

## Finding Information and Documents for Plaques 1 and 2

There's no single way to research the history of your house. But the table below provides a sequence that has worked. Please review the application forms for the two plaques; doing the research for Plaque 1 will open doors to Plaque 2. It's an overlapping process for discovering how you're linked to the history of your home, your neighborhood, and your city. Expect to be surprised and delighted! Please be sure to include the date on all substantiating documents.

Application requirement	Sources of information and documents	Suggestions for research
Name of property's first owner (Plaque 1)	El Paso County Assessor's Office 1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd. Suite 2300 Colorado Springs, CO 80907	Call the Assessor's Office to have them (Steve Schleiker) prepare a list of all owners of your property and the dates of their deeds. (Depending on workload, the office will assemble the information in days or weeks.)
Name of first owner to live in house (Plaque 1)	Phone: 520-6600, 520-6527 Steve Schleiker	(A time-saving alternative is to pay a title company such as Stewart Title to list all the instruments in the chain of title-- anything of record such as transfers, liens, easements. This is an "uncertified title abstract," good for your history and cheaper than a guaranteed abstract.)
Names of historically significant property owners, if any (Plaque 1)		The list you get from the Assessor's Office will help you apply for both plaques. Use the list to research the personalities and events for Plaque 2. For Plaque 1, you can assume that one of the listed property owners built your house. But which one?
Document: city directory listing for first home owner to live in house (Plaque 1)	Special Collections Penrose Public Library 20 N. Cascade Avenue Colorado Springs, CO 80903 Phone: 531-6333	At this point, you know who has owned the property over the years but not who first owned your home (or who later lived in it, information useful for Plaque 2). City directories will help. Look through these annual records in the early years of the property. You're looking for the <u>first</u> time your address appears. It will include an occupant's name.
Year house was built (Plaque 1)		If that name in the city directory matches the name on the deed for that period, you've found the first owner-occupant. If the owner and occupant differ, the occupant may be a tenant. In any case, with no earlier directories mentioning your address, you have an idea of the year your house was built.  To be sure of the year your house was built, draw on any of these library resources (the library staff will be happy to guide you):
Architect and builder (Plaque 1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blueprints</li> <li>• Building Permits (the most accurate way to determine the construction date of your house)</li> <li>• Early maps</li> <li>• Historic inventory collections filed by address</li> <li>• Historic Sites file</li> <li>• Index to the Colorado Springs Gazette, 1872-present, Facts</li> <li>• Maps (Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, subsidence and flood maps)</li> <li>• US Census records (Heritage Quest online)</li> <li>• Water tap records (partial 1902-1940)</li> </ul>

Application requirement	Sources of information and documents	Suggestions for research
Year house was built (Plaque 1)	Pioneers Museum 215 S. Tejon Street Colorado Springs, CO 809031 Phone: 385-5650	In addition to the library, the Pioneers Museum may help you find just when your house was built (and the architect and builder if known). Its resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building plans</li> <li>• Early photos</li> <li>• Private papers</li> <li>• Water tap records</li> </ul>
Architect and builder (Plaque 1)		You fill out a request form at the main desk, and a staff member does the research, a process that can take days or more. An alternative is to call and make an appointment to do your research alongside a staff member.
Document: copy of first property deed (Plaque 1)	El Paso County Clerk 1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd. Colorado Springs, CO 80907 Phone: 520-6200	Once you know the first owner-occupant of your house and the year it was built, visit the County Clerk's Office for a copy of the property deed. You want the deed for the property when it first included your house (deeds may or may not mention a house on the property).
Document: deed for first owner who lived in house (Plaque 1)		Using the information from the Assessor's Office, have the staff pull the microfilm reel that contains the book number of the deed for the first owner of your house. Check the grantee index at the beginning of the book for the owner's name to get the page number. Scroll to that page and make a copy of the deed.
Documents: Copies of all deeds (Plaque 2)		
Significant architectural features (Plaque 1)	Penrose Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>North End Historic District Guidelines</i> (available on paper at Penrose Library and from ONEN, online from CS Planning Dept) <a href="http://www.springsgov.com/PAGE.asp?NavID=6265">www.springsgov.com/PAGE.asp?NavID=6265</a></li> <li>• <i>Design Guidelines for North Weber/Wahsatch Historic District</i> (available at <a href="http://www.springsgov.com/PAGE.asp?NavID=6265">www.springsgov.com/PAGE.asp?NavID=6265</a>)</li> <li>• <i>A Field Guide to American Houses</i>, Virginia McAlester</li> <li>• <i>Old House Dictionary</i>, Steven J. Phillips</li> <li>• <i>American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia</i>, Cyril M. Harris.</li> <li>• <i>Bungalows of Sears Roebuck, 1908-1940</i></li> </ul>
History of events in life of house (Plaque 2)	Penrose Library  Pioneers Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early photos</li> <li>• Building Permits</li> <li>• Personal papers</li> </ul>
History of owners or residents (Plaque 2)	Special Collections Tutt Library, Colorado College Phone: 389-5568	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Book of Colorado Springs</i> by Manly D. Ormes and Eleanor R. Ormes</li> <li>• <i>Files of Colorado Springs Landmarks</i> by Landmarks Committee (M. E. Burgess, E. H. Hylbom, and R. H. Shaw)</li> <li>• <i>Newport in the Rockies</i> by Marshall Sprague</li> <li>• <i>Society Bluebook of Colorado Springs and Vicinity</i> (1898, 1903, perhaps other years)</li> <li>• <i>Who's Who in Colorado</i></li> </ul>

## **The Plaque Research Process**

### **Research Tips**

Aside from the resources at the Penrose Library, you will need to visit a few other facilities to research the history of your house. Below are some helpful tips to assist your research at these facilities.

#### **Assessor's Office:**

To obtain the historic deeds to your house, you will need to start at the Assessors Office. It is located at 1675 W. Garden of the Gods Road. Their phone number is 719-520-6600.

- Ask to speak with Steve Schleiker. Request that he prepare a list of your home's deed records and tax assessments.
- The tax assessment records will have the legal description of your property. You will need this to look up your deeds. The assessor's office does not have the deeds themselves. You will need to go to the County Clerk for them.
- The earliest owners of your property may have owned the property before the house was built. The City Directories at Penrose Library will help you determine the first occupant of the house. Once you have an idea of the first owner of the house itself, you can go to County Clerk to get the deed.

#### **County Clerk:**

The County Clerk is located at 1675 West Garden of the Gods Road. Take the list that the Assessor's Office prepared to find the deed for the property.

- The list will have a book number for each deed transfer. Go to the desk and request the microfilm reel that contains that book number.
- There is one microfilm reader that has a printer attached. Try to use that machine if it is open. If not, you will need to find your deed, write down the book and page number, and then take the reel back to the desk and ask them to print it for you.
- The reels often have more than one book on them. Each book has a title page, and you will need to scroll to the proper book.
- To determine the page of your deed, you will need to use the index at the beginning of the book.
- The microfilm will probably be difficult to read. The entries are hand written, and the lettering is light. You may need to zoom in to make the words out.
- The index is alphabetized by the last name of the grantee. For example, if your grantee is named Campbell, you go to the "C"s, Within the "C"s, however, the names are in random order. You will need to scan the list of "C" names to find Campbell.
- Be aware that your owner may have purchased other properties in that same time period. Some people built homes in our neighborhood as an investment, and their name will appear several times.
- Once you have found the name, to the right of the name will usually be a brief property description such as "Block 210". Be sure that this matches your property. There will also be a page number listed.
- Scroll to the page number and check the deed. Make sure that the property description matches your property. The deed will not have a street address.

- The purchase amount on the deed will likely be “one dollar and other valuable considerations”. This is common, and was likely done for tax purposes.
- The deed will likely not mention your house, just your property. Occasionally, you will see a deed with stipulations on the type of structure that may be built on the property.
- Be aware that your property may have evolved over time. The original owner may have purchased lots 3 and 4, and now your property description is the “west 50 feet of lot 3”. This means that a portion of the property was sold off over time. It does not mean that you have the wrong deed.
- Make a copy of the deed. If you are making it yourself, you may have to play with the light/dark and zoom buttons on the microfilm reader to get a readable copy. If you are not able to get a readable copy, transcribe the information including the grantor, the grantee, the date, and the property description.
- If, for any reason, you do not have the book number for your deed, you can request the grantee reel for the year of the deed. You will need to scan the grantee index for your owner’s name, and it will tell you the book number.
- Those seeking plaque 2 will continue this process for subsequent owners of the house.

### **Pioneers Museum**

The Pioneers Museum is located at 215 S. Tejon. Their resources include private papers, photographs and some building plans.

- It is recommended that you wait to go to the Pioneers Museum until you have the names of the owners and occupants of your home. Most of their archives are filed by name, not address, so if you don’t have names they won’t be able to help you as much.
- You will need to go to the front desk and fill out a request form to do research there. Include your address, owner names, and the architect’s name if you have it.
- They will contact you if they find any information. If they do, they will have you come in for an appointment. This process can take up to two weeks.
- When you go in they will bring you whatever information they have found. You will not be permitted to ‘browse the stacks’ like you can at a library. They will make copies of most items for you.
- The building permits that were once at the Pioneers Museum have been moved to the Penrose Library.
- If your house had a prominent owner or architect, you may find a wealth of information at the Pioneers Museum.

### **Tutt Library Special Collections**

Tutt Library Special Collections is located at Colorado College. They have many local history books that may be helpful in your research.