

Clark County Historic Preservation

Researching Historic Structures/Buildings/Sites/Persons

When doing historical research for National Register of Historic Places or Clark County Heritage Register nominations, you want to focus on the historical significance and context of the structure, site, building or persons associated with it. Who lived there, how the building came to be at its location and what happened there are all questions you want to keep in mind while doing research.

The Clark County Community Planning Department (397-2280, ext. 4913) can give you information on the historic registers. You can pick up materials on Historic Preservation program from Planner, Jacqui Kamp at **1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver**, or at the Clark County Historic Museum, 1511 Main Street, Vancouver. The information is also available on the web at www.clark.wa.gov/longrangeplan/historic/index.html

Below is a list of resources in Clark County that you can use to find out information about that historic building, site or object you've been dying to know about.

1. For structures, the first stop is finding out who has owned or built it. Deed records are a good source of names and dates for buildings. You can find deed records in **the County Auditor's Office**, located in the Clark County Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., 2nd floor, Vancouver, (360)397-2241. An abstract of title and deed histories are also available from a title company. Title companies charge a fee, but do all of the work for you. Be sure that the person doing the work understands that you need all owners back to the date of construction. When you have a list of names and dates, you can start researching who the people were that owned the building previously.
2. The **Fort Vancouver Regional Library** at 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd. (360)695-1566 (Reference) is the source of The Columbian newspaper archives on microfilm dating back to 1890 and a host of other resources.
3. The **Clark County Historical Museum** at 1511 Main Street, Vancouver, (993-5679). Journal records, city directories, newspaper articles, old photographs, birth announcements and obituaries, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, Metsker maps, donation land claim maps and records and general information from other historical documents and publications are available to research. The information gathered here can lead you to other sources and provide information on the history of the people, building, site or structure.
4. **Cemetery records** can be obtained from cemetery offices, churches, diocesan offices. These can be used to determine birth and death dates and family relationships.
5. The **Clark County Genealogical Society**, located at 717 Grand Blvd, can be of great assistance. They are open many days a week. Please call, at 750-5688, or visit them on the web- www.ccgswa.org.
6. **Interviews with living relatives or past property owners or neighbors.** Finding descendants of significant persons or property owners or neighbors with a good memory can be invaluable. Check genealogical records, phone books and Internet resources for possible links. Oral histories, family records and photographs provide a wealth of information. It can be corroborated with archival information as needed.
7. **The Columbian Newspaper's Information Resource Center**, (360) 694-3391 ext. 2336, can help do research of news articles for a fee. Archival research from the 1920's to the present is \$50.00 per hour. If the exact date of an article is known, the fee is about \$25.00. For a single story print of an article between June 1994 and present there is a \$5.00 charge.

These are just a few of the resources to begin your research. You may learn of other resources as you go along. This sheet is only meant to get you started. Good luck and may you find what you are looking for!