



## House History



Learning about the history of your home can be a fun and fascinating process. You may find information about the people who used to live there, or you may learn what architectural style your house represents and try to find out the name of the original architect and builder. Your research could uncover information about important people or events associated with your home. Above all, researching your house will give you a sense of appreciation for its history and lend insight into the customs and lifestyles of your predecessors.

Staff members in the Northwest Room of Downtown Spokane Public Library are happy to assist you as you conduct your research. Many of the research materials you will need are available at the library.

### **Getting Started**

If your home is in the City of Spokane, you may first visit Property Development, a sector of the Permit Department, Third Floor, City Hall, 808 West Spokane Falls Blvd. There are usually permits on file here that show water connections, sewer connections, permits for remodeling and if the home was constructed after 1912, there will be a Building Permit. Ask the receptionist to see the microfiche on your address to view these files. County residents may see their building permits dating back to 1930 at the County Building Department Public Works Building, 811 North Jefferson. Ask to see the Assessor's workbook that will show any additions or remodeling done to your home.

Information uncovered at these offices may provide names and dates that will be invaluable as you conduct further research.

### **Tracing the owners of your home**

This process is called creating a Chain of Title and may be accomplished with a visit to a Title Insurance Company. This Company may provide you with a list of owners and any business transactions attached to the property. There are several Title companies in Spokane, and most may charge a fee for this service. Before approaching a Company, be prepared with a legal description of your property, which may be found by consulting your property's tax records. The description is shown in the upper left hand corner. (Example: HEATH'S L5 B6, meaning Heath's Addition, Lot 5, Block 6). If your tax records are not readily available, a computer printout may be obtained at the Assessor's Office, Spokane County Courthouse, 1116 West Broadway.

### **Tracing the History of the Owners of Your Home**

After learning the names of previous owners of your property, you can put together a history using the R. L. Polk Spokane City Directories. Dating back to 1883, these books list the names and occupations of Spokane residents. Beginning in the 1929 directories, information is cross-referenced, so you may look search by either address or name. It is important to note that prior to 1891, the streets in Spokane used the river to divide north and south and Howard Street to divide east and west, while in directories dated after 1891, the major dividing lines are Division for east and west and Sprague for north and south. Suburban directories are available from 1956, and the library also maintains are county maps and a few Valley directories that may be helpful. These materials are all available for use at the Downtown Library, 906 West Main Avenue.

For more information, call (509) 444-5338 or visit the Northwest Room at the Spokane Public Library, 906 W. Main, Spokane, Washington 99201.



SPOKANE CITY-COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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