

## My Historic Home "Researching the Past"

Researching anything takes time. However, it's an interesting and rewarding venture. To begin the process of determining how old your house/building is, you will need names of previous owners to arrive at the date of construction. There are a variety of sources to help determine who originally lived in the house, and from there you can conduct genealogy searches to fill in the gaps.

In addition to a name, you will also need the legal description of the property (Lot # and Parcel ID). There are several ways to accomplish these tasks, so let's get started.

### PERSONAL RECORDS

Check your personal papers to see if you have a copy of an abstract for the property. Abstracts were used to maintain line of ownership before Title Insurance was used. The abstract will reference deeds, mortgages, wills, probate records, etc., that will provide valuable research information.

**CITY OF ST. CLAIR SHORES  
Assessing Department  
27600 Jefferson Circle  
St. Clair Shores, MI 48081  
(586) 447-3355**

The City's website has important information for your search. You can retrieve the data in two ways.

1. Go to City Hall and use their computer to obtain a printed copy of your property's information. (Nominal fee for printing.) OR
2. Use your personal computer and access the same information.

Type in: "City of St. Clair Shores, MI" (Search)

Click on: The official site (Enter)  
(Blue/White City screen will appear)

Scroll over to: "Information" (Scroll down to)

Click on: "Assessing/Tax/Water Online Information"  
(City of St. Clair Shores screen appears)

First screen: Fill in required information.

Type in: Street Name

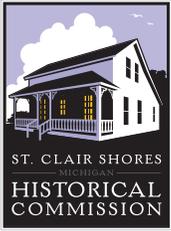
Type in: Street Address (Search)  
(A number of properties will appear)

Click on: Your address  
(General Property information screen appears)

Scroll down: "Load Building Information"

Click on: The square

Now you have the required documentation on current owner, year built, property size, etc. Also at the top of the page there appears a "NOTE" line in blue. If there are images or sketches of your property on file, you can click on that line and the pictures will appear. **EVERYTHING ON THESE SCREENS CAN BE PRINTED FROM YOUR HOME COMPUTER.**



**MACOMB COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS**  
**2nd Floor**  
**10 North Main Street**  
**Mt. Clemens, MI 48043**  
**(586) 469-5175**

The County maintains a database of area land records dating back to 1850, including deeds, mortgages, liens, subdivision plats, etc. There are several ways to access this information.

**In Person:** The Register of Deeds has computers that can be used “free of charge” to trace ownership back through the years. You will need the grantor (seller)/grantee (buyer) index to search the records to the original owner. You will begin with your name as the grantee.

When you find the original owner, there will be a “Liber/Page” number that the Register of Deeds personnel can print out for you. (\$1.00 per copy).

You can also obtain the subdivision plat that includes your property for \$1.00 per copy.

**By Staff:** For a fee, the County staff will conduct the search for you. You will need to check with them on the cost.

**By Internet:** Access is available at [www.landaccess.com](http://www.landaccess.com). You will need a credit card to begin the search. The fee will be \$5.00 per search and \$1.00 to print each copy. NOTE: This can be costly if you are looking up a multiple of owners.

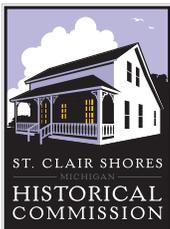
(A copy of the original deed will be needed for application to the “Historic Marker” program.)

**MACOMB COUNTY TREASURER**  
**2nd Floor**  
**1 South Main Street**  
**Mt. Clemens, MI 48043**  
**(586) 469-5190**

The Treasurer’s Office has the tax rolls beginning in 1960 on microfilm. A copy of tax information is \$1.00 per copy.

**MACOMB COUNTY PROBATE COURT**  
**21850 Dunham Road**  
**Mt. Clemens, MI 48043**  
**(586) 469-5290**

Once the former owner’s name has been determined, you can consult probate records for additional information, such as, transfer of ownership and a description of your property. Mt. Clemens Library has microfilm on some probate records that can be searched at <http://mtclib.org/search/probate.php> Also, Probate Court has a website at <http://macombcountymi.gov/probatecourt/index.htm>. You can click on “look up a case” link.



**ST. CLAIR SHORES PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**22500 Eleven Mile Road**  
**St. Clair Shores, MI 48081**  
**(586) 771-9020**

The library has several tools for dating the construction of your house.

Genealogy and Local History Room: The staff can point to old records of

- area maps
- telephone books
- city directories
- high school year books

Main Library: Staff can direct you to microfilm of Erin Township information, such as

- death records -- 1897-1920
- St. Clair Shores News -- 1926-1931
- St. Clair Shores Herald -- 1953-1961 and 1974-1993
- Other Erin Township records

Online: You can log onto the Library's computers to review further.

- The United States Census is taken every 10 years and is available for the years 1880 through 1930 with the exception of 1890. That Census was largely destroyed by fire. The 1940 Census will be available next year.

Using a last name, you can find the names and addresses for the household. The Census also includes ages, marital status, occupation, etc. A copy of this information can be printed. NOTE: Some street names have changed over the years.

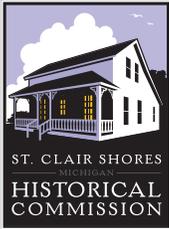
- Social Security files can be accessed and used to determine date of death.

(A copy of these documents can be used for application to the "Historic Marker" program.)

Digital Files: Hundreds of historical photos for St. Clair Shores are available online.

**MACOMB COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**15 Union Street**  
**Mt. Clemens, Mi 48043**  
**(586) 465-2488**

When you have reached a dead end in your research, contact the Macomb County Historical Society regarding the collections that pertain to St. Clair Shores. You can call Crocker House Museum to arrange for a meeting to discuss your findings and needs.



## ST. CLAIR SHORES HISTORICAL COMMISSION

22500 Eleven Mile Road  
St. Clair Shores, MI 48081  
(586) 771-9020  
[www.scslibrary.org/historicalcomm.html](http://www.scslibrary.org/historicalcomm.html)  
[scshmp@gmail.com](mailto:scshmp@gmail.com)

Another valuable resource is to review copies of the Muskrat Tales to fill in the historical blanks. The Historical Commission began publishing the Muskrat Tales in the Spring of 1981. To date, 32 issues have been published and distributed. Each issue includes photos, documents, maps, charts, as well as the written/oral history of the area.

The purpose was twofold -- (1) to share the colorful and interesting history of St. Clair Shores, and (2) to acquaint the citizens with the mission of the Commission and to let them know that every effort is being made to research, collect and preserve artifacts, documents and written and oral history.

Copies of the Muskrat Tales are available for review at the Library; also, copies can be purchased at the site.

### DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Burton Historical Collection**  
**Main Branch**  
**5201 Woodward Avenue**  
**Detroit, MI 48202**  
**(313) 481-1300**

AA variety of information for the St. Clair Shores area is available at the Detroit Public Library, such as:

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for 1930-1946
- Plat maps
- Historical clipping files
- Phone directories
- City directories

NOTE: If a nonresident wants to use the library resources, they must purchase a one-day library pass for \$10.00 or an annual card for \$100.00.

### OTHER LOCAL RECORDS

Church and Parish Records can reveal information about former occupants of your house, such as birth, marriage, baptismal and death records.

Newspaper Articles can be accessed through the archive files of the Detroit-area newspapers. This would include birth and marriage announcements and obituaries. check with the Library to learn which newspapers were in operation at the time the former owner resided in the home and where the archives are located.

City Directories for the years 1955 and 1957 are available at the Roseville Public Library. The Eastpointe Public Library has directories for the years 1942, 1949, 1954-55 and 1957-58. The directories may indicate who lived at a particular address and their occupation and that time.

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