

How to Research the History of a House in Los Gatos

Any house that was built before 1941 is considered historic by Town law and an owner must get permission and permits to change any exterior characteristics.

If the house number is a 4-digit number, it is a Campbell address.

If the house is a 5-digit number, it is a County address (but some of these were pulled out of the County system and made into Los Gatos addresses).

1. Look in **Patrons' Inquiries binder #3** under Residences, which is located on the shelf above the computers in the History Room. These are houses that were already asked about in the past, and there is a chance the house you are searching for can be in this binder, with all the sources checked already.
2. Check the **Historic Property Research Collection** in the boxes in Cabinet #11. These have things like newspaper articles, real estate listings and other information about many homes in Los Gatos. The boxes are arranged alphabetically by street name.
3. There is a binder titled "**Project Bellringer II**" in cabinet #12 and there are some newspaper articles about the genesis of the Bellringer program. There is a list of the 100 Bellringers (houses that were built before 1900 and awarded) in the front pocket of the binder and in the Resource Guides bin in the History Room.
4. A list of 20+ years of the Museums of Los Gatos **Historic Homes Tours** is to be found in the Resource Guides bin on the shelf above the computers in the History Room. If listed, find the house in the Tour Program for the year it was shown. Programs are in Cabinet #11.
5. The **1941 Tax Assessment Survey** is in blue binders in Cabinet #11. This is an assessment of houses that existed in 1941. The listings are alphabetical by street. An entry will tell you how old the owner thought the house was in 1941, which won't always be accurate. By Town decree, any house built before 1941 is considered historic,
6. Part of **Anne Bloomfield's Survey of 1991** is in the white binder in Cabinet #11. **The rest of the Anne Bloomfield surveys are only available on the History Room computer.** There is a folder on the desktop titled "Bloomfield Survey Binders" that has scans of the surveys listed alphabetically by street name. This is another assessment of houses that was done in 1991, and additional information can potentially be found here.
7. The **Sanborn Maps** are bound in a book that lies on top of the microfilm file cabinet. These maps only indicate outlines of buildings in 1884, 1888, 1891, 1895, 1904, 1908, 1928 and 1944. (1944 maps have been relabeled and appear BEFORE 1928 maps.) These maps will show proportions of buildings and structural significances.
8. **Polk's Directories** are in Cabinet #12. We have volumes 1925-1974, some years missing. Most of these directories have reverse listings so you can look up the street address for owner, and sometimes the owner's occupation. The yellow section is like a telephone directory, and the pink section lists the streets and house numbers and who lived there.
9. **Business and telephone directories** are in Cabinet #12, as early as 1881-82.
10. **Books** that are helpful: History of Los Gatos by George Bruntz (979.473); As it Was by Dora Rankin (in Cabinet #11, R979.473 R21 Los Gatos); Los Gatos Observed by Alistair Dallas (979.473); A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia Savage McAlester (728 M11).
11. For additional information, especially if the address was previously assigned to the County, refer the patron to the **Planning Department** or to the **County Recorder's Office** at 70 W. Hedding Street in San Jose.