House History Research

DIY and fee-based research options

Researching the history of a historic home is a rewarding journey. Uncovering the stories of the architects who designed it, the builders who crafted it, and the families who lived there connects us deeply to our community's past. Ridge Historical Society (RHS) supports research for homes and buildings in Beverly Hills, Morgan Park, Mt. Greenwood, and Washington Heights.

Because we receive a high volume of inquiries, we encourage homeowners to explore the DIY resources and Basic Tier fee-based research.

Do-It-Yourself Research

You can do all or a significant amount of the property research on your own using free, publicly available online resources. It is a fun and rewarding experience!

The Free Research Guide: We have compiled a comprehensive, step-by-step guide to help you navigate building permits, fire insurance maps, and historical tract books. You can access the complete guide for free at **https://research.timblackburn.com**

House History Lecture Program: Join us to learn the methodology of house history research directly from RHS historians. The current cost for the program is $10 for members and $20 for non-members. We host these deep-dive educational sessions twice a year:

- ☐ The Friday before Columbus Day at 7pm
- ☐ The first Sunday in May at 4pm

Fee-based Research Services

We offer two tiers of research services. The Basic tier applies to any house and unlocks RHS archival records that add value even if you are doing your own DIY research. Meanwhile, our Advanced tier is a service designed for those who want our historians to do the heavy lifting on their behalf.

Please submit your research services request online for a house history:
http://ridgehistorical.org/request-house-history

Research type	Fees	Scope
Basic Tier	**Member:** $35 **Non-Member**: $50	☐ Online building permit lookup ☐ RHS Architecture files lookup (checking for house, architect, and builder records) ☐ Doris Brown real estate books ☐ Historic photo lookup ☐ Original Owner file lookup (if known)
Advanced Tier	**Member**: $100 for the first 3 hours, then $40/hour **Non-Member:** $125 for the first 3 hours, then $40/hour.	☐ Includes everything in the Basic Research tier ☐ Online census research, including information on all past owners ☐ Online newspaper and periodical research of past inhabitants ☐ Additional scope as agreed upon ☐ A written report of the findings
Onsite Researcher Appointments	**Member:** $20 **Non-Member:** $30 **Students:** Free	The final step in the house history process! Whether you have completed the DIY research yourself or utilized our Advanced Tier research service, an in-person visit allows you to further augment your findings using items from the RHS archives. To ensure a productive visit, your preliminary research must be completed first and your research scope must be documented and reviewed by RHS prior to your appointment. **Submit your appointment request here:** https://ridgehistorical.org/request-research-appointment

Additional Info

- **Billing:** You do not need to pay upfront. We will generate and email a secure Square invoice upon the completion of the research request.
- **Research Limitations:** Sometimes we can find very little about the construction of a house. This is particularly applicable to pre-annexation homes. In these instances, our research effort is still the same or more. We may provide a credit back at our discretion.
- **Timeline:** Due to volume of requests, we cannot guarantee a specific timeline for completion.
- **Financial Assistance:** Grants covering up to 100% of the research fees are available for individuals or organizations who need assistance. If you need assistance, let us know.