

# How To Research Your Historic Property



CHEYENNE  
*Historic Preservation Board*



# WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

Researching your property can be as simple or as detailed as you want it to be. It all depends on your reason for doing the research and the amount of time you want to put into it.

✎ **Step One:** What do you want to know about your property and what will the information be used for: To satisfy your curiosity or to submit a National Register of Historic Places nomination form?

✎ **Step Two:** Decide whether you are interested in the property's style, architecture, and related information such as builder, architect, etc. Or perhaps you are interested in the people or events that are connected to the property.

If you decide that you want to do a National Register nomination, you will need not only information about your house, business or property; you will also need information about the neighborhood, the city, and perhaps even the county.

If you are interested in the people who lived in your house you will need to concentrate your search on records that deal with ownership and occupancy.

## Research Takes Time

Research into historic properties takes time, both per session and in the long term. Be sure also to ask at each research location for other possible sources that they might recommend. Some sources will charge a fee for copies and/or their assistance but costs should be minimal.

## WHERE TO GO

### *Preservation Records*

Located at either the City Planning Office or the State Historic Preservation Office. If your property is located within one of the City's National Historic Districts you can review the nomination forms which may tell you if your property is considered to be historically significant, if it is a contributing structure to the district, and perhaps some information on the architecture, construction, age, prior owner, etc.

### *Tax Records*

Located in the County Assessor's Office. Tell the staff you are interested in researching your property. They will help you look it up by address or owner's name. Those details can lead you to archival records, which can include things like a construction date, construction-related information, legal description, and other details affecting the value of the property.

### *Abstract Of Title*

Sometimes referred to as the chain of title, these records trace the chain of property ownership. These records are located in the Real Estate Office of the County Clerk. You will need to know the legal description of the property to access these records. Ownership is traced from the present backwards.

### *Estate Records*

These can assist in researching ownership changes. Found in the Office of the Judge of Probate.

### *Sandborn Maps*

Historic color coded fire insurance maps that provide rich details on the structures themselves. These maps may show any major remodeling that might have occurred. These maps are available at several locations including the Wyoming State Archives, State Historic Preservation Office, and the Coe Library at the University of Wyoming.

### *City & Business Directories*

Provide an alphabetical list of city residents cross referenced by address. The occupation of each resident is usually listed. Business directories list businesses in the same manner. This is a good resource for identifying residents who may be renting a property. Directories are available in the State Library, the Wyoming State Archives, and the Laramie County Public Library.

### *Building Permits*

An excellent resource for correctly identifying construction dates and dates of structural remodeling. These records may also indicate details on the architect, builder, and client. They can be found in the Building Permits Office in the Cheyenne Municipal Building.

### *Newspapers*

May provide interesting details on properties; however, it will take an enormous amount of time to read through them unless you have an idea of a significant date. They are best used once you have done other research. The Wyoming State Archives has newspapers on microfilm.

### *Photographs*

May provide you with clues on how the house looked when constructed or at some date in the past. The photo collections at the Wyoming State Archives or the American Heritage Center in Laramie would be good places to begin your search.

### *Oral Histories*

Depending on the age of the property, the significance of the owners, or important events connected with the property there may exist oral histories. If not, you may find rich sources of information by interviewing elderly relatives and neighbors of previous owners. Some oral histories about Cheyenne are available at the Wyoming State Archives and the American Heritage Center in Laramie.

## RESOURCES

- ☞ Cheyenne Historic Preservation Board
- ☞ City of Cheyenne, Building Permit Office
- ☞ Laramie County Assessor's Office
- ☞ Real Estate Office of the County Clerk
- ☞ Laramie County Public Library
- ☞ Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
- ☞ Wyoming State Archives
- ☞ American Heritage Center – University of Wyoming, Laramie
- ☞ Coe Library – University of Wyoming, Laramie
- ☞ Wyoming State Library
- ☞ Office of the Judge of Probate

*Keeping Yesterday's Doors Open to the Future.*

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