

# Researching the History of a Home

One of the most rewarding aspects of owning an older home is researching its history. It's not only fun to find out who once lived there, but you may also uncover when it was built, who built it, and may even find out what it originally looked like.

While researching look for dates; construction and remodeling, and the years of previous owners. Also search for photographs and include oral sources such as the old-timers in the neighborhood. They might be able to share the most personal information of all such as, remodeling endeavors, interior appearances, and information of previous owners. They could even possess photographs and wonderful anecdotes.

First, examine other homes within the community to determine the architectural style. You may request the book, [Hands On! The Rehabilitation Handbook for Everett's Historic Homes](#), which will help you with architectural specifics and may be obtained from the City of Everett's Planning and Community Development, or from the Everett Public Libraries Northwest Room.

The research should include county and city records. Because of the 1908 Snohomish County Courthouse fire, the best records for researching the age of a house are with the City Utility Department. They may supply you with the original owner's name, the specifics as to the date when the water and power was hooked up. And you may also find other documentation, such as complaints and upgrades, which might help piece together the dates of previous owners.

The City Building Department can provide the building history though records of permits issued within the last 20 years and they will be able to explain the requirements of permits needed for future projects and how the building code applies to older homes.

The County Assessor's office possesses tax records and may even have an older photograph of your home. An owner may provide a recent photo of their home and trade it for the older version.

The Northwest Room at the Everett Library is full of reference material. Here you will find Polk directories, a biographical index, Sanborn Insurance Atlas, photo files and newspapers. Newspapers are often the only source of information of architects and builders so it is worth a look see. The Northwest Room also has books on renovation and catalogs that supply everything from chimney tops to gingerbread.

An older home was usually built with finer materials and better craftsmanship which will retain its worth and become more valuable with age. Invest in the future by helping your old house achieve its best potential.

For more in depth information visit [Historic Everett](http://www.historiceverett.org).  
[www.historiceverett.org](http://www.historiceverett.org)

## Resources:

**City Utility Department**  
(425) 257-8800

**Snohomish County Assessor's Office**  
(425) 388-3433

**Everett Library NW Room**  
(425) 257-8005

## Recommended Reading:

[House Histories](#), Sally Light, New York, 1989 A guide to tracing the genealogy of your home.

[How Old is This House?](#), Hugh Howard, New York, 1989



[www.riversideneighborhood.org](http://www.riversideneighborhood.org)