

Researching Your Family at the Evanston History Center

Where do I start?

You may be wondering where to start on a family history project, especially if your family lived in Evanston a long time ago or the records you have are very incomplete. EHC has resources and staff to help you with this.

EHC's Research Room and Archives is open from 1-4 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Staff is available at those times to answer any questions you might have. There is a \$5 research fee; students and EHC members are free. When you arrive at the Research Room, we will ask that you fill out a brief registration card. You are welcome to take notes in pencil, and there is a photocopier available for your use. Copies are \$.25 for 8.5x11 pages and \$.50 for legal and 11x17 pages.

What is available at EHC's Archives and Research Room?

EHC has a variety of resources that can reveal the stories of the many people who lived in Evanston throughout its history. Listed here are some of the most widely used for family history research.

- *Biographical clipping files.* EHC has extensive newspaper clipping files for people who lived in Evanston. These files are arranged alphabetically by last name.
- *Archival Collections.* Many of EHC's archival collections hold family papers. A complete list of those collections can be found here and you can search by last name.
- *City Directories and Phone Books.* City directories and phone books can be valuable resources for finding out when and where your family lived in Evanston, as well as what their occupations were and who else lived in the household with them (including servants). EHC holdings include all City Directories published (starting in 1880) and an almost complete set of phone books (starting in 1924).
- *Newspapers.* EHC has a complete collection of Evanston newspapers, starting with the earliest published in 1872. If you are searching for an obituary and have a date of death, the newspaper collection can be very helpful. Obituaries were not published in every paper, but they were published in many, especially in the 20th century.
- *House files.* EHC maintains files on many of the homes in Evanston. They are filed by address and contain items such as building permits, inspection reports, and zoning reviews. If you know where your family lived, the house files can offer additional information about their lives and their home.
- *Photographs.* EHC has a large collection of photographs of Evanston residents and homes. They are filed by last name and by address.
- *Scrapbooks and Photo Albums* EHC has a small collection of scrapbooks and photo albums that are family history related.

Where else can I find information about my Evanston family?

The Evanston Public Library has an obituary index that can be very helpful. It is available by visiting the third floor reference department. Church archives in Evanston can also be helpful. Each church manages its own records and to access them you should contact the church office and request more information about doing research there.