

Resources for Researching Bellingham Homes

Whatcom County Assessor's Office <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/assessor/index.jsp> (Real Property Search)

- Legal Description
- Assessment/History
- Building Details

In the Assessor's Office, you can acquire information from their database that includes a picture of the house—this is often a photo that has been taken in years past. However, there is a caveat that the information stored here may have been recorded in error.

Title Companies have a record of previous owners for in-house review—you will need the legal description of the property. Chicago Title has "Track Books" from 1889 with clean chain of ownership arranged conveniently by piece of property. Availability to the public varies with their business cycles—call ahead. If desired, they will prepare a history of ownership with copies of all deeds for \$50.00. Other title companies have this information on microfiche.

Northwest Regional Archives (WWU Goltz-Murray Building)

http://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/archives_northwest.aspx

- Building permits issued after 1926
- Historic deed books with "inverted index".
- Historic tax assessment records
- Probate records of previous owners (requires death date—available at the Bellingham Public Library)

Center for Pacific Northwest Studies (WWU Goltz-Murray Building (see separate brochure)

<http://www.acadweb.wvu.edu/cpnws/>

- Photograph Collection (though houses are usually not the main feature)
- Map Collection (original plat maps and historic features)
- Michael Sullivan Collection (inventories by neighborhood)

Bellingham Public Library <http://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/>

- Polk City Directories list names, spouses, and occupations of previous owners. Beginning in 1931, cross-indexed with addresses.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (microfilm and bound volumes) for various years provide structural data of properties in "footprint" format.
- Local history collection provides community history, town leaders, etc.
- Bellingham newspapers on microfilm are the diaries of the community and its early pioneers with social events, legal entanglements, and obituaries.
- Bellingham Herald (microfilm) includes special real estate features for many houses (a partial index is available at the Reference Desk of the main library).
- Guidebooks for researching your home's history
- Census data on previous owners <http://www.heritagequestonline.com/index>

Whatcom Museum of History and Art <http://www.whatcommuseum.org/>

- Photo Archives and ephemera of persons, places, events and homes.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for 1904, 1912, 1930 and 1962 in bound volumes.
- Historic maps and City Directories.
- Local history book collection with index to persons, places and things.