



How to Research Your Los Gatos House

1. The vertical files in the Local History's Work Room include data on specific addresses, organized by street. This includes data from the two Bellringer projects and the results of the LGMA's Historical Home Survey. Be careful with the survey data. The closer the events cited are to 1975, the better the information, the further back in time, the more suspect. Much of this information was gained by individuals' memories, and oral history sometimes is unreliable.
2. In the Local History section outside the Work Room you will find the 1941 Tax Assessment Survey. The Tax Assessment Survey is contained in 3-ring binders, sorted alphabetically by street. You will find a lot about your house in 1941 and how it was assessed. It will tell you how old the owner thought the house was, not always accurate. It will tell you the number of rooms, the type of wall construction, something about the foundation and how it was heated. By Town decree, any house built before 1941 is considered historic, and permits must be obtained to change any exterior characteristic.
3. There are telephone directories and Polk's directories in the bookcases outside the Work Room. Find the Los Gatos section in the Polk's directories, starting with 1930 through 1974; look for the address to find the name of the owner. The California Room at San Jose's Martin Luther King Jr Library (5th floor) has a number of directories not available in Los Gatos.
4. Look at the Sanborn Maps located in one of the alcoves of the Local History section. A History docent should be able to help you with these. There are maps for 1884, 1888, 1891, 1895, 1904, 1908, 1928 and 1944, although not all of Los Gatos was covered in the earlier years. Because street addresses changed through time, look for your house first in 1944 or 1928, then look at earlier maps to see when your house first appears, which will give you an idea of when it was built. Also note how the shape of the house changed through time.
5. The Anne Bloomfield Los Gatos Historic Resources Inventory, June 1991 is located in the locked bookcases. If you're lucky you will find data on your house by district. Look at the street index in the front of the binder for street, listed in alphabetical order to find the district.
6. Local History docents are available from 1:00-5:00 on Mondays, 10:00-12:00 on Wednesdays and 1:00-5:00 on Thursdays to answer any questions and/or to help you search for information on your Los Gatos home. The Reference Librarian at the desk at the top of the stairs is available to help you also.