

HISTORIC PROPERTY RESEARCH IN SAN ANTONIO



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1901 S. Alamo Street
San Antonio, Texas 78204
210.215.9274
ohp@sanantonio.gov
www.sanantonio.gov/historic

Section I – Maps

Digital Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

- Initially created for fire insurance liability purposes, these historic map collections are a valuable resource documenting cities and towns across the United States.
- A large collection of historic San Antonio Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are available digitally through the San Antonio Library's website (you will need an active library card) or on microfilm at the Texana desk at the Central Library.
- Sanborn maps identify street names, addresses, building footprints, building materials, types of buildings (dwellings, stores, etc.), and more.
- Sanborn maps can also identify changes in street names.

To access online: <http://www.mysapl.org/>

- Click on Databases
- Scroll down list of resources and click on Texas Digital Sanborn Maps
- Log in with your name and card number (you must be a member of the San Antonio Public Library)
- Click on Browse Maps
- Select state, city, date (most used 1911-1951)
- Review the index or key to find the volume and sheet where your property is located
 - Key – to look up by map
 - Index – to look up by street name

Other Maps Available at San Antonio Central Public Library/Texana:

- Sanborn Maps on microfilm (1885-1971)
- Birdseye/Koch Maps (1872 and 1886)
- San Antonio Street Maps - start in 1865; list of original maps at Texana desk

Section II - Real Estate Deed /Title Search

Bexar County Appraisal District:

www.bcad.org – for property details/owner information

- Click on Property Search tab
- Search type: click on property address
- Fill in: street number and street address (do not include Street, Avenue, Boulevard, etc.)
- Click on Search
- Property search results: click on View Details
- Click on Expand All button (far right) for full information
- Print the property search results (you will need this information later)
- Recent deed information is listed at the bottom under Deed History
- Map tab (near top left): click here to identify where the property is on the map; click anywhere on the map that comes up on the next screen to zoom to the parcel

Bexar County Clerk:

<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> - for deed history/deed records

- Need to register to use the site (*registration and use are free*)
- Click on Login-Search
- Searches Available - most commonly used:
 - Name (of owner)
 - Book/Page (volume/page of deed)
- Search by Name: click on Name
 - Name: enter name of current owner (last, middle, first)
 - Party Type: leave as All Party Types
- Additional Search Filters – Instrument Type:
 - You can choose Deed from the list or leave as blank and it will search all records
- Click Go Search (left tab at bottom of screen)
- View Image – click to see document; print (or save) any you want to include in your research
 - read carefully from beginning to end of documents (they might pertain to another property and not be the one you are researching)
 - check only the listings dated earlier than your last deed transfer
 - your next search will be for the deed of the prior deed of purchase of the seller
- Return to Search Menu - click on Name
 - Enter name of last seller
- Follow same steps as above to print/save results

You will go through the Grantor/Grantee search several times. *Remember, “grantee” is the buyer, the “grantor” is the seller.*

Physical locations for deed/title research:

Bexar County Courthouse

100 Dolorosa
San Antonio, TX 78205

Bexar County Clerk's Office

Basement #15
Monday-Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Help Desk: 210-366-9582 or 877-526-3282

Section III - Building Permits

Newspaper Archives - www.newspaperarchive.com

- Research address and original owner's name
- FREE access to Newspaper Archives at all city library branches; otherwise requires subscription

Subscription: Introductory \$9.95/month
Unlimited Monthly \$29.95/month
Unlimited 6 Month \$99.95/month

Permits issued 1980 to present:

City of San Antonio
Anna Galimore
1901 S. Alamo St., Suite 283
San Antonio, TX 78283
Fill out an open records request

Permits issued 1921 - 1980

Municipal Archives & Records Facility
719 S. Santa Rosa
Katie Rojas*
(210) 207-5076
katie.rojas@sanantonio.gov
Monday- Friday, 7:45 AM-4:30 PM

**When you contact Katie, make sure you have the address and the legal description. She will need the New City Block Number.*

Once you have narrowed down the year, date, and month building permit was issued or at least a year and the month (if it was built in 1920 or later):

San Antonio Public Library/Central Library

600 Soledad Street

San Antonio, Texas 78205

Texana/Genealogy Department

Frank S. Faulkner, Jr./Supervisor

(210) 207-2500

Important: call for hours; this

department has different hours from the library

- Search for building information in:

Service Bulletin for the San Antonio Builders Exchange

Jan.-Dec. 1920 to present

(In the later bulletins the information is about commercial and public buildings)

Section IV - Census Records

- 1880 Census: www.familysearch.org (Free)
- 1790-1930 censuses: www.ancestry.com (\$300 annual fee) or *free at the public library* in Texana/Genealogy department
- 1860-1930 censuses: use public library database “Heritage Quest” (with SAPL library card from home)

Section V - City Directory Resident Search

Central Library Texana /Genealogy

City directories on film, 1877-1970

City directories books, 1960-present

- City directories start listing residents by address in 1903.
- Always look for residents by address a few years prior to the year that BCAD has on record as the year the house was built.
- Starting in 1903, look at the address listing first, then look for the persons listed to find out what their occupations were.
- Remember that just because a person is listed as the owner of the house in the title research, they might not live at that address; the house could be a rental.
- Look for residents at an address every five years; people were not as mobile as we are today. In most cases there is no need to look at every single year.

San Antonio Conservation Society

107 King William Street

San Antonio, Texas 78204

Elizabeth (Beth) Standifird/Librarian

(210) 224-6163

Section VI - Individual or Family Research

www.familysearch.org

www.pilot.familysearch.org

www.ancestry.com

www.newspaperarchive.com

- San Antonio Conservation Society
- San Antonio Public Library/Central Library/Texana
- Obituaries in newspapers at the Central Library:
 - *Express*, 1867-present
 - *San Antonio Light*, 1882-1992
 - *News*, 1918-1994
- Obituaries in card catalog listed alphabetically 1919, 1923-1960
- Google search (home address and person's name and city)

UTSA/Institute of Texan Cultures
Library, 3rd Floor
801 East Durango Blvd.
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Tom Shelton/Senior Curator
(210) 458-2241

Bexar County Courthouse
100 Dolorosa Street
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Alfred Rodriguez/Spanish Archivist
(210) 335-2125

Section VII - Other contacts

City of San Antonio
Office of Historic Preservation
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78283
(210) 215-9274

Section VIII - Locating Vintage Photographs

Look for descendants of the original family; do an Internet search of names listed in census records, city directories, and obituaries.

- San Antonio Public Library/Texana vertical files
- UTSA/Institute of Texan Cultures Library
- San Antonio Conservation Society
- Historic American Buildings Survey, Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress
www.loc.gov



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