



# How to Research a House in Kane County

## KANE COUNTY OFFICES

### Recorder of Deeds Office

Kane County Government Center, Building C,  
719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva  
(630)232-5935

[www.kanecountyrecorder.net](http://www.kanecountyrecorder.net)

- Find the approximate age of a house.
- View records of property transactions, as early as 1837.
- Bring the legal description or parcel identification number, as seen on the property tax bill.

### Tax Extension Office

Kane County Government Center, Building B,  
719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva  
(630)232-5965

[www.co.kane.il.us/coc/Tax/TaxExtension.asp](http://www.co.kane.il.us/coc/Tax/TaxExtension.asp)

- View current and past property documents.
- View current and past tax bills.

### Elgin Township Assessor

729 S. McLean Blvd., Suite 100, Elgin  
(847)741-5110

[www.elgintownship.com/assessor.aspx](http://www.elgintownship.com/assessor.aspx)

- View the most recent property information.
- Data includes: year built, lot size, square footage, sale amounts, and more.

### Clerk of Circuit Court's Office

Probate Division, 540 S. Randall Rd., St. Charles  
(630) 232-3413

[www.cic.co.kane.il.us](http://www.cic.co.kane.il.us)

- Probate records (wills) may include a deed, estate details, and taxes.

## CITY OF ELGIN OFFICES

### City of Elgin Planning Department

City Hall, 150 Dexter Ct., Elgin

(847)931-5910

- Use Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps to uncover details not available elsewhere such as building shape, materials of construction, number of stories, etc. These maps are also available at Gail Borden Public Library.
- Use subdivision maps to help identify when land was subdivided.



## GAIL BORDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

House research assistance and materials are available at the Main Library. If you would like to make an appointment with a librarian, please call the Information Desk at 847-429-4680.

### *Elgin Area Memories*

This free online archive compiled by Gail Borden Public Library, the Elgin History Museum, and local organizations provides collections of historical information, pictures, and links to additional information found in the Illinois Digital Archives. [gailborden.info/elginareamemories](http://gailborden.info/elginareamemories)

### *Elgin and Kane County Directories*

A city directory is the earliest form of a phone book. Directories can be used to find names of others living at the same address, and often provide clues as to where a resident was employed. For people researching house information for "code" purposes, it may provide clues about a house being previously subdivided.

- Elgin directories dating back to 1875
- Early directories list occupants alphabetically
- Beginning in 1900, names are also indexed by address
- Kane County directories available for years 1859-60, 1867, 1887-88, 1887-90
- Some years are available in print version

## Elgin and Kane County Maps & Atlases

- 1860 Kane County Map 911.77323 Map (Locked Case)
- 1872 Combination Atlas Map of Kane County 912.77323 Combination (Archives)
- 1876 Map of Illinois Counties in 1876 911.773 (Archives)
- 1876 Illinois Land Atlas Index (to above) 929.3773 (Genealogy)
- 1880 "Bird's Eye View" Map of Elgin in Old Elgin: A Pictorial History 977.323 Alft (Reference)
- 1887 Sanborn map of Central Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1891 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1892 Kane County Atlas 912.77323 Atlas (Archives)
- 1897 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1903 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1907 subdivisions and plot outlines in Plat Book of the City of Elgin 912.77323 Plat (Locked Case)
- 1913 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1920 Kane County Farm Plat map 912.77323 Farm (Genealogy)
- 1939 Sanborn map of Elgin 912.77323 Sanborn City of Elgin (Microfilm)
- 1955 Kane County Farm Plat book 912.77322 Kane (Locked Case)
- 1960 Kane County Farm Plat Book 912.77322 Kane (Locked Case)

## Elgin Newspapers

Newspapers can be useful for checking obituaries of former residents or owners, reports of building construction, mentions within social or gossip columns, and provide a feel for the history and the spirit of the time.

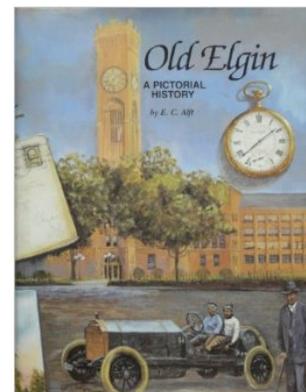
- Local newspapers dating back to the 1850's exist on microfilm
- The Local Newspaper Index may be used to search for a keyword, name, or location.
- Not all articles are indexed, so microfilm should be searched after narrowing down the date.

## Annual Reviews of Local Construction

- Published 1886-1893, 1900, 1903-06, 1908 by Elgin Daily Courier
- Published 1901, 1902, 1907 by the Elgin Daily News
- Available as photocopies for reference or on microfilm
- Includes miscellaneous clippings of building reports from other years

## Elgin and South Elgin History Books and Architecture

- **Views of Old Elgin- 3 Volumes** by Carlos H. Smith (1915) 977.323 Smith (Locked Case)
- **Elgin Area Landmarks** by E.C. Alft (1975) 977.7323 Alft (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Old Elgin: A Pictorial History** by E.C. Alft (1991) 977.323 Alft (Nonfiction)
- **Elgin, Illinois Pictorial and Descriptive** by Artistic Pub. Assoc. (1886) 917.73 Elgin (Archives)
- **The Elgin National Watch Historic District: A Summary and Inventory** by Historic Certification Consultants (1998) 977.3232 Historic (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Historic Resources in the Northeast Neighborhood** by Historic Certification Consultants (1996) 977.3232 Historic (Elgin Area Collection)
- **National Register of Historic Places: Elgin Historic District** by City of Elgin (1982) 977.3232 National (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Photographs of Elgin Houses in the 1920's** by Gifford Park Association (1995) 720.977323 Photographs (Archives)
- **Picturesque Elgin** by McGregor & Whitstruck (1902) 917.7323 Picturesque (Locked Case)
- **Elgin's Heritage, Architecture** by Elgin Heritage Commission (1987) 728 Elgin (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Elgin Design Guideline Manual** by Elgin Heritage Commission (1997) 720.288 Elgin (Elgin Area Collection)
- **South Elgin: 150 Years of Heritage 1835-1985** by Ralph Tredup (1989) 977.323 Tredup (Elgin Area Collection)



- **Mail-Order Homes: Sears Homes and Other Kit Houses** by Rebecca L. Hunter (2012) 728.373 Hunter (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Elgin Illinois Ornamental Concrete Block in Residential Architecture** by Rebecca L. Hunter; sponsored by the Elgin Illinois Heritage Commission (2005) 721.0445 Hunter (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Beyond Sears: Mail Order Homes in Elgin, Illinois from Aladdin, Lewis, Sterling, Harris Brothers, Gordon-Van Tine and Montgomery Ward companies 1906-1940** / a research study by Rebecca L. Hunter (2004) 728.37 Hunter (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Putting Sears Homes on the Map: A Compilation of Testimonials Published in Sears Modern Homes Catalogs 1908-1940** by Rebecca L. Hunter (2004) 728.37 Hunter (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Elgin Illinois Sears House Research Project** by Rebecca Hunter (1999-) 728.373 Hunter (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Suburban Steel: The Magnificent Failure of the Lustron Corporation, 1945-1951** by Douglas Knerr (2004) 728.37 Knerr (Nonfiction)



### **Kane County History Books**

- **Architecture and Historic Urban Neighborhoods on the Fox River** by Carol Zellie (1977) 720.9773 Zellie (Nonfiction)
- **Built for Farming: A Guide to the Historic Rural Architecture of Kane County** by Kane County Development Department (1991) 720.977323 Built (Nonfiction Oversize)
- **Midwestern Vernacular: Farm Structures in Kane County, Illinois** by Jean Hervert (1980) 720.9773232 Hervert (Nonfiction)
- **Kane County, Illinois Historic Preservation Plan** by Kane County Development Department (1989) 977.3 Kane (Archives)
- **The Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois** by W. Le Baron, Jr. (1878) 977.323 Past (Locked Case) See also 977.323 Past Index
- **Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Kane County** by Munsell Publishing Co. (1904) 977.3 Kane 1904 (Locked Case) See also 977.3 Kane 1904 Index
- **History of Kane County, Ill** by R. Waite Joslyn (1908) 977.3 Joslyn V.1 & V.2 (Locked Case) See also 977.3 Joslyn 1908 Index
- **Kane County in Vintage Postcards** by Jim Edwards (2001) 977.323 Edwards (Elgin Area Collection)
- **Sears Homes of Illinois** by Rosemary Thornton (2010) 728.37 Thornton (Nonfiction)

### **Cook County and Hanover Township History Books**

- **Family maps of Cook County, Illinois: with homesteads, roads, waterways, towns, cemeteries, railroads, and more** by Gregory A. Boyd (2006) 912.7731 Boyd (Genealogy)
- **Public domain sales land tract record listing, Cook County** (1983) 929.37731 Public (Genealogy)
- **History of Cook County, Illinois from the Earliest Period to the Present Time** by A.T. Andreas (1884) 977.31 And ( Nonfiction Reference)
- **Hanover Township: Rural Past to Urban Present** by E.C. Alft (1980) 977.31 Alft (Nonfiction)
- **Hanover Harvesters: A Pictorial History of Hanover Township 1850-1955** by Nancy Gher 977.31 Gher (Nonfiction)

## ORGANIZATIONS

### **ABODE**

*Admirers of Beautiful Old Dwellings of Elgin*  
[elginabode.com](http://elginabode.com)

### **Elgin Area Historical Society**

[www.elginhistory.org](http://www.elginhistory.org)  
360 Park Street, Elgin, IL 60120  
847-742-4248  
Elginhistory@foxvalley.net

### **Elgin Genealogical Society**

[www.elginroots.com](http://www.elginroots.com)  
P.O. Box 1418, Elgin, IL 60121-1418  
E-mail: Info@elginroots.com

### **Elgin Heritage Commission**

[bit.ly/2HZz8vB](http://bit.ly/2HZz8vB)  
150 Dexter Court, Elgin, IL 60120  
847-931-6004

### **Elgin's Original East Side Neighborhood**

[bit.ly/2HNcKbj](http://bit.ly/2HNcKbj)  
403 Division Street, Elgin, IL 60120  
President Bill Witte: 847-468-0869

### **Gifford Park Association**

[www.gifford-park-assoc.org](http://www.gifford-park-assoc.org)  
P.O. Box 928, Elgin, IL 60121  
847-421-4022  
President Dan Miller: dmiller155@aol.com

### **Kane County Genealogical Society**

[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)  
P.O. Box 504, Geneva, IL 60134  
kcginfo@gmail.com

### **NENA (NorthEast Neighborhood Association)**

[www.facebook.com/NENAofElgin](http://www.facebook.com/NENAofElgin)  
P.O. Box 1446, Elgin, IL 60121

## ADDRESS CHANGES IN ELGIN

### **House Numbering Changes**

Elgin's house numbering system changed at least 3 times in the late 1800s. The first occurring in 1870s, followed by 1884, and lastly in 1894. The 1884 change adopted new baselines at Chicago St. (and Bridge St., now West Chicago St.) for north/south numbers, and the Fox River for east/west numbers.

Revised baselines for east/west streets were adopted in 1894. Liberty Street became the baseline on the east side, and the line followed by Vandalia, Union and McClure was the divider on the west side. Thus, the same house on the same location may have had three different house numbers, not to mention a different street name (below). Some alterations may have taken place in smaller, isolated instances since the 1894 event.

### **Street Name Changes**

In April of 1894, the following street name changes were made:

Arbor St. and Preston Ave. changed to Preston Ave.  
Bridge St. changed to West Chicago St.  
Cleveland Ave. changed to Buckeye St.  
Division St. and Pearl St. changed to Division St.  
Hill St., Edward St. and Ashton Ave. changed to Hill Ave.  
James St., William St. and Illinois St. changed to Illinois Ave.  
Race St. changed to Water St.  
Summit St. and Willow changed to Summit St.  
West National St. and Walnut Ave. changed to Walnut St.

### **Other street name changes include:**

Alexander changed to River Bluff  
Broadway changed to North State  
Dexter St. changed to National St.  
Ettner Ave. changed to North Porter St.  
Galena Road changed to West Highland Ave.  
Grove changed to Lynch  
Lemonade changed to Wilcox  
Main St. changed to State St.  
Mill changed to Douglas Ave.  
Milwaukee changed to East Highland Ave.  
North Division changed to Jefferson  
Pinnacle changed to Franklin  
Railway Ave. changed to Wellington Ave.  
River St. (west side) changed to Hendee St.  
River St. (east side) changed to Grove Ave.  
Summit St. changed to State St.



**Gail Borden**

Public Library District  
[www.gailborden.info](http://www.gailborden.info)  
270 N. Grove Ave. Elgin, IL 60120