

Researching Your Home and the People Who Lived There

Sedgwick County Resource List Developed by Diana Staresinic-Deane

Resources

Finding the Legal Description of Your Property

- The legal description will appear on documents like the deed to your property, mortgages, and in abstracts.
- Use Sedgwick County's Property Appraisal's Search through the Appraiser's website:
<https://www.sedgwickcounty.org/appraiser/>
- The Register of Deeds Office can also help you identify your legal description

Sedgwick County Register of Deeds Office

- <https://www.sedgwickcounty.org/register-of-deeds/>
- Ownership history, plat maps, oil and gas leases, mortgages, sheriff's sales
- The Register of Deeds and staff keep the history of property transactions in the county, and they tend to love history!

U.S. Bureau of Land Management Tract Books

- The Kansas Historical Society has links to the KSHS Guide to Kansas Tract Books, and a link to where you can find the Tract Books online for free (you will need to create a free login)
<https://www.kshs.org/p/land-records-and-maps/11083>
- The Bureau of Land Management has uploaded all early GLO maps, tract books, and other documents to their website: <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov>

Land Acknowledgement: Identifying Indigenous Nations

- Native Land: A Canadian non-profit with a searchable map of North American Indigenous nations.
<https://native-land.ca>
- Code for Anchorage SMS service: text your ZIP code to (907) 312-5085 to learn about the populations who lived in your area

Early Maps

- Plat maps may be available at the Register of Deeds office (and possibly historical societies and libraries).
- Plat books are available online through:
 - The Kansas Historical Society at <https://www.kansasmemory.org/> (free) (1882, 1905)
 - Historic Map Works at <http://www.historicmapworks.com/> (free to look, \$ to print or download) (1882, 1962, 1978, plus oil maps from the 1950s and 1960s)
- Sanborn Fire Maps:
 - Online maps for Cheney (1893, 1899, 1905, 1911), Wichita (1884, 1886, 1887, 1892, 1897, 1903, 1914, 1935, & 1935 updated in 1950), Mulvane (1893, 1897, 1902, 1911, 1922, Sedgwick (1884, 1892, 1899, 1915)
 - Online through KU Spencer Research Library: <https://digital.lib.ku.edu/ku-sanborn/root>
 - Online through Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/>
- Other historic maps:
 - Early Kansas Territory maps, tribal lands, railroad maps, etc.: <https://www.kansasmemory.org/>
 - Kansas Historical Society – visit the archives in person
 - Local historical societies

U.S. and Kansas Census Records

- Available free through Kansas State Library at <http://kslib.info/221/Online-Databases> (click on Heritage Quest)
- More extensive collections are available at Ancestry.com (\$)

City Directories

- Not every city or town has historic directories
- Available at libraries, genealogical societies, historical societies
- Names (not businesses or reverse addresses) are searchable in Ancestry.com (\$)

Probates/Wills

- Contact Sedgwick County District Court; probates and wills are public record
- Sometimes records are available in libraries or historical societies
- Records searchable by name are available at Ancestry.com (\$)

Vital Statistics

- County records are public; state records are not. Most county records end in the early 1910s. Depending on the county, pre-1911 records may have been donated to local historical societies or, sadly, destroyed.
- Some information can be found at Familysearch.org:
https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Kansas_Online_Genealogy_Records
- More can be found at Ancestry.com (\$)

Cemetery Records

- Public libraries and historical societies, county clerk or register of deeds
- Findagrave.com

Other Records and Photographs

- Yearbooks are available at the historical societies and museums
- Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum: <https://www.wichitahistory.org/>
- Wichita Genealogical Society: <https://wichitagensoc.org/>
- Wichita State University-University Libraries-Special Collections: <https://libraries.wichita.edu/sc/home>
- Wichita Public Library: <https://www.wichitalibrary.org/Research/LocalHistory>
- Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society: <https://mhgswichita.org/>
- Other local historical societies
- Kansas Historical Society: <https://www.kansasmemory.org/>
- K-State Hale Library Kansas Agricultural and Rural Life Publications Digital Collection: <https://lib.k-state.edu/research-find/digital-archives/>
- K-State Chapman Center for Rural Studies: <https://www.k-state.edu/chapman/>
- University of Kansas image collections: <https://digital.lib.ku.edu/islandora/root>
- Wichita Photo Archives: <https://www.wichitahistory.org/discover/exhibits/photo-archive/>
- Local Facebook groups dedicated to history, abandoned buildings, historic photos
- Cutler's History of Kansas (1883) includes local history and biographies of early residents, businesses, and communities <https://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/>

Newspapers

- Searchable content for Kansas papers available through the Kansas Historical Society at <https://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-digital-newspaper-program/16126>
- Microfilm through libraries and historical societies
- Subscriptions available through newspapers.com and newspaperarchives.com

Architecture

- **A Field Guide to American Houses (Revised): The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture** by Virginia McAlester, Lee McAlester (book)
An easy-to-use guide that will help you identify your house architecturally; The revised edition includes information on the development of neighborhoods.

Contact me: I love hearing about your research projects! dianastaresinicdeane@gmail.com