

GLENDALE HISTORICAL RESEARCH GUIDE



**City of Glendale
Historic Preservation Commission**

Glendale Historical Research Guide

The characteristics of place are in large part defined by the events which have occurred there over time. The people who have taken part in those events have, in many instances, left their “marks” on the natural and built environment.

Answers to the following questions will help in creating a “biography” of a building or group of buildings and make possible the realistic assessment of a building’s or district’s significance.

- When was the building constructed?
- Who was the original owner?
- Was there an architect?
- Who were the subsequent owners or users of the building?
- What roles did the building and the people associated with it play in the community and in the architectural development of Glendale?

This guide provides information that will help you find the answers to these questions in the City of Glendale (of course, some of the resources listed here will also provide information about other cities as well). It is broken down into four sections based on typical research needs:

- Researching the site (i.e. the land)
- Researching the building
- Researching the people and events associated with the building
- Additional resources

Researchers preparing a historic nomination may need to use all of these sections, while someone looking for specific information, such as a construction date, will just need one. “Dead ends,” such as missing building permits, can many times be countered with pursuing the same information in alternative sources. The following four guidelines should be utilized when pursuing your research:

- Explore as many leads as possible
- Verify facts by consulting more than one source
- Identify sources
- Respect the fragile nature of old records and re-file all materials correctly

Some research must be conducted in person; however, a growing amount of information is online. In each section you will find information about searching both resources. If no information about online resources is listed, they currently are not available. This of course will change in the coming years, and that is where you can help us. If you find any information here either out of date or incorrect (or if you know of resources that we’ve missed), please let us know. Contact the Historic Preservation Planner at: (818) 937-8155. Enjoy your research!

Researching the Site

Chain of Title / Legal Description

Where: Los Angeles County Assessor's Office
Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St. Room 225
(213) 974-3211
www.lacountyassessor.com

A property's chain of title is basically a list of owners from the time of initial construction through the present. It is not required for every nomination, but can be useful to find significant people associated with a site (at least through ownership). The Assessor's Office only has property information for buildings built after 1905. If you need to develop a complete chain of title and find gaps in the records or need information for the period between 1891 and 1905, you should do deed research at the County Recorder's Office in Norwalk (see "Research the People and Events" section below). A legal description typically includes tract, block, and lot/parcel numbers. It will be useful later on in the research process as a way of identifying your property when searching for relevant documents. The legal description is available from the County Assessor's Office, but can be easily accessed from the assessor's website as well (it is also available on ZIMAS - see "Researching the Building" section below).

In addition to the legal description, the assessor's office and website can provide the following information:

- Property information – including property owners
- Recent sale information
- Most recent roll values
- Legal description
- Building description, including year constructed for many properties

From the main page of the website:

1. Click on "Property Sales & Maps"
2. Agree to the disclaimer (if you agree with it)
3. Type the address of the property you wish to research, and click submit (Note: The system is very particular about the way the address is typed. Omit "W., S., Street, Blvd., etc. Instead simply type the street number and street name. Example – 300 Brand, instead of 300 S. Brand Blvd.)
4. Your search may return multiple results. Click on the Assessor's Identification Number (AIN) corresponding to your address (also take note of the AIN).
5. To the right will appear a panel containing the information listed above. To the left is a basic parcel map. You may click on "View Assessor's Map" to view a more detailed map of the property's area.
6. After pulling up the assessor's map, note the Map Book Number, usually denoted by initials MB followed by a string of digits. It is usually found directly underneath the tract name or number. If there is more than one, take down both, as your property may exist on more than one tract. This information will be necessary when searching for tract maps at the Bureau of Engineering. (Note: the first number in the MB No. denotes the map book, and the second number denotes the page number or numbers on which the tract map is located within the map book)

Additional information can be found by visiting the Assessor's main office, in downtown Los Angeles.

Tract Maps

Where: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

<http://ladpw.org/>

Tract maps offer detailed information about the location of the property, and the area surrounding it. They may also give you information about the original owner of the land on which your property is located, and previous subdivisions of the land. Original tract maps are available from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works website under Land Records Information:

<http://gis.dpw.lacounty.gov/website/surveyRecord/tractMain.cfm>

The site has an interactive map called the Land Records Viewer that allows you to locate the Map Book Number for any property by address or intersection. Once you have recorded your Map Book Number, return to the Tract Map Table and click the corresponding link to access your tract map.

Original tract maps often are accompanied by tract descriptions that may include the names of the original owners of the tract on which your property is located, and the subdivisions of this land. This description usually begins "Being a subdivision of..." and is usually found under the tract name or number on the map, or on an accompanying page, if it is a detailed description.

Aerial (Satellite) Images:

Where: Google Maps

<http://maps.google.com>

For a recent (6 – 12 months old) satellite view of your property's site, you can visit Google's map page.

To view image:

1. Visit Google Maps
2. In the search box, type in, as specifically as possible, the address of your property.
3. If a variety of options appear to the right of the map window, select your address. Otherwise, a map of your property's area will appear.
4. In the top right corner of the map window, click on "Satellite." A satellite image of the site will appear.
5. Using the gauge on the left of the map, you can zoom in and out of the image.

Researching the Building

Address

It is possible that records for a building may be filed under more than one address. Other addresses, especially for corner buildings, commercial buildings, and land parcels with more than one building on them, may come to light during the course of your research.

Addresses in Glendale were changed in 1918 to the present system which numbers north and south from Broadway and east and west from Brand. Originally, the numbering scheme began with the 100 blocks between Lexington (1st Street) and California (2nd Street) and between Adams (A Street) and Belmont (B Street) and increased to the south and west. One way to uncover the historic number of a building is to look it up on the 1919 Sanborn Map (see Part VI).

Like addresses, many street names in Glendale have changed since March 11, 1887 when the subdivision of Glendale was platted out of a tract of the Rancho San Rafael. Most notably, the east/west streets were numbered, beginning at the north at 1st Street (now Lexington) and ending in the south at 6th Street (now Colorado) while the north/south streets were lettered, beginning with A Street (now Adams) and progressing westward. Street name changes may be discovered through tract maps.

Property Name

Historic Name: The United States Department of the Interior defines a historic name as ordinarily reflecting one or more of the following:

- Original owner or builder
- Significant persons or events associated with the property
- Innovative or unusual characteristics of the property
- Accepted professional, scientific, technical, or traditional names

If an appropriate historic name is uncovered by the research, please enter it on the form.

Common Name: The common name represents the title by which the property is known locally. It may be the same as the historic name or may reflect present ownership or use.

Building Permit

Where: Glendale Community Development Department – Building and Safety Division
633 E. Broadway, Room 101
Glendale, CA 91206
(818) 548-3200

Building permits allow you to trace the complete history of construction done on the property. Building permits typically provide you with the following information:

- Date construction was completed
- Owner of the resource at time of construction
- Architect – unfortunately most early building permits do not list the architect's name
- Builder
- Purpose of the building
- Number of rooms
- Valuation of the building when it was built
- Size of the building
- Number of stories
- Material of construction

In addition to the above, you can find certificates of occupancy, alteration permits that show changes made in the building, and correspondence relating to the property.

To obtain building permits:

1. Download the Permit Record Request Form at:
http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us/planning/pdf_files%5CBuildingSafetyPermits/PermitRecordsRequestForm.pdf
2. Alternatively, you can request a form by calling Building & Safety at the number above.
3. Submit the form by fax, mail, or in person. There is a \$17.70 fee per address. The permit package will be e-mailed to you within approximately two days.
4. If you don't have access to e-mail or are looking for specific forms (instead of the entire permit history), come to the Building & Safety Division in person and the documents will be printed out for you. The fee for this service is \$8.75 plus 10 cents/page.

In cases where the original building permit is missing or the building predates 1921, references to the permit might be found in at least two other resources – the *Southwest Builder and Contractor* and historic Glendale newspapers.

Southwest Builder and Contractor

Where: Los Angeles Central Library
Science, Technology & Patents Department
630 W. Fifth St.
Los Angeles, CA 90071
(213) 228-7400
www.lapl.org

Southwest Builder and Contractor (1917-1966) formed through the union of *Builder and Contractor* and *Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer*. Publishing history – Volume 50 (July 6, 1917) through Volume 147 (March 25, 1966). *Builder and Contractor (1893-1917)* was a weekly journal covering architecture, engineering, contracting and industrial program. Publishing history – Number 1 (March 1, 1893) through 1266 (June 28, 1917). Volumes for 1893-1902 also called Volume 1-20. *Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer (1908-1917)* consisted of 18 volumes. Publishing history – Volume 1 (1908) through Volume 18 (1917). All three journals are available on microfilm from the Science, Technology & Patents Department of the Central Library. Copies are available for a fee.

1. See **California Index** (under Researching the People and Events) on how to find articles in aforementioned journals.
2. Once you have located your desired information, visit the information desk in the Science, Technology & Patents Department at the Central Library.
3. Fill out a "Magazine/Newspaper Periodical Request." (Journal name, date, and page number are required.)
4. Generally a 15-20 minute wait is required for microfilm to be brought out of storage.
5. Microfilm readers are located in the rear of the Department, to the right of the information desk.
6. Insert film reel into the reader. Manually locate the page(s) using the knob on the reader.
7. When printing a page, center the document on the screen. Printouts cost \$0.15/page.

Maps: Sanborn Insurance Maps

Where: <http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us/planning/preservation/GlendaleHistory/SanbornMaps.asp>

Sanborn insurance maps were created to assist fire insurance companies in assessing the risk associated with insuring a particular property. They list street blocks and building numbers, including numbers in use at the time the map was made as well as previous numbers. These maps were made between 1867 and 1970. Glendale was mapped in 1908, 1912, 1919, and 1925, with each new edition reflecting the growth of the city by the increase in the area which was mapped.

All of Glendale's Sanborn maps are available for viewing on the website. Additionally, the original bound volumes drawn in 1925 and updated by paste-overs in 1931 are in the Special Collections Room of the Glendale Public Library.

Sanborn maps for the entire state of California are available for viewing in the History Department at the Los Angeles Central Library, but library card holders can easily access them from the library's website as well.

The library owns maps for the entire state of California in its set of Sanborn Maps on microfilm, ranging from 1888 to 1950 on 72 reels. They are catalogued under the number NR 912.794 S198, and are shelved in the microfilm drawers at the far end of the reading room. There is a guide to the Sanborn Map collection available at the reference desk, which is necessary in order to determine the reel on which your map is located.

A library card gives you access to California Sanborns through the Los Angeles Central Library's website.

1. From the main page of the library's website, click on "Databases."
2. You will be prompted to enter your library card number and ZIP code.
3. A long list of alphabetically organized databases will be displayed. Locate and click on "Sanborn Maps."
4. On the Sanborn website's mainpage, click on "Browse Maps." Follow the step-by-step instructions to locate your property.

Although Sanborn maps cannot tell you exactly when a building was constructed, they can establish its presence on a site by a certain date. Moreover, the maps contain additional information about the characteristics of the building.

Turning to the appropriate map, find the building in question. The address will be written in front of the lot in the street. Note the street name and the address in use at the time. The lot lines and a building footprint, drawn to scale, will be shown. The color of the building indicates the materials of its construction; for instance, yellow generally indicates wood frame while pink is usually masonry. Because the color codes did vary somewhat from year to year, it is important to check the legend (usually on the same page as the index). This will also assist you in translating the other information about the building which may be shown, including the number of stories, the locations of windows, porches, and overhangs, the use of the building, and the existence of any out-buildings.

Researching the People and Events

Once you have compiled information on the site and building, you will have an easier time finding out the chain of occupancy and ownership of the property, as well as events that may have occurred there.

Deeds / Chain of Title

Where: Office of the County Clerk Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder
Land Records Division 12400 E. Imperial Hwy.
201 N. Figueroa St. Room 730 Norwalk, CA 90650
Los Angeles, CA 90012 (800) 815-2666
(213) 977-6014

The Land Records Division keeps records of grant deeds, which document transfer of ownership of a piece of property. Easily accessible at the County Clerk's office is information about the current owner of a piece of property. By accessing this information, you can begin to track the history of ownership of your property by pulling previous deeds on the property. A deed names both a grantor, and a grantee. A grantor is the person selling the property. A grantee is the person purchasing or receiving the property. Looking at the most recent deed available on the property, you can identify the grantor to the current owner. At some point, this grantor was the grantee of the property. Locate the deed on which this person is listed as the grantee.

By following this process, you can gain a complete history of the ownership of your property. The County Recorder's Office has deed information going back to 1891. When tracing deeds chronologically, you may encounter gaps due to foreclosure, tax sales, or other problems.

To obtain deeds:

1. Visit the office of the Land Records Division.
2. Provide the staff member with either the property address, the Assessor's Identification Number, or the legal description.
3. The staff member will pull up an index of deeds available on your property. Identify those deeds that will be useful, and the staff member will pull the deeds. Deeds at the downtown records office are available from 1945, and are considered unofficial. Official deeds, and those predating 1945 can be found at the Norwalk office.
4. There is no public microfilm reader available at the office. Those deeds that you request from the index will be printed for viewing at \$1.10 for the first page of each document, and \$.10 for each additional page.

Once you have traced the ownership of your property comes the task of determining whether the previous owners were of any importance within the Los Angeles community.

Historical and Biographical Research

Where: Glendale Public Library
Special Collections
222 E. Harvard St.
Glendale, CA 91205
(818) 548-2030

Los Angeles Central Library
History Department
630 W. Fifth St.
Los Angeles, CA 90071
(213) 228-7400

Once you have compiled a chronology of ownership for your property, there are many resources available at the Glendale Central Library, and in some cases at the Los Angeles Central Library, for biographical and historical research on the previous owners. This information is important in assessing the historic or cultural value of your property.

Local newspapers found building activity in Glendale quite newsworthy, listing building permits and reporting on new construction. The newspapers can also be of assistance in developing a biography of an early resident. In this regard, obituaries can be most helpful.

The Special Collections Room of the Glendale Public Library has microfilmed copies of the following:

- Glendale Encinal 1889-1890
- Glendale News 1905-1913
- Jewel City Press 1910-1911
- Glendale Evening News 1913-1928
- Glendale Daily Press 1921-1928
- Glendale News-Press 1928-

Here is a list of other resources available in the Special Collections Room:

- Local and state histories: Rather than yielding facts about individual buildings outside of the most prominent ones, histories provide a context for site-specific research. Moreover, the often chatty, biographical slant of the earlier writers will help develop profiles of earlier citizens. Check the main card catalog for a complete listing. A partial bibliography would include:
 - Glendale Planning Division, Historic Preservation Element, Glendale Planning Division, 1997
 - Parcher, Carroll W., and George Goshorn, Glendale Community Book, Glendale: Akers, 1957
 - Perry, E. Caswell and Shirley Catherine Berger, Glendale: A Pictorial History, Norfolk: The Donning Co., 1983
 - Perry, E. Caswell and Carroll W. Parcher, Glendale Area History, 2nd ed., Glendale: Schneirsohn, 1981
 - Scherer, John Calvin, History of Glendale and Vicinity, Glendale: Glendale History Publishing Co., 1922
- Photographs and scrapbooks: A collection of recent and historic photographs and related material is organized in binders and stored in the locked cabinets. Check with the library staff to see if a particular site is documented.
- Telephone directories: The collection spans the years 1908 through 1977. Additional copies of all but the earliest years are also available at the Reference Desk. Reverse directories, meaning listing by address as well as the usual alphabetical listing of names, begin in the teens. In some of the older editions, before Glendale annexed the surrounding communities, separate listings were maintained for each area (e.g. "Glendale," "Tropico" [south Glendale]).

The Los Angeles Central Library also contains a variety of useful research sources. Resources for biographical research are extensive, as you can reference city directories, newspaper archives, vital records, or books such as "Who's Who" which give brief biographies of Los Angeles citizens.

Here is a list of resources available in the History/Genealogy Department at the Central Library:

- "Who's Who" books
- Telephone Directories (dating back to 1900)
- City Directories (in book and microfilm formats)
- Los Angeles Times Historical Archive
- Photograph Collection

- Genealogy Collection
- Census Records from 1790
- Family Histories
- Heraldry and Coats of Arms
- Immigration Records and passenger arrival lists for New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The library has records of passenger lists for San Pedro/Wilmington/Los Angeles for 1907-1948.
- All available naturalization records for the U.S. District Court for southern California
- Local histories including cemetery records, probate records, and town records
- Military records - The department owns substantially complete rosters of soldiers who served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. In addition, there are several hundred unit histories of military units from World Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam.
- Name books - There are approximately 600 books on names, their derivation and meaning.
- Newspapers – The library owns on microfilm all of the Los Angeles Times from 1881, the complete Herald Examiner, the New York Times from 1851, the Times of London from 1785, the San Francisco Chronicle from 1869, and the Chicago Tribune from 1849-1998.

Searching for information on an individual can be time-consuming and at times return few results. The above is only a listing of what is available at the Central Library. There are many additional resources throughout the city.

Vital Records

Where: Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder
 12400 E. Imperial Hwy.
 Norwalk, CA 90650
 (800) 815-2666
<http://regrec.co.la.ca.us>

Birth, death, and marriage records for Los Angeles County are available through the county registrar's office. Birth records are available from 1866, death records are available from 1877, and marriage licenses from 1852.

The county registrar-recorder's process for requesting these records is somewhat complicated and expensive. It is up to the researcher to decide whether or not he or she feels that the information gained will be valuable in determining the property's significance. Detailed information on requesting these records can be found at the registrar-recorder's website. Requests for unofficial records can be made by mail or in person. An in-person request requires a valid photo I.D., and can only be fulfilled same-day if the birth occurred after 1964. Births occurring before 1964 will be mailed within 15 working days.

To request records by mail, you must submit a written request containing the person's name, date of birth (if known) or range of years to be checked, number of copies needed, and relationship to the person whose record you are requesting. Because of the likelihood that you are not related to the person whose record you are requesting, simply state no relation. A relationship is only required if you are requesting a certified official copy of the record. The application can be found on the registrar-recorder's website. You must also submit a notarized certificate of identity, which can also be found on the website.

Historical Los Angeles Times Archive / ProQuest

Where: http://library.ci.glendale.ca.us/online_resources.asp

You can search for information from every page of the Los Angeles Times written between 1881 and 1987 by using a database called ProQuest. This service can be accessed from computer terminals inside any branch of the Glendale Public Library or from home on your computer. In either case, you need an active library card to enter the system.

To search the archive:

1. Visit the Glendale Public Library's Website.
2. Click on "Online Resources" on the left side of the screen.
3. Look for the "Subject Guide" in the middle of the page and click on "Los Angeles Times (1881-1987) - ProQuest Historical Newspapers."
5. Enter your search terms in the appropriate fields.
6. Enjoy your research!

Genealogical Research

Where: Ancestry.com

www.ancestry.com

Ancestry.com contains a huge database of U.S. Census, social security, military, immigration, and birth, marriage, and death records. You can sign up for a free 14-day trial on the website which gives you full access to its database.

You can also visit Glendale's Family History Center, which has a library subscription to Ancestry.com that you can use on-site.

Glendale Family History Center
1130 East Wilson Ave.
(818) 241-8763

California Index

Where: Los Angeles Public Library Website

www.lapl.org

A retrospective card file and current computer database that provides detailed indexing to people, places and events in the state, with emphasis on Southern California. Many citations are linked to the digitized documents so they may be read online or downloaded. A large portion of the database is biographical. Many of these entries are linked to a biographical data sheet filled out by the person himself in the early years of the 20th century. Many citations refer to copyright documents which could not be scanned into the database. Some of these documents are actually on file in the History Department and may be requested from the library. The California Index is available online to anyone with a library card.

To search the index:

1. Visit the main page of the Los Angeles Public Library's Website.
2. Click on "Databases."
3. Type in your library card number and ZIP code.
4. An alphabetical listing of available databases will be displayed. Locate and click on "California Index (LAPL)."
5. Perform your search. You may search under a community name or a subject, such as a park, school, or building. You may also combine terms to narrow your search to the

parks in a particular community, or you may search under a specific name. You may search under various ethnic groups and do so within a specific community.

Los Angeles Public Library Photographic Collection

Where: Los Angeles Public Library Website

www.lapl.org

The Los Angeles Public Library's collections include 350,000 photographs of Los Angeles beginning in the 1880s and the 2.5 million photo morgue of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner newspaper. The Library also houses the Security Pacific National Bank collections, which consist of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Collection, Turn of the Century Los Angeles, and the Hollywood Citizen News / Valley Times Newspaper Collection. In addition the History Department also holds collections of the Central Library's Historical California Photographs, Portrait Collection, Federal Writer's Project, Ralph Morris Archives, William Reagh Collection, and Shades of L.A. The Los Angeles Public Library Photographic Collection is available online to anyone with a library card. Photographs are also available for viewing at the Library by appointment; call (213) 228-7403 to schedule.

To search the index:

1. Visit the main page of the Los Angeles Public Library's Website.
2. Click on "Databases."
3. Type in your library card number and ZIP code.
4. An alphabetical listing of available databases will be displayed. Locate and click on "LAPL Photo Database."
5. Perform your search.

Seaver Center for Western History Research

Where: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

900 Exposition Blvd. (center of the Ground Floor next to California History Hall)

Los Angeles, CA 90007

(213) 763-3359

www.nhm.org

The Seaver Center is open from 10:00AM to 4:00PM on Monday and Thursday by appointment only. As study space is limited, reservations are essential. Please call (213) 763-3359 schedule an appointment. The purpose of the Seaver Center for Western History Research is to collect, preserve, and make available to the general public research materials documenting the history of the trans-Mississippi West with special emphasis on Southern California and Los Angeles. Historic records include, but are not necessarily limited to, manuscript materials, books, serials, pamphlets, broadsides, maps, posters, prints, and photographs.

From the main page of the website:

1. Click on "Research" and then "Disciplines."
2. Under Disciplines click on "History."
3. Click on "Collections."
4. Select "The Seaver Center for Western History Research."

Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals

Where: Los Angeles Central Library
630 W. Fifth St.
Los Angeles, CA 90071
(213) 228-7400
www.lapl.org

The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals is a comprehensive guide to the current literature of architecture and design. The Avery Index contains over 2,500 journals published worldwide on architecture, design, urban planning, historic preservation, and landscape architecture, three-fourths of which are not indexed elsewhere. An obituary index of architects and the retrospective *Burnham Index to Architectural Literature* (1919-1934), created by the Art Institute of Chicago, are also incorporated into the Avery Index. The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals may only be accessed from the Central Library.

To search the index:

1. From a computer terminal at the Central Library, visit the main page of the Los Angeles Public Library's Website.
2. Click on "Databases."
3. An alphabetical listing of available databases will be displayed. Locate and click on "Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals."
4. Perform your search.

Los Angeles Conservancy Architectural Archive Database

Where: Los Angeles Conservancy
523 W. Sixth Street, Suite 826.
Los Angeles, CA 90014
(213) 623-2489

This is a relatively new addition to the Conservancy's library. It is a small, but growing, database of information to help you find out if an architect or firm has deposited drawings, papers, or other materials in an archive or at a library. In general, only "name brand" architect's materials are collected by major archives, but it's worth checking just in case. At this time, the database is not available on-line. Call the Conservancy directly and ask for assistance in looking up the architect you are researching.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Henry E. Huntington Library

1151 Oxford Rd.
San Marino, CA 91108
(626) 405-2203

UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library Department of Special Collections

Research Library Building
Los Angeles, CA 90095
(310) 825-4732

USC School of Architecture Library

Watt Hall
University Park Campus
Los Angeles, CA 90089

The library houses over 75,000 volumes in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. The architecture periodical collection is the most extensive in southern California.

USC Regional History Special Collections

University Park Campus
Doheny Memorial Library, 2nd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213) 821-2366

Contains many and a variety of documents relating to Southern California history, including clippings from the Los Angeles Examiner, and an extensive photograph collection.