person worked, how many people were in his or her family, and whether there were additional boarders or servants living with the family.

CENSUSES – Like city directories, the census tells you more about the people associated with your building. Census information can be found online on most genealogical websites (ancestry.com, heritagequest, etc). These sites can be accessed for free at local libraries and are easy to use. Just type the name of the person you are searching for into the blank and the database will comb through censuses for you. Later years of the census reveal details about occupation, education, birthplace, and family members while early censuses (1850, 1860, 1870) tend to be less detailed.

SANBORN MAPS – Sanborn maps were created by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company to assess fire hazards in cities during the 19th and 20th Centuries. They can be accessed online at most libraries. The maps show details about individual buildings with symbols—a new researcher should consult the legend before attempting to decipher the map itself. Sanborn maps show architectural details about buildings and their sites – they show outbuildings, height (in stories), and a basic plan of the structure from above. Looking at multiple decades of Sanborns can show changes in a property over time. A great guide to using Sanborn maps is: <http://sanborn.umi.com/HelpFiles/about.html>.

OTHER HISTORIC MAPS – Other map companies plot out cities usually with a basic outline of each building in a neighborhood. These maps can be used like the Sanborns to see changes over time. Try checking the Library of Congress's online map collection or asking the historical society for specific maps of the neighborhood your building is in.

DEED RECORDS – A deed is created when a property is bought or sold. Most of the houses listed in the landmark survey forms database have deed research already started or complete. The city courthouse keeps deed books in the office of the City Clerk. It is best to start by looking up a name in the grantor index (someone selling the property) or the grantee index (someone buying the property). The index will give you a number of a deed book and a page number in this book where the deed is located. Within the text of the deed, other previous transactions and the number of the book/page they are located at is listed. Many courthouses now have some of these books on the computer as well. Deeds can reveal changes in the buildings on the site over time and help date when a structure was built. They can also give you more names of people who are associated with your building or site.

NEWSPAPERS – Newspapers can contain obituaries, advertisements, or articles which can relate to your site. The Library of Congress’s Chronicling America site has digitized some newspapers which can be searched online. Most libraries have microfilm of historic newspapers which can be searched – sometimes this had a key word index that can indicate articles of use to you. If there is no index, try checking dates that you know important things have happened in the site’s history to find articles.

PERSONAL RECORDS. INVENTORIES. AND ACCOUNTS – Wills, probate inventories (a log of all the head of house’s possessions after his or her death), and old receipt books can be helpful in learning more about the people living in your building through the things they owned. They also can help reconstruct what an interior space could have previously looked like. These are harder to track down than other documents. They can be found at the historical society, as well as the City of Charlottesville Courthouse, but not all people have them on file.

VERTICAL FILES – Some libraries and archives have files on your site or the neighborhood it is located in. Ask a librarian whether or not they may have one that relates to your structure or site. These contain anything from newspaper clippings to unpublished manuscripts, to old tour brochures.

PLACES THAT HAVE THESE THINGS:

ALBEMARLE-CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hours:

Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM (Library only)

Address:

McIntire Building

200 Second St., NE

Charlottesville, VA 22902-5245

Try checking their website: <http://www.albemarlehistory.org/>

Or email a librarian: info@albemarlehistory.org

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COURTHOUSE

Hours:

Monday- Friday: 8:30 AM-4:30 AM

Address:

315 East High Street,

Charlottesville, VA 22902

(archives are in the clerk’s office downstairs)

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA’S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY

Hours (Vary by Semester):

Monday-Thursday: 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Sunday Closed

Address:

170 McCormick Rd.

Charlottesville, VA 22903

Try checking their website: <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/small/>

Or email a librarian: library@virginia.edu

THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Hours:

Monday - Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Address:

The Library of Virginia

800 East Broad Street

Richmond, VA 23219

Try checking their website: <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/> and their digital collections at:
<http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/>

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WEBSITE

American Memory Project (maps, photos, and other useful information)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

Chronicling America (Newspapers)

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Historic American Building Survey (Photographs, measured drawings)

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/

KNOW OF ANOTHER GOOD SOURCE OF CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORY? NEED HELP LOCATING MATERIAL?

Email Mary Joy Scala (Preservation Planner) at: scala@charlottesville.org