HISTORIC PROPERTY RESEARCH GUIDE

Photo by Historic Preservation
Services Staff (2019)

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City of
Fort Collins
Historic
Preservation

Table of Contents

Introduction

Researching historic properties is much easier if you know where to look. Whether you are researching a building for a nomination for historic designation, for a class, or just for your own records, this guide is meant to give you a place to start. Each section will describe a source or repository of historical information and will also provide tips to help you get the most out of those sources. For the most part, these tools are in no particular order. The last several pages of this guide contain a Fort Collins Landmark Nomination Form that is marked up with some information to help you complete the application.

> *"'History' is a Greek word which means, literally, just 'Investigation.'"*
>
> *— Arnold Toynbee, Historian*

*As you conduct your historical research, be meticulous about keeping accurate records of where you learned what information (known as **"citations"**) to avoid plagiarism and so future researchers can easily find your sources of information. To learn about citing archival sources, see Appendix 1.*

Research Questions: What Do You Want to Know?

Where you try to dig up information on a historic property depends somewhat on your purposes for doing research. Below are some questions you may want to keep in mind to guide your research. Modify, remove, or add to these questions to suit the purposes of your research.

- When were the buildings or landscape features on my property constructed?
- Who built them? (First owner, architect, builder?)
- What was the history of my property's *land* and *setting?*
- Have the buildings changed over time? (e.g. Have there been additions or other alterations? If so, when were they completed?)
- What kind of materials make up the buildings today? Are they the same as when the buildings were constructed?
- What was the original use of my building? Has that changed over time?
- Who used to *own* my property?
- Who used to *live* on my property, or what businesses were here?
- Where did these people come from, and why did they come to Fort Collins?
- What did these people do in Fort Collins?
- What people or groups did these people associate with?
- What does all of this mean? How does my property and the people associated with it fit in with the broader history of Fort Collins?

Resource 1: Where to Begin- Historic Preservation Services

Historic Preservation Services
281 N. College Ave.
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 416-4250
preservation@fcgov.com

As you begin your historic property research, it is always a good idea to give City of Fort Collins Historic Preservation Services a call or an email. The Historic Preservation office has research files for many of the city's historic properties; staff will happily arrange a time for you to look at any non-confidential files they have on the property. The kinds of documents kept in Historic Preservation Services' property files include: architectural and historical surveys, photographs, and correspondence, among other sources.

Keep in mind that some of these sources may be out of date (for example, an historic survey conducted in 1980 may no longer have accurate recommendations about the historic value of a property); be a discerning researcher by keeping your eye on the credibility of your sources no matter where they come from.

Starting with Historic Preservation Services' files is a good idea because it reduces the chances of you repeating research that has already been completed, and it may give you some key words, phrases, or names that can help you as you expand your search elsewhere.

Historic Preservation Services has also posted its collection of local history reports and contexts online. There is information on a wide variety of subjects, including things like: Agriculture, Postwar Development, Hispanics in Fort Collins, and more. Because these reports were produced for Historic Preservation Services by professional consultants or staff, this is a collection of reliable secondary sources. All of these reports are downloadable as PDFs and are searchable (search using CTRL + F), and can be found here: https://www.fcgov.com/historicpreservation/research-projects.php.

Resource 2: The World Wide Web

Not All Sites Are Created Equal

As anyone who has been on the internet can tell you, you can't trust everything you read on the web. A good historical researcher (and internet user) is always careful of trusting what they see online.

When in doubt, do a **credibility check.** Does my source have:

- **Authority**
    - o The author or organization behind the source is reliable (e.g. an expert, a professor, an unbiased organization, a primary source)
- **Currency**
    - o The source is either a primary source (historic source/first-hand account) or a secondary source created recently that accounts for new information
- **Objectivity**
    - o The source is unbiased, meaning that the author's perspective or agenda does not affect what information is presented or how it is presented (if a source is biased, be sure to note that bias if you choose to use the source)
- **Support**
    - o The source is either a first-hand account or is well-supported with evidence that is itself reliable (e.g. cited sources include academic journal articles, not Wikipedia articles)

Below are some websites that provide more reliable information.

2.1 Fort Collins History Connection
http://history.fcgov.com

This website is a digital archive put together through collaboration between the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and the Poudre River Public Library District. It contains a diversity of resources including: brief essays on local history, historic photographs, city directories, maps, building permits, and more. Some of these sources will give you instant information, but others have not been fully digitized and require you to visit the Local History Archive in person (see Resource 3).

It is a good idea to do some research on this site *before* making an appointment to visit the archive. Try to make a list of sources you would like to see and email it to Archive staff; they are very helpful and can pull files before your visit.

Begin by searching for the property's address in the search bar under "All Collections." Omit everything in the address but the number and street name to avoid missing any

results (e.g. "155 W. Mountain Ave." becomes "155 Mountain") or use asterisks to widen your search (e.g. "155 W* Mountain" includes "W." and "West"). If you receive an overwhelming number of results, consider de-selecting "City Directories" from the "Collections" list on the left sidebar. You can always look at City Directory information separately, or in person at the archive. Be aware that addresses sometimes change slightly over time; it is a good idea to search one or two addresses up and down to be thorough.

You may find Tax Assessor photographs, vertical files, or other sources in this way. You can save photos found in the Fort Collins History Connection to your computer, and other information too, just be sure to keep citations with them. Also be aware that the quality of images on this website is usually much poorer than the quality of the actual photographs stored at the Local History Archive. Some sources are not available online; record the name and location of the sources you would like to see at the archive in a list to expedite your visit.

If you choose to look at City Directories online, be aware that the scanning process does not always accurately read the text of names and addresses listed in the directories. The earliest date of City Directory given in the results for an address search might be a good place to start, but do not assume that directory contains the first appearance of the property; look at earlier directories too. When searching scanned directories that haven't had the text recognized (i.e., the pages are just images without searchable text), it is easiest to find a property in the section of the directory listed by street name rather than last name. This, however, can be somewhat tedious; *it is much faster to do City Directory searches in person at the archive.* See Resource 3.2 for further information on City Directories.

Also try searching for the names you find in City Directories or through other research; the archive has vertical or biographical files on many of Fort Collins's historic residents, most of which you have to view in-person, but which are catalogued via History Connection.

You will likely find historic building permit information through an address or owner name search. Consider creating a table in which you can store building permit information. Record the permit number, date, the owner and builder information, and any descriptive text. Historic Preservation Services has a collection of Historic Permit Books; if you have the date and permit number, you can usually look at the actual permit at their office to see if there is any additional information (although their collection is not complete).

Use this resource throughout your research process as you find new key words or names to search!

2.2 City of Fort Collins Public Records Search
http://citydocs.fcgov.com

This website contains digital public records including things like Building Permits, Plans, Ordinances, Inspections, and more. It is a good resource to get a property's more recent building information to add to your permit/alteration table, and you can sometimes even find things like blueprints or other useful information.

Although you could search using just a property's number and street name to overcome the variations in how records were entered, you will likely receive a lot of unrelated information this way because the system defaults to searching ANY of your search terms in ANY field. It is worth the time to enter all variations of the address in quotation marks to avoid this (e.g. "155 Mountain," "155 W. Mountain," "155 West Mountain); searching with words in quotation marks means that only results for the exact phrase display.

Keep in mind that just because a building permit exists for some work does not necessarily mean the work was done. Likewise, just because a Letter of Completion does not exist does not mean work was not done. And of course, just because there isn't a building permit does not mean work was not done. Look at the property with a discerning eye to compare the historical record with the physical reality of the building. City historic preservation staff are experts in the history of buildings and can help when the record of changes to your property is not well-documented.

2.3 Larimer County Property Search (Tax Assessor)
https://www.larimer.org/assessor/search#/property

The Larimer County Tax Assessor website allows you to look up recent property records. The easiest ways to find a property is to look it up by parcel number in the upper search box; if you do not have the parcel number, you can also look it up by address in the lower box. You do not necessarily need to enter an owner name. If looking up one address (rather than a range), you only need to enter a number in the first address number box. In the street name field, be sure to omit any directionals and the street suffix as instructed. Always enter the city name. Click "Find Property." Because you have omitted directionals, make sure you are looking at the correct property; you can always check this by clicking the "Property Map" tab at the top of the pop-up page.

The "General Info" tab is the first page you should see after clicking on a property for more details. This page is useful for finding *legal descriptions.* You can also get the property's *parcel number,* which is useful because addresses tend to change more

often than parcel numbers over time. You can also find recent owner information. The current owner should be listed with their mailing address in the upper section of this page (keep in mind that this information may be out of date). In the "Sales Information" section of this page, there is a summary list of recent sales. If you click on the dates under the "Sale Date" column, it will display information about the sale including grantors and grantees if available. If you click on the links under the "Reception No." column, it will direct you to the Larimer County Official Records Search (see next online tool below), where you can view the actual deed documents.

Under the "Building Info" tab, you can find general information about the building itself, such as the primary material, square footage, year built, year remodeled, etc. Keep in mind that this information is sometimes inaccurate or estimated, so it is important to corroborate it elsewhere. If there are multiple buildings associated with the same parcel number, you should see a field toward the top of this page called "View Building ID," and there should be a two or more colored boxes with numbers in them representing each of these resources on the property (e.g. a primary residence and a farm utility building); clicking on these boxes is an easy way to toggle between the Building Info for each resource.

2.4 Larimer County Official Records Search
https://records.larimer.org/LandmarkWeb/Home/Index

This is an excellent database where you can find a wide variety of information, including things like plats, deeds of all kinds, or marriage records, among many other things, and view the actual records. In order to view images of records, *you must create an account.* It is free to do so. Remember to log in before doing a search, because logging in diverts you to the home page no matter where you are in your search. The Records Search database is searchable back into the 1970s, but it has images going back into the nineteenth century.

This tool is great to use in conjunction with the Tax Assessor's Property Search tool. If you use Property Search first, you can get a small list of the most recent owners, and you can even click on the "Reception No. (doc)" link under the Property Search "General Info" tab to link you directly to the imaged record in the Records Search database. Also make a note of the property's legal description on the Property Search tool for future reference.

It is a good idea to take the earliest name you found via the Property Search tool and use it to see if you can get any earlier owners via the Records Search tool. Do this by clicking "Name" on the homepage. You can choose to pick "grantor" or "grantee" under the Party Type field. Under the "Name" field, enter names "last first" with no comma (e.g. John Smith becomes Smith John). You could choose to select only certain

document types if you get an overwhelming number of results, but keep in mind that, if you are looking for deeds, there are a ton of types of deeds that you would need to check in the list, and not all of them are obvious. You can also look up other documents this way, like plats. For example, if you were looking for the Swett's Addition plat, you could just enter "Swett" in the name field, and then look for "Plat" in the "Document Type" field of the results. If you are not finding what you're looking for, keep in mind that the system defaults to only showing the first 100 records; this can be changed in the bottom drop down menu on this page.

Once you get your list of results, you can sort alphabetically or numerically by any of the column fields, and clicking more than once reverses the order. To find a specific property, look in the "Legal" column; find the correct legal description here so you know which entries are relevant to the specific property you are looking for. You can click the small blue plus on the left side of the results list to add different things to your view list. If you scroll back to the top of the page, on the right, there is a green icon called "My List." Click this to see a simple list of your saved items. These remain in your list even if you log out of the system; they can be removed manually by clicking the "remove from list" button located one actual record's page.

If you are trying to find several different plats, it is often quickest to use the "Document Type" search option ("Document" from the homepage). You can just select "PLAT" form the "Document Category" dropdown field, and you can then sort the results by date or name.

You can also search by "Book/Page" number. This is a very useful tool when trying to view records from the more distant past, but you must know the specific book and page numbers you would like to see ahead of time; this usually requires a trip to the County Clerk and Recorder and a bit of leg work first (see Resource 4.2). This is the fastest way to view a specific historic record. For more recent records, you can use the "Reception Number" search in a similar way.

To view the oldest historic records with lettered books rather than numbers (e.g. Book F, Page 83), you must use a computer at the County Clerk and Recorder office. You will use this same website and the same Book/Page number search, but it must be in-person on one of their computers; those records are not accessible elsewhere.

Many title documents will say they were sold for a tiny amount of money and "other valuable considerations." It is not always possible to determine the actual sale price of a property, but you can sometimes find the actual prices in historic newspapers (see Resource 2.8) or by looking at the stamps on the deeds. Essentially, a certain number of cents represented the tax on each $100 of value. The historic documentary stamp rates for Fort Collins have not yet been collected, so you cannot necessarily know exact value based on stamps, but you can glean when major improvements occurred

on properties. For example, if a 1910 deed had 60 cents of stamps, and the same property's 1915 deed had $1.50 in stamps, it would be reasonable to assume that a building was constructed between those dates.

2.5 Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records Search
https://glorecords.blm.gov/

If you are researching a farm or ranch, a subdivision, or a site, you may want to know about the early history of the land before it was platted. This site allows you to search and view images of land patents (things like homesteads), given you have a little information to guide that search.

Primarily, you will need to determine the section, township, and range of the land you are interested in. Land is divided into one-mile squares called "sections;" a six-mile square, or 36 sections, is equal to one "township/range" block (township and range are somewhat akin in concept to latitude and longitude). Homesteaders usually received quarter-sections (160 acres) of land, so knowing what part of a certain section the land you are interested in can help you accurately describe its ownership and history. Imagine a map of your town divided into one-mile squares, or sections. Then, imagine one of these squares divided by two intersecting lines into quarters; these are quarter sections called the NE, NW, SE, and SW 1/4. Imagine each of these smaller squares divided once again into four even smaller squares; these are quarters of quarter sections (e.g. the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of a section would be 1/16 of the whole section, and would be located in its upper right corner). This can continue on and on for more and more specificity to give you a more precise location; usually this is done in quarters, but it is sometimes done in halves. *When you are reading land descriptions on deeds or elsewhere, be careful not to confuse "quarter" and "corner."* (For a visualization of this kind of land measurement/description, see here: https://history.fcgov.com/farms/)

This website helps you determine section, township, and range in a straightforward way by address: https://www.randymajors.com/p/township-range-on-google-maps.html. Enter an address in the search bar, and it will move the map to that location and spit out the locational information. It will tell you something like the address is in the "NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 13, Township 7 North, Range 69 West, 6th Principal Meridian." It is often helpful to examine the map and take that description to one or more additional levels of specificity for your notes (e.g. the N ½ of the SE ¼ of the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of…). In addition to giving you information to use the BLM/GLO Records Search online, having this detailed description will probably help you if you do a *Title Search* (see Resource 4.2).

2.6 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

http://0-sanborn.umi.com.catalog.poudrelibraries.org/about.html
https://cudl.colorado.edu/luna/servlet/view/search/where/Fort%2BCollins?q=%3dfort+collins+LIMIT%3aUCBOULDERCB1~21~21&sort=city%2Cdate%2Csheet

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are a collection of primary source maps. If a building is on these maps, it can show you things like: the primary materials, the footprint shape, the relative location of primary and secondary structures, the number of stories of your building, the locations of porches, etc. There are digitized map series for the following years for Fort Collins: 1886, 1891, 1895, 1901, 1906, 1909, 1917, 1925, and a 1943 amendment of the 1925 map. Be aware of the month the map was produced.

Before you begin using this source, take a look at the first page of the map series. Familiarize yourself with the key, which tells you things like red shading means brick, or an "x" through a building means it is a stable. The first page of each year's maps also shows the whole town with different areas highlighted in shaded blocks with numbers in the center. The numbers represent the page number of the map series for that year. Find the general location of a building on this page to determine which page of the map series the property appears on. Be aware that this page number is not always consistent between all the maps, so it is a good idea to check the page number for each year's map series. Also, it is possible the property does not appear on these maps; that does not mean it did not exist at the time the map was produced.

There are two links provided above. The first is through Poudre Libraries. It contains all of the years listed, but the map scans are in black and white, so some data is lost. The second link is to the University of Colorado Boulder's digital collections. This includes all years except 1925 and the 1943 correction of the 1925 map, and the maps are in color.

2.7 Genealogical Research

https://www.familysearch.org/en/
https://www.ancestry.com/

Once you have gathered some names associated with the property you are researching, you can often find a lot of information about those people through online genealogical research tools. Things you can find through these search engines include: US census records (occupation, sometimes place of residence, place of birth, mother/father's place of birth, spouse names, children's names, etc.), marriage records, death records (sometimes with obituaries through the Find-a-Grave Index), city directories, yearbooks, land records, and more. If you choose to look at user-created

family trees, they can be helpful, but require an amount of scrutiny and corroboration with other sources.

Ancestry allows you to get limited information for free, but to access many of the records, you will have to create a paid account. If you have a regular paid account, you still will not be able to get international records without paying an additional fee. If you go to the Local History Archive (Resource #3), they have a computer with their (regular) Ancestry account on it you can use. On the home page, there is a search area. Try to enter as much information as you can to begin with (at least a first and last name and location). You will have the option to select "exact" or "initials" if you so choose for the name fields; consider using this feature at first, then expanding your search to catch the misspellings and variations. This homepage search area defaults to searching all categories (You can look at specific collections [e.g. just census records] by clicking "search" in the ribbon at the top of the page). You can narrow by collection after doing an all categories search by clicking on a collection in the panel on the left. The advantage of doing it this way is that you can go back to "all categories" and pick a different specific collection to look at without having to type in your information again.

Family Search is very similar to Ancestry. It was created by and is maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you look at the citations on many of the Ancestry records, you will notice that they come from the LDS collections in Utah. Family Search is free, but you must create an account. The user interface is less slick than Ancestry, but the records are pretty much all the same. To access the records search function, click "Search" on the ribbon at the top of the page, then "Records." As you will see, there are a few less options on this page, but you can still search with "Exact" terms by clicking the check boxes. You can also still search by collection by using the Find a Collection or Browse All Published Collections options on the right (although this can be somewhat overwhelming and requires some refining using the panel on the left). In addition to being free for national records, international records are also free on Family Search.

2.8 Historic Newspapers
https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/
https://coloradoan.newspapers.com/

The breadth of Colorado's digitized newspapers is staggering and allows you to do some serious primary source analysis without poring over microfilm for hours. You never know what you might find out about a person or place! Early newspapers fairly consistently published short snippets about real estate transfers and construction projects, so this can be a good way to find out some basic information about a property. Newspapers also publish local news, sometimes including very personal

details that can give you some insight into some of the people who owned or lived on a property. Sometimes, newspapers published photos of buildings. Even advertisements could be helpful to your research, if you are researching a commercial building, or if the person you are researching was a business owner.

The OCR used on both of the sites above is fairly accurate, but of course not 100%. You can overcome these inconsistencies by using a variety of different search terms. It might even be a good idea to try misspelling things (e.g. "Maneval" and "Manaval"). Also try shortening first names; newspapers often did this for men using certain conventions (e.g. George becomes Geo, Joseph becomes Jos, William becomes Wm, etc.). You could also try searching for Mr. or Mrs. Surname, which is especially helpful when searching for women. If you are searching for an address, put all forms of the address in quotation marks to avoid having to sift through extraneous entries (e.g. "155 Mountain," "155 W Mountain," "155 West Mountain," "155 Mtn," etc.). If you are not getting good results, consider searching a couple numbers up and down from the address in case it changed. To get early information about a property before it was addressed, try searching for variations of the legal description. To refine or expand your results, modify your use of exact phrases (quotation marks) and use a minus sign to eliminate entries with certain words (this is useful if you are getting, but do not want, results for two different things with the same name).

Save any clippings or any notes in a research folder or document on your computer; remember to save the citation info (article author (if available), article name, newspaper name, date) so you do not have to go back to try to find it later.

The first website listed above is the Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection hosted by the Colorado State Library. This is a free database, but it generally only goes to about 1925. You can browse by title, date, or county using the "Browse" option in the ribbon at the top of the page, or by a number of selected topics. The fastest way to browse, however, is to click "Search" in the same ribbon. It is a good idea to limit your search by county, but not necessarily city, because many local newspapers wrote about news in nearby cities. On this website, you can "clip" articles in two different ways. You can right-click on the article and select "clip this article," but if the article is long, the system breaks it into multiple images, which is not conducive to easy saving. You can also clip by clicking the scissors icon on the right side of the newspaper viewer window and clicking and dragging over the area you want; this tool produces one image, but if the article is long, the text will end up being very small.

The second website listed is the *Coloradoan* collection from Newspapers.com (this website also has other newspaper collections). It includes many of the same historic newspapers as the previous source, but also articles published to today; however, viewing more than a tiny snapshot of an article is not free and requires an account. If you go to the Local History Archive (Resource #3), they have a computer logged into

their account that you can use. Search methodology on this site is very similar to what you would do using the Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection. Unlike the other website, if you have an account, you can store clippings online, which has the advantage of storing the citation information automatically.

2.9 *History of Larimer County,* Ansel Watrous
https://archive.org/details/cu31924028878936/page/n8/mode/2up

Ansel Watrous's *History of Larimer County* has been digitized and is searchable at the site above. Published in 1911, this could be helpful as either a secondary or primary source, depending on how you use it. It is a wealth of information about people, places, and the history of Fort Collins that you can view without leaving the house or office.

2.10 History Colorado and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP)
https://www.historycolorado.org/preservation-planning-unit-resource-center

OAHP is the State Historic Preservation Office, whose staff assists with all things related to historic preservation or archaeology across the state, including managing State and National Register of Historic Places nominations and federal and state preservation financial incentives, among other objectives. History Colorado is an agency of the State of Colorado beneath the Department of Higher Education and a nonprofit organization dedicated to making Colorado's history and culture accessible and relatable to everyone, with an emphasis on building strong communities.

Listed above is one link from History Colorado's website (that leads to resources on Colorado's architects, builders, and more), but a little clicking around the History Colorado website is worth your time. They have many useful publications, including a regularly updated blog and a podcast, and they also have a searchable online collection, much like Fort Collins's archive, full of images of objects and maps.

2.11 Online Searches (Google, Bing, etc.)

Lastly, you can of course use search engines like Google or Bing—but beware! There is a lot of information taken out of context on the internet, so be careful about the credibility of the sources you look at. If you do a search (e.g. for a person's name), try clicking on the "Books" tab (under the three dots/More). This could lead you to useful secondary sources (which are sometime preview-enabled and searchable), or it could

lead you to digitized primary sources. You can change the years published to be very early to view only primary sources by clicking the arrow labeled by default "Any Time," then clicking on a century range or entering a custom range.

Google may also lead you to some helpful local history blogs or websites that have articles related to your topic. For example, https://www.northerncoloradohistory.com/ is written by Meg Dunn, who has chaired the Landmark Preservation Commission and is active in the non-profit organization Historic Larimer County; she writes about a wide variety of topics, from specific properties to social patterns, and she always cites her sources. Other local organizations also have blogs, such as the Fort Collins Historical Society, Historic Larimer County, and the Poudre Landmarks Foundation, among others.

Resource 3: The Local History Archive

The Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery
408 Mason Court
Fort Collins, Colorado 80524
(970) 221-6688

Contact Form: https://history.fcgov.com/contact/

Hours:
Sundays and Mondays: CLOSED
Tuesday – Saturday: 10AM – Noon, 1 PM – 5 PM

*You are not allowed to use pens in the archive; bring a pencil.

The Local History Archive is located inside the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery. No need to check in at the museum's front desk; you can go straight to the archive. When you enter through the front door, the archive is located off to the right in a separate room. Please do not bring food or drinks into the archive. Once inside, sign in using the sign-in sheet on the front desk. An archivist will most likely be there to assist you; they are all incredibly helpful! Do not be afraid to ask for help.

Before you visit the archive, it is a good idea to do some footwork to put together a list of sources you know you would like to see. You can do this by exploring history.fcgov.com, the archive's website. Take note of the names and file locations of records you would like to see; this will expedite your trip to the archive. If you contact an archivist in advance, they can even pull records so they are ready for you when you arrive. Keep in mind that if you need to see something stored in a collection not readily accessible, stored off-site for example, advance notice of a couple days may actually be necessary to retrieve the records.

Although you may be able to find records yourself in the network of filing cabinets in the archive, it is easiest (probably for both parties) if you ask an archivist to retrieve files for you. They will replace the files you examine when you are finished reviewing them. If you are looking at City Directories or any of the reference books, it is not necessary to ask an archivist to retrieve/replace items for you (unless you need help locating or picking a source).

When looking at records, you are allowed to take photographs of things for future reference, but it is always a good idea to ask first. The archive charges a small fee for high-quality pictures of photographs. In addition to the resources following, the archive also has: historic newspapers, historic maps, objects, and photograph collections.

3.1 Tax Assessor Records

The archive's collection of Tax Assessor Records is invaluable to historic property research. These cards represent the historic version of the information collected in the online Property Search database (see Resource 2.3). Records are generally from 1948 and 1968, with some variation.

Although the entire record can be helpful, there are some key parts to each Tax Assessor Record to examine. First, look at the picture; these are often some of the best historic photographs that exist of any property. Ask the archivist if you may take a photo of that photo for future reference; explain to them what you are using the photo for.

On the other side, there is a sketch map; this can be helpful to understanding how the property changed over time. Keep in mind that because the box for the sketch is a standard size, the distance between structures can be distorted and should not be treated as to-scale. Some abbreviations you might see on a sketch include: OP (open porch), CP (closed porch), WD (wood deck), etc. Some creative Googling can usually give you an answer related to other abbreviations. The divisions you see drawn on the building do not necessarily correspond to additions or alterations (although they sometimes do); they most often exist to help the surveyor accurately calculate the area of the building (the product of this calculation can be seen on the right side of the card). Other details you might see on a Tax Assessor sketch include: locations of bay windows, number of stairs leading to a porch, percentage of basement area, number of stories, etc.

Other useful information you can find on a Tax Assessor Record include: the date of construction (note whether it is an actual or estimated date), the foundation, cladding, and other materials, and more. In the c. 1948 series, the back of the card has a section called "Major Alterations or Additions," and in the c. 1968 series, the back of the card has a section called "Other Improvements." This is a good place to look for any additions to the building or improvements to the lot.

The archive may not have the Tax Assessor Records for the property you are looking for; visit the Larimer County Tax Assessor office to try to locate it (See Resource 4.2).

3.2 City Directories

The Local History Archive has an extensive collection of City and County Directories, including most of the years between 1902 and the present. Be aware that there are some gaps in the collection, most notably between 1940 and 1948. It is much faster to do directory searches in-person at the archive than online, especially if you are looking

up multiple people or multiple addresses. Be careful when handling the directories; some of them are very fragile. When you finish using a directory, tie it up, and put it back on the shelf. The archivists are very nice and will tell you that you don't need to do this, but you will most likely end up looking at almost all of the directories, which creates quite the pile on the table.

Directories (usually) have listings by last name, business name/type, and street name/address. One of the advantages of doing a directory search in-person is that these different sections are usually on different colored paper, so you can quickly navigate between them rather than searching semi-randomly online. If you look up an address in the street name section, it is often a good idea to also look up the name of the occupants in the names section because it gives you some additional information like the person's occupation, their spouse's name, sometimes their children's names, whether their work address is different than their home address, etc. You may also see little symbols next to people's names. Some common symbols are an "r" for "renter" or an "o" in a circle for "owner;" these identifications are usually accurate, but warrants corroboration through a title search (see Resource 4.2). If you're not sure what a symbol or abbreviation means, there is always a key, usually at the beginning of the names section.

If you are doing research on an area outside of the City's historic annexation area, you might encounter the term "Rural Route" and wonder if you can determine a location based on this address. Unfortunately, there are no maps in the archive that give insight into these locations, but you may be able to get a general idea by doing some historic newspaper searching (See Resource 2.8).

3.3 Vertical Files

The archive has a large number of vertical files on people, places, local history topics, and more. Most of these files have not been scanned into the online database, but the website will still tell you if a file exists at the archive even if it has not been scanned. Because of the breadth of the vertical files, it is helpful to search the website for the ones you would like to see (See Resource 2.1). There are files by street, biographical files, subject files, and more. Unless the file you are looking at is very specific, you may have to leaf through the items in a file to find ones relevant to your topic. On the opposite side of the spectrum, there are sometimes vertical files that include just one or two documents.

An archivist should tell you if you have to wear gloves to look at a file; this usually happens when a file includes photographs that are not in protective sleeves.

3.4 Biographical Sketches

In your database search, you may run across a "Biographical Sketch" for a historic person. These are sometimes helpful, but they usually are not. They tend to be really short snippets from newspaper articles that merely mention the person in question rather than an actual biography. Nevertheless, they can sometimes be helpful. There are two books containing the biographical sketches; be sure to note the page number of the sketch you are looking for to determine which book it is in.

3.5 Reference Library

There are many books you can read or even check out from the Local History Archive. The collection includes local history books, like Ansel Watrous's *History of Larimer County* (See Resource 2.9) or Harold Dunning's *Over Hill and Vale*, or books on more specific local topics, like Lucy Burris's "People of the Poudre: An Ethnohistory of the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area." There are also reference materials and books that provide more historical context related to goings-on in the state of Colorado, the West, or the nation, at different times or from the perspective of different themes. It is an impressive and useful collection. You can, of course, supplement these materials with a trip to the public library.

Resource 4: County Records

Sometimes, the records you are looking for will not be accessible online, or the Local History Archive might not store them at their facility. Fortunately, many of Larimer County's historic property records are stored in Old Town Fort Collins, where the Assessor and County Clerk and Recorder offices are located. Both of the resources below can be found in the building at 200 W. Oak St.

4.1 Tax Assessor

The Tax Assessor office is located on the second floor of the County building. If you were unable to find historic tax assessor records for the property you are researching at the Local History Archive, you may still be able to find images of the cards, including historic photographs, here. Ask the front desk attendant for help, and he/she will direct you to their microfiche catalog and reader. Use the catalog to look up your property and find its microfiche sheet (be sure to note somehow where you took it from so it is easier to put back when you are done). Every microfiche reader is a little different, but for a brief tutorial on using this kind of machine, see here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu9yuezDSIQ.

*You will be charged a very small fee for printing any images from the microfiche reader— Bring change!

4.2 County Clerk and Recorder: Title Search

The Recorder/Citizen Information Center is located on the first floor of the County Building. Here, you can create a complete list of owners for the property you are researching by scanning through title book indexes. This is a fairly tedious process that can take hours, depending on the complexity of a property's ownership history, but the information you are collecting is incredibly valuable to creating a complete narrative for the property you are researching. Before you do a title search here, you should have already collected a few dates/names of owners so you have a place to start. If you have not, you can always hop on one of the computers on the left side of the room, where you can use the online County Records Search (See Resource 2.4).

On the left side of the room, you will also see a desk with a sign-in sheet on it. Sign in, and then put on one of the "Volunteer" badges. Let one of the desk attendants know you are there to see the books. They will either let you back or tell you it is okay for you to let yourself through the gate. Remember to sign out and put back your badge when you leave.

Each book contains the same kinds of information. These books are actually indexes that refer you to more detailed records. Each line tells you the "Book" and "Page" where that record lives (you can look them up on the Larimer County Records Search, Resource 2.4). Names are listed as "Grantor" or "Grantee." In the case of a warranty deed, a "Grantor" is the person who sold the property, and a "Grantee" is the person who bought the property. The type of record will also be noted (e.g. a warranty deed, a decree, etc.). You may sometimes see two dates; take notes on the date or recording consistently. The right side of the page contains the property information; this may be listed by lot/block and subdivision, by section-township-range, or it may tell you to see the record. It is a good idea to take notes on much of this so you can refer to it later.

The books are organized by date; the oldest are closest to that sign-in desk and the newest are furthest from it. There are two books for every year because there is one alphabetized by "Grantor" and one by "Grantee;" these books contain the same information. Use the ownership information you have gathered elsewhere to begin your search; be sure to look at the property information field and record type field to make sure you found the correct record. For example, if you know that John A. Smith sold the property in 1970, you might then start looking from 1970 backwards for John A. Smith in the *grantee* books to find out who he bought the property from. Then, you would take the name of that *grantor* and search for it in the *grantee* books to see who that person purchased from, and on and on. Take good notes because this information pairs with the Larimer County Records Search tool (Resource 2.4).

There are many different types of deeds of other recordings listed in these books; be careful to note the type of deed because this will tell you if the property actually changed hands or if something else happened. For example, one common deed type is a "deed of trust." This essentially means that the property owner (grantor) took out a loan from a lender, and the trustee (grantee) held onto the property until the loan was paid off; technically, the trustee held the title for the borrower during this time, but the borrower was still responsible for the property in every practical way, and the title returned to the borrower when the loan was repaid through a "release" of the deed of trust.

The special thing about looking up records on the computers located in the Recorder Office/Citizen Information Center is that you can view the oldest records (ones with lettered rather than numbered books), which you cannot do from home. It might be a good idea to email yourself images of these records to save an extra trip later.

Appendix 1: Citing Sources

When writing history, be sure to use a consistent method of citing sources. There are many standard methods including APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), and Chicago/Turabian's. Typically, historians use Chicago Style citations as they are usually more precise and make it easier for future researchers to track down where you found what information – we recommend you use Chicago/Turabian's. In general format, this means that when you use a source in your writing, you follow its punctuation with a footnote that gives the reference. It also means that you collect your major sources or source repositories in a bibliography at the end of your work. You can find more detailed information about formatting these citations here: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html.

Because there are so many different kinds of archival sources, each footnote will look a little different, but there are guidelines to follow when creating these references available online or in hard-copy at most libraries. Generally, your citation will go from most to least specific. In the footnote, cite the name or author of the actual source, its date, its storage identifier, its collection, its repository, and ending with the city and state it is located in. This might look like:

[1] Letter from John Smith to Jane Smith, January 27, 1919, John Smith File, Biographical File Collection, Local History Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, Fort Collins, CO.

In your bibliography, you should not cite each individual archival source you used (unless you only used one or two). Cite the entire collection. This might look like:

Biographical File Collection. Local History Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery. Fort Collins, CO.

If you used multiple collections from the same repository, you may reorder the elements of this citation for organizational purposes like this:

Local History Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery. Biographical File Collection. Fort Collins, CO.

——— . Businesses Alphabetical File Collection. Fort Collins, CO.

If you cite multiple sources from the same author in your bibliography, you can use the same notation (three em dashes followed by a period).

You can treat newspaper collections the same way. Cite individual articles in your footnotes, but just collections in the bibliography. This might look like:

Fort Collins Courier Database. Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection. Colorado
      State Library, History Colorado, Denver, CO,
      https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&e=-------en-20--1--
      img-txIN%7ctxCO%7ctxTA--------0--&sp=FCC

Appendix 2: Annotated Fort Collins Landmark Nomination Form

City of Fort Collins

Planning, Development & Transportation Services
Community Development & Neighborhood Services
281 North College Avenue
P.O. Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522.0580

Fort Collins Landmark Designation

LOCATION INFORMATION

Address: Click here to enter text.

Legal Description: Click here to enter text.

Property Name (historic and/or common): Click here to enter text.

OWNER INFORMATION

Name: Click here to enter text.

Company/Organization (if applicable): Click here to enter text.

Phone: Click here to enter text.

Email: Click here to enter text.

Mailing Address: Click here to enter text.

CLASSIFICATION

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	Existing Designation
☐ Building	☐ Public	☐ Occupied	☐ Commercial	☐ Nat'l Register
☐ Structure	☐ Private	☐ Unoccupied	☐ Educational	☐ State Register
☐ Site			☐ Religious	
☐ Object			☐ Residential	
☐ District			☐ Entertainment	
			☐ Government	
			☐ Other	

FORM PREPARED BY

Name and Title: Click here to enter text.

Address: Click here to enter text.

Phone: Click here to enter text.

Email: Click here to enter text.

Relationship to Owner: Click here to enter text.

DATE: Click here to enter a date.

Comment [RJ1]: From the tax assessor (Resource2.3)

Comment [RJ2]: E.g. The Frank J. Ulrich Property or the McCormick Apartments

Unless there is a reason not to, the entire property is landmarked, and the specific contributing/not contributing features are described in the Explanation of Boundaries section.

To determine the Property Name, consider: What was this property known as historically (e.g. business name)? Who was the first owner/person who had the building constructed? Who lived in or used the property the longest?

Comment [RJ3]: Can be deleted if not applicable

City of
Fort Collins

Planning, Development & Transportation Services
Community Development & Neighborhood Services
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P.O. Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522.0580

TYPE OF DESIGNATION and BOUNDARIES

☐ Individual Landmark Property ☐ Landmark District

Explanation of Boundaries:

The boundaries of the property being designated as a Fort Collins Landmark correspond to the legal description of the property, above. The property (hereinafter the "Property") consists of Click here to enter text.

Comment [RJ4]: Identify contributing and non-contributing features here. Include the parcel number to be precise (from the tax assessor).

E.g. "The property (hereinafter the "Property" consists of the 1920 house and 1921 garage, both resources contributing to the historic property, and a non-contributing 1995 shed (Parcel no. 9250687427)."

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE and INTEGRITY

Properties are eligible for designation if they possess **both** significance and integrity.

Significance is the importance of a site, structure, object or district to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering or culture of our community, State or Nation. For designation as Fort Collins Landmarks or Fort Collins Landmark Districts properties must meet one (1) or more of the following standards set forth in Fort Collins Municipal Code Section 14-22(a):

☐ Standard 1: *Events*
This property is associated with events that have made a recognizable contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the community, State or Nation. It is associated with either (or both) of these two (2) types of events:

    a) ☐ A specific event marking an important moment in Fort Collins prehistory or history; and/or

    b) ☐ A pattern of events or a historic trend that made a recognizable contribution to the development of the community, State or Nation.

Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 2: *Persons/Groups*
This property is associated with the lives of persons or groups of persons recognizable in the history of the community, State or Nation whose specific contributions to that history can be identified and documented.

    Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 3: D*esign/Construction*
This property embodies the identifiable characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; represents the work of a craftsman or architect whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality; possesses high artistic values or design concepts; or is part of a recognizable and distinguishable group of properties.

    Click here to enter text.

Comment [RJ5]: For whichever Standards of Significance are appropriate for the property, treat this text like a complete Statement of Significance, which means that you are making a precise, brief argument and supporting it with evidence.

Use the property's name, name the Standard of Significance, and make a clear argument in the first sentence of your statement.

Discuss ALL contributing features. (E.g. a house and a garage if you have identified them both as being contributing features)

☐ Standard 4: *Information Potential*

This property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

> Click here to enter text.

Period of Significance is the discrete chronological period (or periods) during which a historic property gained its significance. Additions or alterations to a property that have significance in their own right can warrant the extension of a Period of Significance.

> Period(s) of Significance:
>
> Click here to enter text.

Integrity is the ability of a site, structure, object or district to be able to convey its significance. The integrity of a resource is based on the degree to which it retains all or some of seven (7) aspects or qualities set forth in Fort Collins Municipal Code Section 14-22(b): location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. All seven qualities do not need to be present for a site, structure, object or district to be eligible as long as the overall sense of past time and place is evident.

☐ Standard 1: *Location is the place where the resource was constructed or the place where the historic or prehistoric event occurred.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 2: *Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan space, structure and style of a resource.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 3: *Setting is the physical environment of a resource. Setting refers to the character of the place; it involves how, not just where, the resource is situated and its relationship to the surrounding features and open space.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 4: *Materials are the physical elements that form a resource.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 5: *Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure or site.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 6: *Feeling is a resource's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the resource's historic or prehistoric character.*

> Click here to enter text.

☐ Standard 7: *Association is the direct link between an important event or person and a historic or prehistoric resource. A resource retains association if it is the place where the*

Comment [RJ6]: This Standard is generally interpreted to mean archaeological information, but it can mean potential to yield information about other things too; this doesn't have to mean ancient history.

Comment [RJ7]: If a property is significant under multiple standards, it may have multiple periods of significance.

Comment [RJ8]: Identify period(s), then explain why you chose the period(s) of significance.

Comment [RJ9]: There will likely be some overlap in your descriptions; that is okay. More detail is better. If you refer to a specific source, cite it in-text or in a footnote.

Comment [RJ10]: Again, make sure to specifically discuss each contributing resource here (e.g. house and carriage house). Make a separate paragraph for each resource under each aspect of integrity for the sake of clarity.

Comment [RJ11]: In addition to other design elements and character-defining features, discuss additions and alterations here. Does an addition detract from the building's integrity, or is it historic in its own right?

Comment [RJ12]: Workmanship generally refers to the skill of the builder and the techniques used in building at the time of construction; architect-related things belong more under Design.

Comment [RJ13]: Remember to check the boxes! It is easy to forget; an unchecked box implies that a property does not meet the standard.

City of Fort Collins

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Fort Collins, CO 80522.0580

event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.

Click here to enter text.

Comment [RJ13]: This is key to this Aspect of Integrity. How is an association with a person or event evident by looking at the property?

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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Delete this text. Please include city directory research and/or a title search if the property is important for its association with a significant person.

Comment [RJ14]: Write this in narrative form, and remember to cite your sources in footnotes. This should be an in-depth history of the property and the people associated with it.

Give the historical context surrounding the property. What was going on in Fort Collins preceding, during, and after the period of significance? What did the area around the property look like before and after this property was constructed? Who lived or worked here? Who owned the property? Who owns it now? It is especially important to do a city directory/title search if there is association with a significant person, but it is a good idea to do this for all properties! You never know what you might find out.

This is also where you are making a strong, in-depth argument for the significance of the property. For instance, if the property is significant under Standard 3, Design/Construction, you might explain the history and context surrounding the development of its architectural style in addition to property-specific information.

Be sure to include the construction history of the property. If it is particularly complex, you might consider making a table and putting it at the end of this section.

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ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION
Construction Date: Click here to enter text.
Architect/Builder: Click here to enter text.
Building Materials: Click here to enter text.
Architectural Style: Click here to enter text.
Description:

Delete this text. Please include any special features of the property/surroundings, as well as dates and descriptions of any additions or alterations to the buildings or structures.

Comment [RJ15]: You may or may not be able to find this information.

For Construction Date, if you cannot find a precise date, estimate the date, but you MUST SAY IT IS AN ESTIMATE:
e.g. c. 1920 or 1920 (estimate)

Not all buildings were architect-designed, and builder information is not always available- that is okay. Type "Unknown." If you found the architect or builder, be sure to specify which role he/she played:
e.g. William Robb (architect)

Comment [RJ16]: Primary wall materials/cladding, foundation

Comment [RJ17]: Systematically describe the following as it appears today:
-The setting and site features, including any notable landscaping or fences
-Whole-building elements like the height of the building, the foundation, the wall materials, the roof type and material, etc.
-Each elevation of the building, including types and materials of windows, doors, architectural details, etc.
-Any outbuildings (carriage houses, garages, sheds, chicken coops, etc.)

REFERENCE LIST or SOURCES of INFORMATION

Click here to enter text.

Comment [RJ18]: Use your footnotes to create your bibliography here.

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MAPS and PHOTOGRAPHS

Comment [RJ19]: Number both maps and photographs.

You should at least include a Location Map that outlines/labels the property. Consider highlighting contributing and non-contributing resources in different colors.

You could include: Aerial maps, historic maps (e.g. Sanborn maps)

Comment [RJ20]: Include photographs of the entire property, including all elevations of all contributing resources, and at least one photo of each non-contributing resource.

Photograph each type of door and window. Include close-ups of architectural details.

Label your photos clearly with what is shown, where it is, and which direction you were facing when taking the photo:
e.g. Photo 12: East Vinyl Window, North Elevation, Facing Southwest

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The undersigned owner, or owners, of the Property hereby submit the Property for designation as a Fort Collins landmark pursuant to the Fort Collins Landmark Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 14 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins. The undersigned owner, or owners, certify that all signatures necessary to consent to the designation of the Property are affixed below.

I understand that upon designation, I or my successors will be requested to notify City of Fort Collins Historic Preservation staff prior to the occurrence of any of the following:

Preparation of plans for reconstruction or alteration of the exterior of the improvements on the Property or interior spaces readily visible from any public street, alley, park, or other public place; and/or

Preparation of plans for construction of, addition to, or demolition of improvements on the Property.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 202___.

_____
Owner Name (please print)

_____
Owner Signature

State of _____)

)ss.
County of _____)

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _____, 202____,

by_____.

Witness my hand and official seal. My commission expires _____.

_____
                                    Notary

Resources for Architectural Description

OAHP, "Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture & Engineering":
   Information on architectural styles and building types in Colorado, available online or as a PDF
   https://www.historycolorado.org/colorados-historic-architecture-engineering-guide
   https://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/1625Field.pdf

National Park Service, "Preservation Brief 17: Architectural Character":
   Guidance on what to look for to determine character-defining features of historic buildings; includes interior features (not necessary for Fort Collins Landmarks)
   https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm

Chicago Architecture Center, "Architecture Dictionary":
   Online dictionary of architectural terms
   http://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/architecture-dictionary/a-d/

Example Landmark Nomination Form:
   https://citydocs.fcgov.com/?cmd=convert&vid=72&docid=3424359&dt=&doc_download_date=JAN-21-2020&ITEM_NUMBER=