

House History Hunting

What year was my house built?

****Hennepin History Property Tax**

search by address

note: If your house was built before 1900, it will show as being built in 1900 (computer system was set up to deal with dates in the 1800s)

****Construction Permits**

Hennepin County Special Collections has permits for houses built between 1884-1872

Website: digitalcollections.hclib.org

*Who paid for the permit? Owner? Contractor? Most likely the future owner but...

*Make sure that you have the right house—house numbers changed as infill housing was built

Who built my house?

****Minneapolis City Directories Online**

Website: <https://box2.mntvault.com/Hennepin2/jsp/RcWebBrowse.jsp>

City directories (sort of like phone books before there were phone) from 1859-1944 are online

-You can search by name and/or by address; be sure that you use the format (abbreviations, etc.) so that the system will recognize a match

-information varies but usually includes whether someone is a renter (b for boarder “h” for homeowner) and an occupation if one was provided

-beginning in 1930, the directories included a “reverse” directory in the back of the book. You can find owners’ names by address. Hint: search for “Twelfth av” rather than “12th”

Photos:

****Minnesota Historical Society Visual Collections (pay for use)**

Website: www.mnhs.org → research → search collections

****Hennepin County Library Special Collections (a fee, I think)**

Website: <https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/custom/home>

Certain collections are likely to yield better results: Model Cities Collection, Hennepin History Museum, Joe Zalusky but give them all a try. If you live by a church, school, theatre, shop, try searching for “Minneapolis church,” etc. or if you live near Bloomington, Cedar, Lake, etc. search on a street name

****Library of Congress** (free use—in the public domain)

Website: www.loc.gov/photos

has 1249 photos of Minneapolis online (not all of Phillips) but worth a look; most were taken during the Depression as part of FDR's public works programs

***Minnesota Reflections (free use—in the public domain)**

Website: <https://reflections.mndigital.org>

Wonderful site—search broadly—for example, Bloomington Avenue, streetcars, schools, etc.

Free Resources:

Website: www.familysearch.org Free

Latter Day Saints (Mormons) website has extensive genealogy resources and it is free. You need to set up an account but there is no charge. It is easy to use (easier than ancestry.com)

Online Newspapers:

***Minnesota Historical Society**

Website: www.mnhs.org →research→digital newspapers

Can search by date or keyword, etc.

Minneapolis Tribune from 1867-1922

Minneapolis Journal from 1901-1906

Various other papers including African-American publications, Scandinavian language papers, etc., also St. Paul papers which often covered Minneapolis news stories

The Alley:

Bound copies at the Franklin Library, Special Collections Room, etc.

Digitized online version at

<https://digitalcollections.hclib.org/digital/custom/home>

Or online at alleynews.org

Also: check out friendsofthecemetery.org

Places to visit: Hennepin History Museum, Minnesota Historical Society, Hosmer Special Collections Room at the Downtown Library

Tip: Phillips was considered part of Powderhorn before 1972

Fun searches: churches, bakeries, drugstores,