

Comprehensive Research Guide to St. Charles History:

Thank you for reaching out to the St. Charles History Museum with your research request. Please note that this guide and a preliminary search of the Museum's Archival Collections are complimentary, but research requests which are fulfilled by Museum staff, interns, or volunteers cost a fee. **The fee for research requests runs by the hour and is priced at \$25/hr. for non-members and \$15/hr for members of the Museum.** For researchers for those looking for in-person research appoints, please contact the Collections and Exhibitions manager at collections@stcmuseum.org to schedule a visit. However, if you were looking at conducting research on your own, we have prepared a helpful guide to researching the local area. Below you will find links to official records, atlases, newspapers; where to research; and a plethora of other helpful information!

Genealogy and Local History Research:

- When conducting historical research, the St. Charles History Museum is a fantastic place to start, as we not only have information on hand, but can help guide to other sources outside of our institution! The Museum itself can provide access to an extensive collection of over 20,000 artifacts for research, including personal artifacts, court records, city directories, yearbooks, and much more. The Museum is also the primary repository of historic images of the St. Charles area.
- For information regarding our Institution's collections, you can find the Museum's online catalog at: [CatalogitHub](#). Please note that the CatalogitHub page is incomplete and is currently being updated as we clean up and add items to our long neglected digital database. For further information on temporary exhibitions, please visit our Digital Exhibition Website at: [Omeka.net](#). Here you can find the text, artifacts, and a majority of images from every temporary exhibit since Autumn of 2020. For information regarding stories, podcasts, and an assortment of other topics, please visit our website at: <https://www.stcmuseum.org/>.
- While we do not have a genealogist on staff at the St. Charles History Museum, the St. Charles Public Library often gives classes on genealogy and has access to a large number of [genealogical databases](#) for no cost. The [Illinois State Genealogical Society](#) can also assist with any questions. For records that are inaccessible even at Public Libraries, there are three familysearch genealogical centers around the area in [Sycamore](#), [Naperville](#), and [Schaumburg](#).
- If you have not already done so, try out genealogical resources like [Ancestry](#) or [Familysearch](#). Familysearch is completely free, and will give you the ability to browse through a plethora of biographical records such as the census, immigration, draft cards, and birth and death records of individuals. Many of the premium features can be accessed in house at the St. Charles Public Library.

- Check out the local newspaper archives. A very critical source, local newspapers help to give a detailed recollection of our town, week to week. It is important to know that what you are reading is not always accurate, however, kernels of facts can be carefully extracted if researched properly. Be aware that offensive and outdated language was often used, details of events are often blunt, and tragic events were often sensationalized. We would recommend your search begin with collections of the St. Charles Library with their digitized newspaper catalog, [which can be accessed here](#). The Geneva Public Library also has a digitized collection of newspapers which can be [accessed here](#), as well as the University of Illinois, which has a more regional database, [linked here](#).
- If there is an exact word or phrase you want the system to focus on, be sure to use quotations around the word/phrase(ex: "history"). This will then pull up results that are identical to whatever you typed in. Don't forget to try variations on spelling, as mistakes often occur, or nicknames may have been used. Married females would often be addressed only by their married surname (ex. Mrs. Smith).
- Other online sources to find information are through the Illinois Digital Archives collection, [St. Charles History- Then and Now](#). On the site are books, directories, photos, and ephemera from the town's history.. For older ancestors, especially those in politics or who were early settlers, there may be information written about them in on of the many histories of the area. [Google Books](#) is a surprisingly good resource for this, as well as the [Internet Archive](#).
- Key Books on Kane County Region:
 - [History of the Eighth Cavalry Regiment, Illinois Volunteers \(1868\)](#)
 - [Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois \(1878\)](#)
 - [Commemorative Biographical and Historical record of Kane County \(1888\)](#)
 - [Biographical Record of Kane County, Illinois \(1898\)](#)
 - [Passing in Review \(1902\)](#)
 - [History of Kane County Volume I \(1908\)](#)
 - [History of Kane County Volume II \(1908\)](#)
- Don't forget to keep the search going! If your ancestor lived for a length of time in any one place, check out that place's local archives or local newspapers for possible information. If your ancestor lived in Chicago, check out the [ARCHIE](#), [Explore Chicago](#)., and [CARLI](#) search tools, as well historic this link to historic [Chicago directories](#).

House/Business Research

- For house research, the primary source to reach out to is the [Kane County Recorders Office](#), as they the legal and definitive source for property information in the area dating back to 1836. For in person visits, the building is located at 719 Batavia Ave, Building

#C, Geneva, IL, 60134, which is nestled in the back of the building complex. To make searching for records easier, please bring in your home's Tax ID number (located on property tax bill) and the Legal Description of the property (located on the home purchase documents). There, the staff will be able to assist you with any inquiries about your property.

- For online access to the Recorder's Office please click on the following link: [Kane County Recorder Land Records Search](#). By knowing a few key bits of information such as owner names, your address, parcel number, and which Section/Township/Range your home is on, will make navigating the site easier. Just note that there is a learning curve involved with researching records on the site, but any questions can be answered with an in person visit.
- Also note that the collection of deeds online only go back to 1928, and an in-person visit would be recommended for earlier records (c.1836-1927). To see a general overview of ownership before 1928 online, you can view the "Tract Books" by clicking Sections (Tract) or Subdivisions (Tract) which are both located under the "Books" tab. There are some important terms listed below which will also help you navigate the Deeds.
Important Terms: **WD**=Warranty Deed (Title to real estate), **Grantor**=Seller (Person selling the land), **Grantee**= Buyer (Person purchasing the land), **TD**= Trust Deed (Indebtedness, similar to a mortgage), **R**= Release (When indebtedness/other obligation is satisfied/paid).
- A great supplement to the Kane County Recorder is the [St. Charles Township Assessors Office](#), or the [Campton Hills Assessor's Office](#). There, you will be able to find information on any current building or structure along with basic info, a parcel number, an estimated date of construction, and any additions that were added on.
- Do not forget to look through old Atlases of Kane County and Sanborn Fire Maps to see how properties have changed over time. The Kane County Recorder has a GIS overlay comparing the locations of the 1872 Atlas to today's maps, [found here](#). The Illinois Digital Archive also has a collection of maps which can be [accessed here](#).

Atlases:

[1860 Atlas of Kane County](#),
[1871 Atlas of Kane County](#),
[1892 Atlas of Kane County](#),
[1904 Atlas of Kane County](#)

Sanborn Fire Maps:

[1893 Sanborn Fire Map](#),
[1898 Sanborn Fire Map](#),
[1905 Sanborn Fire Map](#),
[1912 Sanborn Fire Map](#),

[1923 Sanborn Fire Map](#),
[1928 Sanborn Fire Map](#)

The St. Charles History Museum and St. Charles Public Library both have an extensive collection of directories, yearbooks, and other supplementary information. Photos of historic properties can be obtained through the St. Charles History Museum. ***While the Museum's archives are extensive, please note that a strong majority of properties are undocumented, and there is often little or no information on hand.***

Local Outside Institutions:

[Batavia Depot Museum](#)

155 Houston St.
Batavia, IL, 60510

[Batavia Public Library](#)

10 S. Batavia Ave,
Batavia, IL, 60510

[Geneva History Museum](#)

113 S. 3rd St
Geneva, IL, 60134

[Geneva Public Library](#)

227 S. 7th Street
Geneva, IL, 60134

[Kane County Recorder](#)

719 S. Batavia Ave, Building C
Geneva, IL 60134

[Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley](#)

8 Indiana St,
St. Charles, IL 60174

[St. Charles, City](#)

2 E. Main Street,
St. Charles, IL 60174

[St. Charles Public Library](#)

1 S. 6th Ave,
St. Charles, IL, 60174

[St. Charles, Township](#)

**1725 Dean Street,
St. Charles, IL 60174**

[Village of Campton Hills](#)

**40W270 LaFox Rd Suite B,
St. Charles, IL 60175**

[Village of Wayne](#)

**5N430 Railroad St,
Wayne, IL 60184**