Documenting a Property in Georgia

Contents

INTRODUCTION

How and where do you research an historic building or multiple buildings in a district? Detailed research into the history of a building involves more than determining the construction date and style. It is important to understand the context surrounding the built environment. This means you will need to know something about the neighborhood and era in which it was built, and for whom it was built. What was the owner's role in the community? What was his or her occupation? Was the building built for a prominent family or a working-class household? Was it built for speculation? Was a trained architect involved or was the design purchased from a mail-order house? What social events took place there? What impact did the building have on the local community?

Every piece of ground has a legal ownership (title), whether it is the site of a Native American village, a battlefield, a train depot, or a dwelling. People live in some sort of dwelling, but a person's occupation of a location does not indicate ownership, nor does ownership ensure occupation. Many owners have never seen their property. If you know the general historical era in which the building fits, where it is located, and who the present owners are, then legal land records, estate papers, and other miscellaneous records can help in determining its history.

To conduct research of old buildings you will need to visit some repositories in person. While a select number of historical records are available online, most historic land and ownership records are only found at the county courthouse, the local archives, or at the Georgia Archives (5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow Georgia). Historical records are often organized by the agency that created them. Archival records are arranged by record group not necessarily record type. A direct query of your property address may not lead you to all of the sources available. For example, the Georgia Power photograph collection in the Georgia Archives Virtual Vault has images of a 1930s and 1940s relighting project that showcases the interior and exterior of numerous businesses throughout the state. An address search would not reveal these photographs.

If you have already completed a Preliminary Eligibility Application, National Register staff has provided you with some resources available at the Historic Preservation Division (HPD), if you have not completed a Preliminary Eligibility Application, please contact HPD for some helpful guidance and potential sources.

The following is a list of suggested sources that should be consulted to adequately research historic properties. This list is only a start. Please do not limit your research to these sources. Be sure to visit the local historical society, library, courthouse, as well as county and state archives for information.

HPD is always seeking additional sources of information. If you are aware of a source that is not in this guide, please let us know!

Cover photograph is from the Broad Street Historic District, Augusta, Richmond County NRIS 80001226

I. EARLY GEORGIA LAND DISTRIBUTION

Georgia's land was originally distributed under two systems: the headright and bounty grants and the land lotteries. The first system distributed those lands obtained ceded by Native Americans prior to 1803 and generally east of the Oconee River (east of present-day Milledgeville). The second system distributed lands ceded by Native Americans from 1803 to 1832, which was approximately the remaining two-thirds of the state to the west, north, and south of Milledgeville.

HEADRIGHT AND BOUNTY GRANTS:

Started in the colonial days after the end of the trusteeship, this system continued until all land in those counties, after they were opened, was distributed. For lands opened after the American Revolution, there are plats available which give the size and dimensions of the farms as they were parceled out to the applicants. These do not give any data about dwellings except in rare cases. The Georgia Archives has an index to Bounty (land) grants.

LAND LOTTERY:

Eight lotteries were held from 1805 to 1832. By 1832, attempts had been made to distribute all of Georgia's land after the forced removal of several Tribal Nations. Some land had to be regranted after original grantees failed to pay fees, and many acres in fractions, instead of whole lots, were sold in special sales after the regular lotteries. Indian reserves should also be taken into account, such as the Coweta Reserve, McIntosh Reserve, Indian Springs Reserve, etc., as these were sold separately, as were the town lots. A source of information concerning the distribution of Georgia's land is *Hall's Original County Map of Georgia* (1895), which is available at the Georgia Archives in the Virtual Vault under key word "Original County Map." The full map is broken up by county. It shows the original plats and owner names. The Georgia Archives has an index to Lottery allotments as well.

A person could not legally sell the land he/she held until it had been officially granted by the governor, but many persons swapped land, as they were not required to occupy the land. So the earliest deeds on a property may not reflect the lottery winner, but perhaps a friend or a relative, or the deed may have been recorded in the county of the lottery winner's residence before the new county was ever organized. Knowing the name of the original owner (grantor) of the property can help you begin the search of transfer of ownership from grantor to grantee over the years.

The Georgia Story by James C. Bonner is a textbook that includes information concerning the distribution of lands by the treaties that were signed.

Georgia Land Surveying History and Law by Farris Cadle offers a comprehensive study of Georgia's land history. **The Georgia Public Library system (PINES)** https://www.gapines.org/eg/opac/home has copies of both of these books.

II. LAND AND OWNERSHIP RECORDS

TAX RECORDS:

Tax records in Georgia are called digests and are maintained at both the city and county level. Because building permits were not routinely required until the 20th century, an increase in tax from one year to the next can indicate that a building was erected on the property thereby increasing the taxable value of the property. This information can help you date your building. Since the 1950s, taxpayers are listed in roughly alphabetical order; they are not arranged by street address or land designation. Thus, you must know the owner of the property in order to locate the appropriate entry.

- **City tax records** are found at the city clerk's office in the city hall. City tax records are often contain a card on a building with some drawings, date, and space plan attached.

- **County tax records** are located in the county courthouse in the Office of the Ordinary (Judge of Probate) or the Tax Office. County tax records contain the name of the owner of the property, a brief description of the property (commonly just the acreage) and a value for the property. It does not list buildings and indicates the existence of a building only if it is within the city limits.

- **Rural or unincorporated area tax records** may not be available. Rural property was evaluated only by acreage, without reference to the number or age of buildings.

- **Georgia Archives** has a tax FAQ page at: https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/tax_records_faq They also have some tax information onsite on microfilm and in books https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/tax

- **Ancestry.com** (which charges a fee) has Georgia property tax digests online https://www.ancestry.com/ This database contains tax digest books for 137 Georgia counties from 1793-1892. Atlanta History Center, and most public libraries have on site, free of charge, access to the Ancestry site.

- **The National Archives** offers more information about tax records https://narations.blogs.archives.gov/2010/09/24/family-tree-friday-tax-records-at-the-national-archives/

- **County Tax Assessor** Check the county tax assessor's online records. Tax records may show outbuildings, dates of recent building permits, and often have an estimated (not necessarily accurate) date of construction. Tax assessor record information varies by county and may only include information from the later part of the 20th century.

- **qPublic.net** is an e-government solution allowing users to view local government information and related records online. Search for the county name and qpublic to access tax data.

DEEDS:

Deeds are located at the county courthouse in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court or at the Georgia Archives on microfilm.

- Georgia Archives Virtual Vault site has some deeds listed alphabetically online at https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/search/searchterm/deed

- Digital Library of Georgia has some deeds online at https://dlg.usg.edu/records?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=both&q=deeds

ESTATE RECORDS:

Estate records are located at the Office of the Ordinary (Judge of Probate's office) in the county courthouse, and on microfilm at the Georgia Archives. If you know the name of a person that passed away when they owned a property, that person's will may help in determining the existence of a house. Wills and administrators' records sometimes indicate information relative to property changes. The published index for Georgia wills to 1860, written by Ted O. Brooke, 1976, is *In the Name of God, Amen: Georgia Wills, 1733-1860.* Available through the Georgia Public Library system (PINES).

CENSUS:

Census records for Georgia exist from 1820-1880 and 1900-1950 (latest year released by U.S. Census Bureau). Census records can show who lived in a house, nearby neighbors, whether occupants rented or owned. After 1880 in cities, the census included house numbers. Agriculture and manufacturing schedules (for 1850-1880) show acreage, crops, and livestock. Conduct a search for "agricultural schedules" or "nonpopulation census records" to narrow down a source. Most census records are available on Ancestry.com https://www.ancestry.com/ (which charges a fee for usage). The Georgia Archives, Atlanta History Center, and most public libraries have on site free of charge access to the Ancestry.com site.

III. MAPS

Maps are an excellent tool to understand the built environment and its changes over time. Following is a list of maps that can be obtained online:

David Rumsey Map Collection open-source map collection
https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/RUMSEY~8~1

DeKalb History Center map collection extends beyond DeKalb County https://dekalbhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/dekalb-history-center-map-guide-b.pdf

Digital Library of Georgia home page https://dlg.usg.edu/
- Digital Library has some county maps:
  https://dlg.usg.edu/records?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=both&q=county+map
- Digital Library also has a Historical Atlas section which contains historic maps, listed by county:
  https://dlg.usg.edu/records?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=both&q=historic+atlas

Georgia Archives home page: https://www.georgiaarchives.org/
- Georgia Archives has a county maps collection. Does not include all counties
  http://vault.georgiaarchives.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/cmf -
- Georgia Archives historic map collection: https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/hmf
- *Hall's Original County Map of Georgia* (1895) is available in the Virtual Vault under key word "Original County Map." The full map is broken up by county. It shows the original plats and owner names https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/search/searchterm/original%20county%20map
- There are numerous maps at the archives available on microfilm.

Global Land Survey (GLS) is a digital database of Atlanta land survey records dating from the 1880s. The collection contains original subdivision maps, individual property surveys, as well as right-of-way condemnations of the interstate system through the heart of Atlanta. https://www.glsarchives.com/

Google Maps Street View some cities have a street view feature that allows views from previous years
https://www.google.com/maps

Google Earth accesses satellite and aerial imagery https://earth.google.com/web/@-0.00000181,-23.87529683,-11423.10977379a,29872148.8791099d,35y,0h,0t,0r

GNAHRGIS is a database with surveys of Georgia Property.

Historic Aerials aerial photography https://www.historicaerials.com/

Library of Congress Map Collection is extensive. You can narrow it down by location and date
https://www.loc.gov/maps/
- "The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies" contains detailed maps made by the army during the Civil War showing structures such as houses and mills: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gcw0099000/?sp=3&st=gallery

- **Panoramic or bird's-eye-view maps** are usually limited to cities that were considered large in the 19th century. These are useful in showing buildings, especially outbuildings, which existed at a certain point in time. Library of Congress collection is at: https://www.loc.gov/collections/panoramic-maps/

National Archives Cartographic Holdings are extensive
https://www.archives.gov/research/cartographic?_ga=2.54204712.1633318830.1627408938-2011007803.1626119534

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- **Historical Topographical Map Collection** (HTMC) is a set of scanned images of USGS topographic quadrangle maps from the period 1884-2006. https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/topo-maps/historical-topographic-map-collection?qt-science_support_page_related_con=0#
- USGS Topographical Maps https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/basic/?basemap=b1&category=histtopo,ustopo&title=Map%20View#startUp
- USGS Historical Topographical Maps http://historicalmaps.arcgis.com/usgs/
- USGS Topographical Maps at https://caltopo.com/map.html#ll=40.44695,-98.39355&z=5&b=mbt

Vintage Aerial is a collection of aerial views over rural America searchable by state and county: https://vintageaerial.com/

Atlanta Department of City Planning exclusive to Atlanta. Find things such as the Land Lot and District number, via the lot boundary map https://gis.atlantaga.gov/interactivemaps-2-col.html

Plats are legal divisions of land. Plat maps show how a tract of land is divided and show boundaries, waterways, etc. and sometimes show improvements and roadways if they were present at the time the plat was drawn. Real Estate Sales Plats are privately printed sales plats. Check with the county Superior Court Clerk or with Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority https://www.gsccca.org/search

Other places to look for maps:
- University of Georgia Map Collections
- University of Georgia Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library https://www.libs.uga.edu/hargrett/
- The Georgia Historical Society in Savannah
- University of Georgia's Science Library map collection
- Georgia State University
- Atlanta History Center in Atlanta
- *The First One Hundred Years of Town Planning in Georgia* by Joan N. Sears, (1979) features plat maps for early Georgia County seats. Available to view at the Historic Preservation Division in Atlanta and through the Georgia Public Library system (PINES).

SANBORN MAPS:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (commonly called "Sanborn Maps") are highly detailed, 1" = 50' scale maps of America's towns and cities. They were published and frequently updated by the Sanborn Map Company between the 1867 and 1961 (with some revisions occurring as late as 1990). Sanborn Maps are one of the most useful resources for historic preservation research in Georgia. They can help in determining a building's age, location, use, footprint, construction material, and number of stories. They can identify the location of vacant lots and the sites of demolished historic structures. Information is shown graphically, through notation, and a color-coded system of symbols.

It is important to understand why and how Sanborn maps were created and updated, and what their symbols and color-coding means, as well as how to use their key to find a particular area, before using these. Visit https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection/ for helpful information on how to research using Sanborn Maps.

Sanborn maps are not available for all cities and towns, and they generally only cover incorporated areas. The best course of action for determining whether Sanborn Maps are available for an area you are working with is to visit the Library of Congress which has a searchable database which is continually updated. https://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/

EDR Lightbox acquired the Sanborn Map Company's collection in 1996. Their holdings are extensive and available for a fee. https://edrnet.com/prods/sanborn-maps/

- **Digital Library of Georgia** has digitized Sanborn maps (1884-1941): https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg_sanb

- **Atlanta History** Center has Sanborn maps on microfilm primarily of metropolitan Atlanta from the 1880s up to 1960

- **Georgia State University** has Sanborn maps available to the public on microfilm. https://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115461&p=755495

- **University of Georgia**, Map and Government Informaiton Library has Sanborn maps in print and on microfilm. https://www.libs.uga.edu/magil/collections/sanborn

- **Local libraries** Check with your local library to see if they offer on-site, free of charge access to digital Sanborn sites and/or have Sanborn maps available on microfilm or in hardcopy.

IV. HISTORIC IMAGES

Be on the lookout for historic images in the form of photographs and postcards pertaining to the site you are researching. Check the town's Facebook page for old photographs, especially those surrounding events such as a snowfall, town centennial celebrations, U.S. 1976 bicentennial celebrations, and more. Execute a Google search using your city or neighborhood name and the term historic images. Section III. Maps, above, has links to Historic Aerials and Vintage (rural) aerials. See also Section XXI. Geographic Area Specific Sources for more image resources.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

It is useful to peruse photograph collections with the understanding that they may have images of buildings or towns under a heading that may not be by address or location. Photographs are often organized by the archival name such as that of the law office, business, or family who donated the photographs or the archival materials. Remember to attribute the photographer in any photograph used.

Atlanta History Center has digitized some photographs. Not all of the photograph collections are specific to Atlanta. https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/

- Kenneth Rogers photographer for the *Atlanta Constitution* from 1923-1972: https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/Rogers

- Bill Wilson photographer for the *Atlanta Constitution* from 1937-1942: https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/Wilson

DeKalb History Center has some digitized photographs and many more on site. https://dekalbhistory.org/dekalb-county-archives-research/dekalb-history-center-collections-photographs/#boxten

Digital Library of Georgia can be searched by county, time period, collection, and holding institution. The comprehensive list of photographs available is located at: http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/MediaTypes/Photographs.html

Georgia Archives Virtual Vault has several photograph collections worth searching through listed on the site in alphabetical order: https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/?page=1
- Carnegie Family Photograph Albums images from the family vacations and at the family home on Cumberland Island
- Georgia Power Photograph Collection has images of buildings from the 1930s & 1940s
- Historic Postcard Collection
- Historic Schools Photograph Collection has pictures of schools being decommissioned during beginning of the e-school movement
- Lamar Q. Ball World War II Photograph Collection
- Mines, Mining and Geology Photographs
- Small Print Collection
- Vanishing Georgia
- Virtual Georgia

Georgia State University has several digital collections of photographs
- *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* photographs: https://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/digital/collection/ajc
- Lane Brothers Commercial Photographers collection from 1920-1976: https://digitalcollections.library.gsu.edu/digital/collection/lane

Library of Congress Collections document achievements in the United States and its territories through a comprehensive range of:
- architecture and building types in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)
- engineering technologies in the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)
- and landscape design Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS)
- https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/

Vanishing Georgia photographs by Brian Brown (not to be confused with Vanishing Georgia collection in the Georgia Archives). Be sure to attribute any of these photographs to Brian Brown: https://vanishinggeorgia.com/

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POSTCARDS:

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Postcards became popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Postcard collections can be found at many historical archives including the University of Georgia, the Georgia Historical Society, and the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library in the Archives Ephemera Collection.

Atlanta History Center postcard collection cand be found at: https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/p17222coll22/search

Digital Library of Georgia postcard collection can be found at: https://dlg.usg.edu/records?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=both&q=postcard

Georgia Archives postcard collection can be found at: https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/postcard

V. DIRECTORIES

City directories predate and are similar to telephone directories. A city directory provides a listing of residents, streets, businesses, organizations, or institutions, with their location in a city. Not all cities in Georgia had city directories, as these were usually for the more populated cities, and they usually include only property within city limits. City Directories are a useful resource to determine occupants, occupations, businesses, neighbors, businesses, and more. From the earliest editions, dating to the 19th century, directories list names, occupations or place of work, and usually home address. Businesses and residents have separate entries. Telephone lists or directories are only available for the years following the invention of the telephone in 1876, and usually not until after 1900.

Most directories will be found at local historical societies or at city libraries, as well as at the Library of Congress. Check to see what items/holdings the local community might have at the Georgia Archives by typing in the city name at https://www.georgiaarchives.org/ghrac/directory/

A listing of known Georgia city directories and their locations can be found in *Georgia Research: A Handbook for Genealogists, Historians . . .* (2001) compiled by Robert S. Davis, Jr., and Ted O. Brooke for the Georgia Genealogical Society. The Georgia Public Library system (PINES) has this book.

Business directories, similar to city directories, apply primarily to large cities. Some general ones are the *Southern Business Directory* and the *General Commercial Advertizer* [sic] (Charleston, South Carolina, 1854), which list merchants and advertisements.

VI. GAZETTEERS

Gazetteers can be good sources for information on rural areas, businesses, and towns. Although earlier gazetteers exist, those that are helpful in documenting historic buildings are those that were published in Georgia from the mid-1870s to about 1915. Gazetteers include valuable details about small communities. The information is arranged in alphabetical order by name of community and within each entry is a list of businesses or owners of businesses. The entries resemble a mini-city directory. They do not list street addresses but give useful statistical data on the community: population, rail connections, churches, banks, etc. Family Search is a free website managed by the Jesus Christ Church of the Latter-Day Saints. *The Georgia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* for 1881-82, available on Family Search, lists owners by types of business, for example, flour and gristmill owners are listed by towns, alphabetically; other occupations are listed as well.

Family Search https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Georgia_Gazetteers

The 1860 *Gazetteer of Georgia* by Adiel Sherwood provides antebellum information
https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/georgiabooks/pdfs/gb0235.pdf

The University of Georgia, Georgia Archives, Georgia Historical Society, and the Atlanta History Center are the best repositories in which to seek non-digitized gazetteers.

VII. PERIODICALS

Periodicals and trade journals can provide helpful information about building materials, architecture, and architects. House plans may have come from a pattern book or catalog such as Sears and Roebuck.

Building Technology Heritage Library has over 12,000 building manuals, trade catalogs, pattern books, and house plans https://archive.org/details/buildingtechnologyheritagelibrary

Georgia Tech Library has some online editions of architecture journals http://library.gatech.edu/
- *American Architect and Building News*
- *American Architect*
- *Architect and Engineer*
- *Architectural Forum*
- *Architectural Record*

Atlanta History Center has a select number of issues of:
- *American Architect and Building News.* Some copies are available online through Google books: http://books.google.com/
- *Architectural Forum*
- *Architectural Record*

Atlanta History Center has other publications that may provide information on buildings including:
- *Refresher Magazine* Atlanta business publication by the Coca-Cola Company
- *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture*
- *Journal of African American History*
- *Georgia Trend Magazine*
- *Atlanta Magazine*

Manufacturers' Record at Georgia State University and on microfilm at Emory University lists buildings underway throughout the U.S., and often their architects, from the 1880s through the 1950s. Some editions are available online at Google books: http://books.google.com.

Industrial Index, a similar publication to *Manufacturer's Record*, covering 1912-1950s, can be found in Columbus at the W.C. Bradley Memorial Library and at Columbus State University.

Southern Architect and Building News, an Atlanta-based periodical published 1889-1930 is a valuable source for many major Atlanta works of architects, as well as lists of buildings being constructed in other towns. Plans and other illustrations often accompany various articles. Although there is no known complete collection of this periodical, those issues which do exist at the Atlanta History Center and Emory University provide much insight into the building programs. The Georgia public library system (PINES) offers a single issue from 1925 digitally.

VIII. NEWSPAPERS

Many pieces of information may be found in newspapers. These include architects, building dates, subdivision ads and photographs as well business advertisements and important community events. There are subscription-based newspaper search sites, such as Newspapers.com and Proquest.com available digitally, and some archives and local libraries offer patron access. Local libraries also may have newspapers on microfilm.

Atlanta History Center provides free access to Newspapers.com on site at the Kenan Research Center.

Digital Library of Georgia has a wide list of newspapers
https://dlg.usg.edu/records?f%5Bmedium_facet%5D%5B%5D=newspapers&only_path=true

- For a wide list of newspapers (not all are available) by area visit:
  https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/

- This site also offers access to over twenty African American newspapers published in Georgia between 1865 and the early twenty-first century:
  https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/types/#africanamerican

Georgia Archives has onsite access to *The Atlanta Constitution*, 1868-1984

Library of Congress Chronicling America online search can be narrowed by keyword, location, and date:
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

NewspaperCat is the University of Florida Catalog of Digital Historical Newspapers:
https://ufdc.ufl.edu/hnccoll

University of Georgia newspaper listings, some of which are available on microfilm:
https://guides.libs.uga.edu/newspapers

University of Georgia Libraries list of African American Newspapers available on microfilm:
https://www.libs.uga.edu/sites/default/files/reference/aanom2.pdf

IX. SURVEYS

Georgia's Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has been collecting historic resources surveys of properties from communities since 1974. These surveys typically include an overall survey report summarizing findings in and history of the survey area (such as a county, municipality, or neighborhood), as well as individual survey forms documenting physical detail and sometimes limited historic information about each historic resource recorded. Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) is web-based geographical information system designed to store and display information about the state's archaeological and historic resources. Many of the individual property survey forms are available online at GNAHRGIS
https://www.gnahrgis.org/PublicHome/Index?ReturnUrl=%2f

Some of the older survey forms are only available in hardcopy format. Contact HPD to obtain access to these forms.

X. ARCHITECTS AND PLANS

There is a possibility drawings and plans are still in existence for a building. In some cities, tax record cards are kept on file for houses. In the case of railroad depots, school buildings, post offices, Masonic temples, and other such buildings, check with the headquarters of the present organization or firm that built the building. Another possibility is that the building was built by a well-known person or architect and thus perhaps rated mention in the newspaper at the time of its construction or at a later date.

American Institute of Architects (AIA) *Historical Directory of American Architects* contains names and brief biographical details of national-level AIA members up to 1978.
https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/overview

Association for Preservation Technology (APT) Building Technology Heritage Library is great for information on construction methods, materials, and house plans:
https://archive.org/details/buildingtechnologyheritagelibrary

archINFORM site has a world-wide architect database with brief biography and list of work. The bibliography provides additional avenues research.
https://www.archinform.net/arch/index.htm

Atlanta History Center has collected the original plans of many Georgia-based architects. For a complete A-Z listing of architects and firms represented, place the cursor in the "Architect/Firm" field and enter "search." http://architect.atlantahistorycenter.com/

HPD has collected information about architects known to have worked in Georgia and the South.

Society of Architectural Historians publishes brief biographies in alphabetical order of American architects from 1897-1947 transcribed from the *American Art Annual* by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
https://www.sah.org/docs/misc-resources/brief-biographies-of-american-architects-who-died-between-1897-and-1947.pdf

Other libraries and archives may have architectural plans be sure to check: Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, Columbus State University, the Washington Memorial Library in Macon, and the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah.

Some historic house plans may be found in trade catalogs or pattern books.
Building Technology Heritage Library has over 12,000 building manuals, trade catalogs, pattern books, and house plans https://archive.org/details/buildingtechnologyheritagelibrary

XI. FAMILIY HISTORIES AND RECORDS

Family histories may indicate various persons who owned the house, or a change of owners, which could be due to marriage, remarriage and/or inheritance, particularly where a deed was not mandatory. Check with the present owners, at the Georgia Archives, and in the *Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography* (1972, with supplements) available in the Georgia Public Library system (PINES). Always be sure to check local historical societies and the main county library, as well as closest branch library (if applicable), for family papers, as well as diaries, ledger books, record books of any type, and letters, pictures, deed, and estate papers relating to the family that owned the building. Many families who have lived in the same building for a century have, in many instances, never thrown anything away.

XII. AFRICAN AMERICAN SPECIFIC RESOURCES

This list is not exhaustive but includes links that may be helpful in documenting historic African American resources. If you are aware of other helpful resources, please let us know.

General:

- **Georgia Archives** African American Resources: https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/african_american_resources

- **The Atlanta History Center** has a wide array of books and periodicals on African American History. The online catalog is at https://atlantahistorycenter.on.worldcat.org/advancedsearch?databaseList=

- *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia,* by Carole Merritt https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/historic_black_resources.pdf

- *African-American Historic Places and Culture: A Preservation Resource Guide for Georgia*, by Minority Historic Preservation Committee Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/africanamericanhistoricplacesculture.pdf

- "Historic Resources – African American," HPD web page https://www.dca.ga.gov/georgia-historic-preservation-division/historic-resources/historic-resources-african-american

- **Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History** collects, preserves and provides access to rare, unique and primary materials concerning people across the African Diaspora, with a concentration on local Atlanta history. https://aafa.galileo.usg.edu/

Newspapers:

- **Digital Library of Georgia** has African American newspapers published in Georgia between 1865 and the early twenty-first century: https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/types/#africanamerican

- **University of Georgia Libraries** has African American newspapers, including the *Atlanta Daily World*, available on microfilm: https://www.libs.uga.edu/sites/default/files/reference/aanom2.pdf

Schools:

- "Rosenwald Schools in Georgia, 1912-1937," Jeanne Cyriaque, Keith Hebert, and Steven Moffson:
  https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/rosenwaldschools.pdf

- "Equalization Schools in Georgia's African-American Communities, 1951-1970," by Steven Moffson:
  https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/equalization_schools_in_georgia_0.pdf

Miscellaneous:

- **Georgia Archives** research materials relating to "The African Case and the Slave Trade 1817-ca. 1821":
  https://www.georgiaarchives.org/assets/documents/research/african_case_resource_guide.pdf

- Information about segregated parks in Georgia:
  http://www.atlantatimemachine.com/misc/state_parks.htm

- *History of the American Negro and His Institutions*, *Georgia Edition, Volumes 1 and 2,* by Arthur Bunyan Caldwell. Published in 1917 contains short biographies of African American ministers, educators, and more from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
    - Volume 1: https://archive.org/details/historyofamerica01cald/page/n5/mode/2up
    - Volume 2: https://archive.org/details/historyofamerica02cald/page/336/mode/2up

- *The Negro Motorist Green Book,* by Victor H. Green. Published annually from 1936-1966, for African American travelers. Most editions included a chapter on Georgia sites including hotels, boarding houses, taverns, restaurants, service stations, parks, and other establishments.
  https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=aagreenbook
  https://transcription.si.edu/project/7955
  https://www.loc.gov/item/2016298176/
  https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/786175a0-942e-0132-97b0-58d385a7bbd0

XIII. INSURANCE RECORDS

Check to see if the insurance records for the property exist either in the hands of the owner, previous owners, or at the insurance company's main office. The main office could be overseas; for example, insurance records in England turned up plans to a warehouse in Savannah. When checking with an insurance company, always ask for the owner by name, since that is how the files will be set up, not by a name given to a house. If the original records exist, they will include a floor plan and date of construction. If nothing else, the insurance company logbook will show data that will indicate an increase in premiums when changes were made to a building.

XIV. BOOKS

Georgia has an excellent public library service called the Public Information Network for Electronic Services (PINES). If the local branch does not have a particular book the library can request it be sent from another branch. Books that may be of help in conducting your research and which are available in the PINES system include:

Georgia Bibliography: County History (1979) which is a list of county histories.
United States Local Histories in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography (1975, five volumes)
Georgia Genealogy and Local History: A Bibliography (1983) lists articles and books by county
Research in Georgia. Robert S. Davis, Jr. includes a special section on Georgia's land records and how to use them.

Two periodicals focused on Georgia history are:
Georgia Historical Quarterly
Georgia Genealogical Society Quarterly.

The Atlanta History Center has a wide array of books and periodicals on Georgia history, businesses, architecture, African American History, Civil War, material culture, trains, LGBTQ history, and more. The online catalog is at https://atlantahistorycenter.on.worldcat.org/advancedsearch?databaseList=

XV. CITY RECORDS

These records, which are located at the office of the city clerk in the city hall, consist mainly of the town minutes, ordinances, and local laws, which may be of some benefit. Also, business licenses may be available to prove when someone started a firm. City tax records are also of assistance to the researcher, as well as a published list of improvements appearing in newspapers.

XVI. COUNTY HISTORIES

HPD has a collection of county histories. Please contact us to see if we have anything on a particular county. Other sources for county histories include:

The Atlanta History Center has numerous books of county history. If using information found in these books, be sure the author uses citations that validate the research and assertions.

Digital Library of Georgia offers various information that can be searched for by county. The amount of information can vary by county, for example Baldwin County has approximately 12,000 items and Bacon County has approximately 140 items. The about tab will take you to a New Georgia Encyclopedia page with an historical overview of the county. A list of digital collections in the Digital Library of Georgia is at: https://dlg.usg.edu/records/facet/medium_facet

Georgia Archives has numerous has numerous books of county history. If using information found in these books, be sure the author uses citations that validate the research and assertions.

The Georgia Public Library (PINES) has copies of *Georgia Bibliography: County History* (1979) which is a list of county histories.

XVII. PLACE NAMES

Atlanta History Center has an assortment of books on how places earned their names.

The Georgia Public Library (PINES) has an assortment of over 100 books on Georgia place names.

Georgia Place-Names, by Kenneth K. Krakow: http://www.kenkrakow.com/gpn/georgia_place-names.htm

XVIII. RECONSTRUCTION VOTER OATH RECORDS

Voter registration oath books were created by U.S. military officials stationed in Georgia after the Civil War to identify eligible voters. The oath books are located at the Georgia Archives. The oath books include name, date of registration, county of residence, race (sometimes included), and signature (Oath) of allegiance to the United States of the registrant. Confederate Enlistment Oaths and Discharges: https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/confed

The Returns of Qualified Voters provide similar information to the oath books and are available at the Family History Library (part of the Family Search website). Returns include name, race, time of residence in state and naturalization information. https://www.familysearch.org/en/family-history-library/

XIX. SOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH HPD/NPS

Along with the Survey files discussed in Section IX above, the Historic Preservation Division maintains files on individual properties and areas; topical and context files and publications detailing property types and resource categories; and architect files on various architects that practiced in Georgia. This information is largely the product of what is submitted to us, so whether we have any information on a particular property, topic, or architect will generally depend on whether our office has ever received anything on the resource, person, or topic. Contact HPD to see if the office can provide information relevant to your search.

- *National Register Bulletin 39: Researching a Historic Property* National Park Service (NPS): https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB39-Complete.pdf

- *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook For the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia* by Carole Merritt: https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/581524

- Historic Preservation Division Research page: https://www.dca.ga.gov/georgia-historic-preservation-division/national-register-research-survey

- Historic Preservation Division Resources page with many links to additional sources: https://www.dca.ga.gov/node/6680/documents/6689

XX. UNUSUAL SOURCES

Among those sources, particularly for information on the 18th and 19th century Georgia history, which may not be readily known are the following:

1798 Direct Tax lists, which were based on *An Act to lay and collect a direct tax within the United States*. In 1798, the Fifth U.S. Congress imposed a direct tax on each state. The act called for each state to enumerate lands, dwelling-houses, and slaves and provide the list to surveyors of the revenue to determine how much tax the landowner was to pay. This tax record exists only for a few of the Georgia counties that were in existence in 1798. Those existing on microfilm can be found at the Georgia Archives. Known extant 1798 Direct Tax lists can be found at: https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/spring/tax-lists-extant.html

An article by D.J. DeLaubenfels, "Where Sherman Passed By," which appeared in *The Geographical Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 3 (1957), pp. 381-95 describes some of the places and buildings that the Union army encountered during the Civil War. If a building is evidenced in this article, it could help narrow down the building's construction date. Available on JSTOR https://www.jstor.org/journal/geogrevi, a subscription service which may be available to view at a university library. Check with the reference librarian. JSTOR may offer limited access for free, contact JSTOR customer support for more information.

The Georgia Historical Quarterly (Vol. XLI (1957), pp. 288-300, also indicates houses General William T. Sherman passed on his way from Decatur to Milledgeville, Georgia in 1864. This copy of *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* is available at the Georgia Archives. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* is also available at the Atlanta History Center and the Georgia Public Library system (PINES), but they may not have all issues.

Georgia Archives has books of governmental proceedings and Indian Treaties dating back to the Colonial Era as well as church records. The Georgia Archives also has a vast genealogical collection, including African American ancestry and history and Native American culture and history.

Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research has many area specific resources. Some of these may be written by community members, therefore any sources used must be verified before citing these as fact in an official documentation. https://ighr.gagensociety.org/

XXI. GEOGRAPHIC AREA-SPECIFIC SOURCES

Below is a list of research outlets and sources specific to certain geographical areas in Georgia, of which HPD has become aware over time. This list is not exhaustive, and new outlets and collections routinely become available. Checking with local historical societies or history organizations, historic preservation interest groups, historic preservation commission, libraries, institutions, city and county land record offices, and even community landmark organizations such as prominent churches, clubs, and social organizations, etcetera is an important initial step in any historical research quest.

ATLANTA:

The City Builder published by Atlanta Chamber of Commerce from 1916 to 1961. The publication was created to highlight the accomplishments of businesses, cultural and civic organizations, and local government. Some copies are available at the Atlanta History Center. An index allows a search by name and subject-heading: https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/ACBuilder/search

Emory University has digitized maps of Atlanta: http://disc.library.emory.edu/atlantamaps/atlanta-1927-30-topographic-maps-with-open-street-map-overlay/. They also have overlay maps where you can find things such as the Land Lot and District number, via the lot boundary map. https://gis.atlantaga.gov/interactivemaps-2-col.html

GLS Archives is a digital database of Atlanta land survey records with over 100,000 Atlanta land surveys that date back to the 1880's. The land surveys on file consist of original subdivision maps of Atlanta and individual property surveys: https://www.glsarchives.com

Atlanta History Center has building permits, plat maps, and residential and commercial property cards for Fulton County and the city of Atlanta on microfilm. They also have some appraisals for Fulton as well as other counties statewide. They also publish a guide "Home Sweet Historic Home: Research Your Historic Home" that provides suggestions and resources for additional research.

> **Adair Realty and Loan Company maps** at AHC. Georgia's first real estate company produced over 5,000 maps, 698 of which are available online. Adair Realty maps include illustrations that feature layouts of streets and plots of land; descriptions and amenities of property, including proximity to streetcars and railroads; announcements and dates of property and estate sales, and locations of businesses and residences in proximity. The plats document the sale of property and buildings located in the present-day neighborhoods of Downtown Atlanta, Old Fourth Ward, Sweet Auburn Historic District, Mechanicsville, Pittsburgh, Summerhill, Grant Park, Castleberry Hill, Adair Park, English Avenue, Atlanta University Center, Marietta Street Artery, Midtown, West End, Capitol View, Vine City, Peoplestown, in other areas of the city, and in some instances plats elsewhere in Georgia. https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/p17222coll8

Atlanta Time Machine has a collection of then and now photographs, mostly of Atlanta and nearby communities, which are especially revealing for residential and commercial architectural change http://www.atlantatimemachine.com/

Dekalb History Center has photographs, maps, city directories, oral histories, and more https://dekalbhistory.org/dekalb-county-archives-research/. They also publish Researching Your House, a guide explaining where and how to find information in DeKalb County https://dekalbhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/researching-your-house.doc.pdf

Kauffman's Map of Atlanta 1934 detailed map of Atlanta:
https://bplonline.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15099coll3/id/1661/
     AHC digitized key to Kauffman's map:
     https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/digital/collection/AHBull/id/8996/rec/51

<u>**AUGUSTA:**</u>

Augusta Cadastral survey (1939) Cadastral maps and individual lot survey cards. These are not digitized. Contact HPD for more information.

Augusta Museum: https://www.augustamuseum.org/PhotographersPhotographandPostcardCollections

<u>**COLUMBUS:**</u>

Columbus State University Digital Archives and Special Collections: https://archives.columbusstate.edu/

Columbus Metropolitan Library: https://digital-collections.columbuslibrary.org/digital/collection/ohio

Chattahoochee Valley Libraries: https://www.cvlga.org/columbus-public-library/

<u>**SAVANNAH:**</u>

Savannah Cadastral survey (1939) Cadastral maps and individual lot survey cards.
https://www.savannahga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/541/Savannah-Cadastral-Survey?bidId=

Savannah Digital Collections: https://www.savannahga.gov/747/Digital-Collections

<u>**TROUP COUNTY:**</u>

Troup County Archives: http://www.trouparchives.org/

XXII. GENERAL ONLINE DATABASES AND SEARCH HELP

Atlanta History Center: https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/archival-collections/

- The Kenan Research Center publishes a finding aids guide: https://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/

Digital Library of Georgia has cataloged items and photographs.
https://dlg.usg.edu/records/facet/medium_facet

Georgia Archives has many items online at https://www.georgiaarchives.org/ or
https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research and https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/research_help

- Georgia Archives Virtual Vault collections are listed alphabetically: https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/

- Georgia Archives Search help provides a search engine to determine what records the archives may store and whether the records are digital, on microfilm, or in hard copy format.
  https://georgiaarchives.as.atlas-sys.com/

- Georgia Archives YouTube videos on numerous subjects
  https://www.google.com/search?q=youtube+georgia+archives&rlz=1C1GCEB_enUS979US979&oq=youtube+georgia+archives&aqs=chrome..69i57.7880j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Georgia Historical Society: https://georgiahistory.com/research-the-collection/search-our-collection/

Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/help.html

Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/collections/

- Ask A Librarian: https://ask.loc.gov/

New Georgia Encyclopedia has scholarly articles about the state and its history.
https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/

- New Georgia Encyclopedia has an Architecture and Historic Preservation Resources Page
  https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/topics/architecture-historic-preservation/

XXIII. HOW TO USE SOME MORE COMMON SOURCES

TAX RECORDS:

- Is the building currently within the city limits of a town or city?
- Was it within the city limits when it was built?
- If it was not within the city limits when it was built, when did the city limits incorporate that land? (Example: Georgia tax digests indicate the presence of houses only within city limits, because taxable town property was located only within those limits.)
- Remember that many times landowners in Georgia paid taxes for all of their Georgia lands at their permanent residences. (Example: Senator Robert Toombs owned land in five counties, including a cotton plantation in west Georgia, but taxes on these lands were paid to Wilkes County, where Toombs had his permanent residence.) Out-of-state persons who owned lands in Georgia had to pay taxes in Georgia, but they usually did so through agents.

DEEDS:

- Deeds are land records that can be traced from the current owner backwards, from the known to the unknown. They include the name of the owner, the location of the property, sale price, and the date the property changed hands. Arrangement is chronological, in the order of entry.
- Normally deeds are indexed, but the indices are alphabetical by the name of the seller (grantor), listed in a "direct index" and the name of the buyer (grantee) listed in another index called the "reverse index."
- Remember that deeds were not required to be recorded; they were valid even if they were not recorded.
- When was the land beneath the building first opened for white settlement?
- How far back, starting with the present owner, can you trace the ownership (i.e., the deeds or title) of the property? Unless the deed records have been burned or have not been recorded, you should be able to trace the land to the original grantee. It is always best to start with the current legal owner, since 21st-century transactions require a title check of approximately 80 years, and this saves much time. Be sure to check with the owner for his/her legal title.
- Remember that many times the deed is actually dated after years of partial payments; therefore, occupation may have taken place several years prior to the date on the deed.
- What values has this property sold for? Is there any noticeable change of value to indicate the possibility of a building being constructed or additions being made to the building?
- What can deeds normally show a researcher regarding the presence of a house? (Actually, very little unless it was located within city limits, and even then, its presence is questionable. For example, a sharp rise in value of the property or the mention of the house indirectly in the deed would indicate its presence.)
- What if the courthouse has burned and all deeds have been lost? In this case, the following records may be helpful: census lists; city, business, and social or other family papers; the families may have copies of deeds, perhaps in safety-deposit boxes; newspaper accounts of purchase and building; or, as a last resort, oral tradition.
- Deeds are not the only items to be found in the deed index of the Superior Court. Many times, mortgages, liens, and plats on property are just as valuable in documenting a building and are either indexed with the deeds or in separate indices. Deeds can be found in the county Clerk of the Superior Court's office or on microfilm at the Georgia Archives.

ESTATE RECORDS:

- Types of estate records include wills, administrations of estates, inventories and appraisements, annual returns, and sales.
- Inventories and sales show values and apparent wealth and size of a dwelling (i.e., the presence of a house is shown when furniture is sold), as well as the placement of furniture in various rooms (in case you want to restore it to a certain period), provided the owner died while in ownership of the house.
- Check for sales of land which were never recorded by deeds and for rental information.

NEWSPAPERS:

- Was the building mentioned in the newspapers of the period? Normally, only buildings built within a town are mentioned, since those in the country were too far away from the center of activity.
- Legal advertisements are also sometimes found for regular or estate sales, in which the house and outbuildings, especially of plantations, are described.
- New subdivisions are usually advertised. These feature builder, covenants, amenities, etc.
- Obituaries often provide addresses, may help indicate dates to search for property transfer or wills.
- Society columns about weddings and other social events held at a house can provide details about the building and its occupants.

XXIV. SOURCES FROM HPD'S PACKET FOR NOMINATING INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

If you are nominating a resource to the National Register of Historic Places, you should be working with the Packet for Nominating Individual Resources/Historic Districts to the National Register in Georgia. Item 4 in each of these packets is a "Checklist of Sources" that one should use to develop a National Register nomination. To assist those completing that checklist, below, are suggestions for where to find these sources in this research document and guidance for how to use these sources: