

How to Research Your House



Van Buren County Offices

219 E. Paw Paw St. Paw Paw, MI 49079
269.657.8242

Register of Deeds

- Find the approximate age of a house
- View records of property transactions
- Search for Deeds here.
- View current and past property documents
- View current and past tax bills
- Probate records (wills) may include a deed, estate details, and taxes

Paw Paw has highlighted some of its historic homes in this video: Historic home tour in Paw Paw (opens in YouTube)

email info@pawpawlib.org for a PDF of the brochure



Maps and Geographic Information Services (GIS)

- Parcels interactive map
- Property tax search

Plat maps at Paw Paw District Library

- 1860; 1873; 1895; 1912; 1928; 1933; 1954; 1957; 1960s; 1967-70; 1974-75; 1978; 1980-81; 1983; 1986-87; 1992; 1995; 1997; 2000; 2005; 2008-09

The Sanborn maps at the Library of Congress can also be of use. They have digitized several for the Paw Paw area. These are useful to discover details like building materials, shape, and number of stories.

City Directories allow you to look for individuals, families, or businesses. The local history collection has city directories and farm directories.

Obits of people who used to live in your house can provide clues and/or stories. The local history room has many on file. Look up your town, street and names of the people who lived in your house, if you know them.

- Michigan Newspapers
- Paw Paw Free Press 1853-1856
- Paw Paw Free Press and Courier 1913
- Paw Paw Herald 1887
- True Northerner 1858-1919
- True Northerner 1873-1920

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What style is your house?

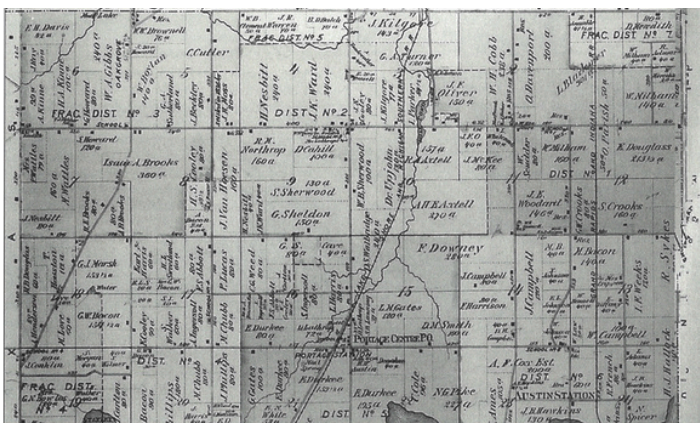
This might give you a clue to the age. Books in the library on architecture can be found in the 720-729 non-fiction area.

Books about Architecture at PDDL:

- Architecture in Michigan by Wayne Andrews 720.9774 A
- Buildings of Michigan by Kathryn Bishop Eckert 720.9774 ECK
- American House Styles: A Concise Guide by John Milnes Baker 728.37 BAK
- A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to identifying and understanding America's domestic Architecture by Virginia Savage McAlester 728.37 MCA

Books about the local area:

- Historic Paw Paw: In Celebration of the Sesquicentennial 2009 by Fr. Joseph Clayton Neiman 977.413 NEI
- Historic Paw Paw: Postcard Views by Fr. Joseph Clayton Neiman 977.413 NEI
- Van Buren County Michigan: A Pictorial History compiled by Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society 2003 977.413 VAN



Other resources

These websites offer a selection of additional online resources.

- [Michigan Historic Preservation Network](#) has information on tax incentives and loans for historic properties.
- The Library of Congress has information on [Michigan](#) which includes maps and other information regarding resources for pursuing family history or history on the state, municipal and county.
- [National Register of Historical places](#)
 - Researching a Historic Property
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)
- [How to Preserve Historic Properties \(National Park Service\)](#)
- [Smithsonian's House Detective](#)
- [State Historic Preservation Office](#)
- [Michigan Above-Ground Survey Manual](#)
- [Bureau of Land Management](#)
 - Original Federal Land Patents

Area Organizations

- [Van Buren Genealogical Society](#)
- [Kalamazoo Valley Genealogical Society](#)
- [Webster Memorial Library \(Van Buren District Library\)](#)
- [Zhang Legacy Collection \(Western Michigan University\)](#)
- [Kalamazoo Public Library Local History Room](#)
- [Library of Michigan](#)