

Material to aid your building research can be found at the Archive at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, the Poudre River Public Library District (Reference, Non-Fiction, and Microfilm sections), and online at the **Fort Collins History Connection**: <http://history.fcgov.com>.

STEP 1: Look at City Directories to find the occupants of the building. The directories are available for most years from 1902-present and often include all of Larimer County. They are indexed alphabetically by name, business, and street address. Look at the section where they list the streets and find your address. It will tell you who lived there, their occupations, and names of children, and the business owners. There are a few directories that do not have listings by streets: 1904, 1906, 1907, and 1934. [Digitized directories](#) for 1902-2005 may be viewed online.

STEP 2: Look for information on your occupants in the Local History Reference Books. Five books provide major information on Fort Collins' people/buildings: *Fort Collins Yesterdays*, *Ranch Histories of Livermore and Vicinity*, and the three Larimer County history books: *History of Larimer County* 1911, 1985, and 1987.

STEP 3: Look for information on your building and its occupants on the Fort Collins History Connection site in the [Building Databases](#).

STEP 4: Look for your occupants' names in Cemetery Records. Grandview and Roselawn Cemeteries' Records list name, age, and date of burial [online](#) and in book form (978.868 Cemeteries). When you find the date of burial, you can usually find an obituary in the microfilmed newspaper dated 3-4 days before the burial date. These obituaries can provide significant historical information about the residents/owners of your building.

STEP 5: Look for the style of your building in [A Field Guide to Colorado's Architecture and Engineering](#). Additionally, there are other architectural style reference books in the 720 to 728 section of the Archive Reference Books.

STEP 6: Search the Tax Assessor Records. The Archive has a partial collection of Larimer County tax records dating from the 1940s to the 1970s with information and photographs of the property. Patrons need an address or legal location (township, range, and quarter section) to access these records. Many photographs from the 1948 and 1968 records are available in the Fort Collins History Connection [Tax Assessor Database](#).

STEP 7: Look at the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. These maps primarily depict the Old Town and early residential areas of Fort Collins during the years of 1886, 1891, 1895, 1901, 1906, 1909, 1917, 1925, and 1961 and are available at the Archive or [online](#) through the Poudre River Public Library District website.

Step 8: Look at the early newspaper indexes online and *The Coloradoan* newspaper card index from 1979-1987. Microfilmed Fort Collins newspapers 1874 and 1878-present, Wellington Sun, and Triangle Review are also available. See the [Colorado Historic Newspaper Project](#) for early Fort Collins newspapers online.

Additional Archival Resources

Historic Photograph Collections — Date from 1860s-present and include Larimer County and Fort Collins' businesses, residences, events, street scenes, and individuals. Order Forms for photographs are [online](#) or available at the Archive.

Oral History Transcripts — Over 300 verbatim transcripts of interviews available for viewing at the Archive and some are [online](#). Transcripts are also available for check-out at the Old Town Library. Topics include historical events, experiences of early pioneers and current residents, and Larimer County community histories. Excerpts from some interviews on [Local Events](#) and [World War II](#) are online.

Biographical and Subject Files — These [files](#) are available in the Archive and provide newspaper clippings, reports, and other documents pertaining to the history of local properties and individuals.

Historical Maps — Provide information on land ownership, boundaries, road and railroad routes, population statistics, agriculture, storm drainage, subdivision plats, etc. There are maps from 1894, 1914, 1915, 1929, and 1940, and atlases from 1956, 1959, 1963, 1968, and 1974 that detail property ownership of Fort Collins and Larimer County.

Obituary Files — Contain a copy of every obituary in *The Coloradoan* newspaper from 1977-2011. Obituaries dated before 1977 must be searched for in the microfilmed newspapers. The *Fort Collins Coloradoan* newspaper database has obituaries without the photographs dating from 1999-present; Poudre River Public Library District cardholders may also search the [Proquest Database](#) for obituaries from 1999 to present.

Historic Building Surveys and Contexts — Provide historical and architectural data on various residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural buildings in Fort Collins. Surveys exist for the following neighborhoods: City Park, West Central, West Side, East Side, Laurel School, Southwest, Holy Family, and Buckingham/Alta Vista/Andersonville Neighborhoods.

Building Permit Records — Provide construction dates from January 1920-December 1949. A [database](#) for these years is available online.

Building Records — Copies of building records that appeared in the newspapers at the end of each year. They give the location of new construction and often the name of the owner or the builder. These newspaper articles span the time period from 1878 to 1956. They are not available for every year and an incomplete [database](#) is online.

Other Local History Sources

The offices of [Tax Assessor](#) and [County Clerk and Recorder](#) in the Larimer County Administration Building (200 W. Oak, Fort Collins, 80521, 970-498-7000) provide information on tax assessments and deeds, mortgages, and sales that pertain to a property from the 1860s-present. These will reveal who owned the property and for how long, how much the property cost, and can give valuable information about the homeowner of the deeds that have been filed on the property. Deeds are indexed by the names of the seller (grantor) and the buyer (grantee), so start with the most recent owner and transaction and work back through the years. When trying to determine the year a building was erected, there are a number of clues to look for. For example, a sizable increase in price from one transaction to the next suggests that there was some capital improvement on the land. Also, a large increase in the property taxes assessed suggests that some major improvement took place. Additionally, wills, probate records, and court litigation that may involve the property are filed with the District Court which is on the second floor of the Courthouse, 201 Laporte, Fort Collins, Colorado.

If money is no object, but time is, it is possible to have a title company do this research for you by providing you with the abstract for the property. Search online for local Title Companies.