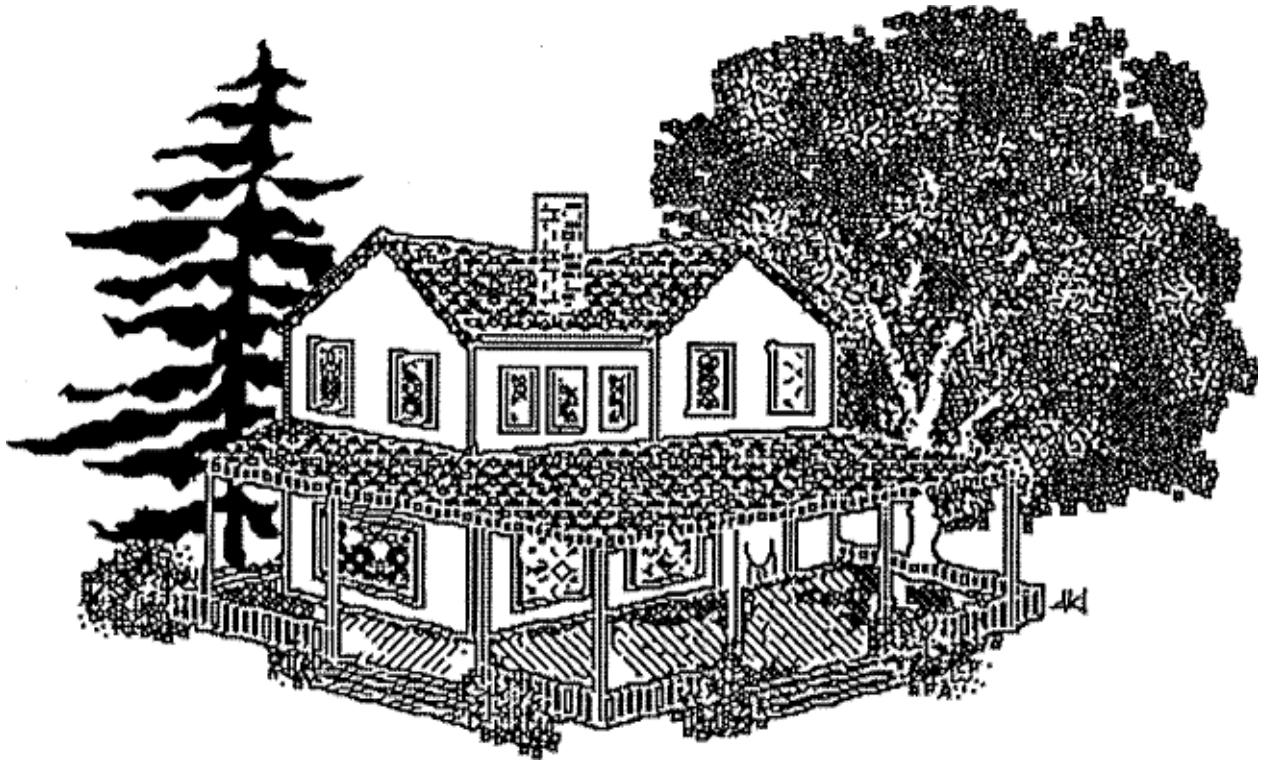# Researching the History of a Sonoma County Property

Prepared by the
Sonoma County Historical Records Commission,
Sonoma County Landmarks Commission,
Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, and
Historical Society of Santa Rosa

Revised October 2023

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INTRODUCTION

We do historical research on places in our communities for all kinds of reasons. Whether you own your home or business, or rent similar properties, you may want to know more about how the building was built, or who its previous owners were. You may be interested in who the past residents or tenants were or what other uses the property may have had over time. You may be planning to make some modifications to your building and want to have a better understanding of previous work that has been done. Maybe you are interested in getting recognition for a building or place, and you need to be able to document its history to demonstrate its importance to the community. Or maybe you just want to know a little bit more about your neighborhood.

Whatever your interests are, this booklet is designed to introduce you to the resources that are available in Sonoma County for doing this kind of research. It includes an overview of the kinds of documents and records that exist, what sort of information they could provide, and where you can find them. It also provides you with locations and contact information for a wide range of groups and organizations in the county that offer access to their archives and resources for researching local history.

This booklet revises and updates an earlier version published in 2004. The revisions were completed by a team representing the Sonoma County Historical Records Commission, Sonoma County Landmarks Commission, Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, and the Historical Society of Santa Rosa. It is intended to be a brief and practical introduction to the resources available for property research in Sonoma County. It is particularly designed for people who may be new to Sonoma County, or new to this kind of research, or both. But even experts can find something useful here, especially in searching for more hard-to-find sources of information.

This brief introduction is not exhaustive. Sonoma County is a place that is rich in both history and historical resources, with deep and enthusiastic public interest in these topics. New materials and information are always being discovered. In addition, digital technologies are constantly changing the accessibility of all kinds of historical records. While every effort will be made to keep the online version of the booklet as up-to-date as possible, be aware that new information may become available between revisions. Similarly, these guidelines can help you locate a wide range of research materials, but your own careful investigations will be needed to verify the accuracy and currency of the information you discover. Finally, while this introduction gives you a good start on accumulating the kinds of information needed to document your property's history, it does not provide the level of detail and technical guidance needed to complete formal state or national historical property nomination forms. See Section IV at the end of the booklet for an overview of the Sonoma County Landmarks designation process, if you decide to take your research further.

BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH

Overview

When you first start your research, you may have little information beyond the location of the property. This means a good first stop may be the offices of the Sonoma County Assessor and the Sonoma County Recorder, or their online resources. On the other hand, if you already know several names, dates, or events associated with the property, your first visit might be to one or more local libraries, museums, or historical organizations. Also, you might check with county or local city planning departments to learn if your property is located in an historic district, named neighborhood, or cultural district. As you accumulate more information over time, you will probably find yourself returning to both the public county offices and the libraries and other organizations for further searching. You will discover new leads to pursue, and other sources to explore. Jump to Contact Information for Relevant Agencies and Organizations in Sonoma County.

Start with the Building or Property Itself

The building itself may prove a primary source of information. Make a list of its distinctive features and obvious alterations and changes. If possible, examine any other associated buildings and structures. Then do the same for the property as a whole, taking note of landscape features like pathways, fences, mature trees and other formal plantings. Keep an eye out for any signs of previous buildings or activities, such as foundations and wells. Also, get a sense of the setting of the property and details like adjacent roadways, neighboring properties, nearby parks, businesses, schools, and so on. You may also want to find out about local geographical features like nearby creeks, lakes, or ridgelines.

First Steps to Researching the History of Your Building or Property

Establishing a construction date, relating the building to historic events and the development of the community, finding the names of additional people who owned or lived in the building and any names by which the building has been known, are all subjects you can research in publicly accessible records and documents to learn more about your property.

If your goals are to gain some kind of formal recognition of the building's historical significance, then you will want to research the specific kinds of information that those formal recognition processes require. For example, discovering that a building is connected with important people or events, is a significant example of a particular architectural style, or was designed by a notable architect will increase the likelihood that it may be eligible for designation as a local, state, or national landmark. In recent years, historians have emphasized the building's place within a wider framework, such as a national or regional architectural style; the economic development of an area; the settlement of a neighborhood; or a unique cultural or ethnic context.

Whatever your goals are, the steps listed below will help you get started researching these key questions. This section also provides you with a brief introduction to the main county offices and organizations where you can access the information you will need. There are more detailed lists of useful organizations, what kinds of documents they have and their contact information under Types of Research Materials and Contact Information for Relevant Agencies and Organizations in Sonoma County.

Some Basic Research Questions

1. When was your building built? If you are not sure of the date, do you have a general idea? This kind of information may be available in formal legal documents like deeds, as well as in a wide variety of other records like newspapers.

2. Has your building been included in a Historic Resources Survey? Professional surveys may provide a construction date, architectural style, architect, if the building was moved, and information on previous owners. Check with the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library to get started.

3. Do you know the architectural style of your home? Knowing the style can help you come up with an approximate construction date. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (revised 2015 edition) by Virginia McAlester is a good resource when trying to determine characteristics of a particular style of architecture. It can be viewed on Google Books or borrowed at the Sonoma County Library.

4. Is the property you are researching in an urban area of the county? If so, you'll want to check to see if any Sanborn Fire Insurance maps exist. These maps are available online and on microfilm at the Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library and other institutions such as the Library of Congress.

5. If your research property is in a rural area, you may want to start by looking at county atlases and maps:
   - 1867 A.B. Bowers map of Sonoma County
   - 1877 Thomas H. Thompson 1877 Illustrated Atlas of Sonoma County
   - 1884 Map of Sonoma County
   - 1897 Reynolds and Proctor Illustrated Atlas of Sonoma County
   - 1900 Official Map of Sonoma County
   - 1908 Official Map of Sonoma County by McIntire and Lewis
   - David Rumsey Map Collection
   - Online Archive of California

6. Historical aerial photography will help you identify the past uses of your property as well as its surrounding environment. Sonoma County has aerial photography dating back to the early 1940s. You can get started here.

7. Who built, owned, or lived in your building in the past? What were their biographies, family histories, or significance in the local community? Answering these questions

can begin with property ownership documents like deeds or mortgages, and then range very broadly through a wide array of other kinds of documents and records, from census records to local newspapers.

8. What was the historical setting of your property? Was it located in a wealthy neighborhood, an area with a distinctive cultural or ethnic identity, or an area known for a particular kind of land use – orchards, ranches, industrial areas, commercial districts, or transportation corridors? Hints about this kind of information can be found in a wide variety of historical maps, but also in period newspapers, photographs, business directories, and personal documents like diaries, journals, and letters.

Where to Go to Get Started

Sonoma County Assessor's Office

You may wish to visit the County Assessor's Office first, even if you already know the assessor's parcel number (APN) of the property. They have many kinds of public records relating to your property. Instructions on how to search parcel information is here. Be aware that some documents kept at the Assessor's Office will be available to property owners only.

You may view and download the property's Assessor's Parcel map online for free here. You may also want to purchase a Property Profile and Building Record that provides extensive information such as assessed evaluation and official records of the last purchase.

Sonoma County Recorder's Office

The County Recorder's Office offers access to a wide range of public records relating to both the land and people of Sonoma County. For more detailed information about the kinds of records available consult the office's website.

While the actual documents such as deeds, leases, or other property records are not viewable online, the Recorder's Office does maintain an online public index for these records. Documents dating back to 1964 may be purchased and viewed immediately online. A list of the kinds of records indexed online is posted on the Recorder's Office website and is accessible through their web-service.

All recorded documents may be searched and viewed for free in the office during operating hours. Check the website for current hours.

Libraries, Museums and Historical Organizations

The Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library in Santa Rosa provides materials and support for those interested in Sonoma County property research. Resources include historic maps and atlases; aerial photography; city and phone directories;

historic building surveys and architectural guides; permits, registers, tax assessments, and other local resources such as indexes to local cemetery, marriage, birth, death, and probate records; high school yearbooks; wills, diaries, and family scrapbooks; information on local businesses and community associations; and county histories. One key resource accessed through the History and Genealogy Library is the Sonoma County Archives.

The library also offers free access to genealogical and other historical research databases, such as Ancestry Library Edition and Newspapers.com, and to the Sonoma County Digital Collections which makes available a variety of digitized historical materials from their Special Collections locations, including over 45,000 historical photographs.

Other local libraries, museums, and historical societies may hold additional city, town or area-specific materials relevant to your property. For example, if a certain resident of your property becomes important to your research, you may want to consult with organizations like the Sonoma County Genealogical Society or the Santa Rosa LDS Church Family History Center. If you are researching a commercial property, or a business associated with a former occupant of a residential property, then there may be similar businesses still operating today that could have valuable information for you. Local religious and civic organizations can have extensive historical membership records that may be available to the public. Cemeteries also may have records about individual and family burial plots on their properties. For many of these kinds of organizations, providing public access to their records requires additional time and effort, so be sure to contact them in advance to explain your goal and make an appointment. You can find Contact Information for Relevant Agencies and Organizations in Sonoma County below.

Find a list of other Historical and Genealogical societies on the Historical Records Commission website.

GUIDE TO THE RESOURCES

Types of Research Materials

This section provides an initial list of some of the kinds of documents and records that can be useful in documenting your property's history. They are divided into categories based on what information the documents include and why they were created. Generally, records listed here are about the property itself or about the individual people associated with the property over time (such as builders, owners, residents, etc.). Then there are some more general kinds of documents that might contain information about both people and property. Each category is arranged alphabetically for ease of use. See below to learn where these and other materials may be found.

Property Ownership Records

Records involving property ownership, purchase, value, and transfer

> **Abstracts of title** are a way of finding who owned the building, how long they owned it, and how much it cost, as well as a description of the property. Title companies as well as libraries may have these.

> **Deeds** are signed legal documents that transfer ownership of a property from a previous owner to a new owner. These can be used to find the names of the previous owners, the price of the property, and the legal description of the property at a particular point in time. The grantor/grantee indexes in the Sonoma County Recorder's Office can be used to locate the deeds for the property you are researching.

> **Mortgages** are similar to deeds in content and language. Here one can find a description of the property, terms of payment, and value of the primary building. A mortgage on an already existing building may also indicate construction of an outbuilding such as a carriage house or barn.

> **Tax and Assessment Lists** will give the name of the owner and the monetary value of the real and personal property. Tax assessments are conducted annually, so the development of the property over time, including any new buildings or upgrading or expanding of existing structures, may be indicated by an increase in the assessed value over time.

> **Wills, Probate Records, and Decrees of Distribution** also document the transfer of property at the time of death of an owner. Specific information on the building may be found here; sometimes even the original furnishings or specific property improvements may be listed.

Property Development Records

Public records involving land surveys, building construction, and infrastructure

development

Building Permits where applicable, may show the date the building was built, alterations to existing property, as well as new construction. The name of the architect and the contractor can be found. Building permits were not required until 1961. The Assessor's Office has some records previous to this time.

Historic Property Surveys have been completed in several cities and some areas of the county. They record all properties over a certain age (often 50 years) at the time the survey was conducted, and give a description of the buildings and known historical information. These will provide a framework for your own research and may mean that part of the work has already been done for you.

Mechanic's Liens, when available, will provide information related to the construction or remodel of a building.

Water Hook Up Records may show the date public water service began to a property.

Personal Records

Records that help identify individuals associated with your property

Census Records record information by residential household every 10 years. They may show nationality, place of birth, occupation, whether the house was rented or owned, and other information about the individuals living in the house. Federal census records are now publicly available through the 1950 U.S. Census.

City and County Directories will show the names of some persons living at a particular address as well as their occupation. Directories are not a complete list. They were not necessarily published every year and the names listed do not necessarily include all adults at the residence. For example, female heads of households are often not listed. The earliest directories do not have an address cross reference. City directories in Sonoma County can date back as early as the 1870s.

Vital Statistics are official records created by city and county offices as well as some religious institutions that can yield information on the births, deaths, and marriages of past residents of your property.

Other Documents

County Histories published up through the early 20th century are sometimes called "subscription histories." County residents could pay to have their personal or family histories included in these volumes. Subscribers often provided detailed information designed to document their success and good standing in the

community. This information may yield biographical information on previous owners of a property. Details such as construction dates for specific buildings, descriptions of original structures, and other details of property improvements are often included. These volumes are often profusely illustrated. Search Google Books for "History of Sonoma County" for a selection of these publications or visit the Sonoma County History & Genealogy Library for print editions.

Maps and Atlases provide more than just location. Early urban insurance maps known as "Sanborn maps" can indicate construction materials and details, location of porches and other additions, number of stories, along with location of out buildings and wells. The exact size of the original property can be found as well as the position of the primary building. Historical atlases combine maps with historical data and can give the names of the property owners and other biographical and historical details. Aerial photographs and geological survey maps will show the general terrain, past land uses in the area, and changes in major landscape features such as settlement sizes, field systems, and roadways. Surveyors and civil engineers may also have these kinds of documents in their offices, in addition to those found in public offices and libraries. (For a few examples, see links for maps listed earlier in this document.)

Newspapers are particularly useful when you have an approximate date range for the property you are interested in and a list of individual names of people associated with the property. Obituaries, birth and marriage notices, advertisements, notices of tax sales, sheriffs' sales, or auctions can be helpful; there may be related news stories as well. The names of specific subdivisions and new houses, as well as their builders and costs, were often listed, especially after the turn of the 20th century. Historical newspapers are increasingly well-indexed and available online. You can find a wide range of digitized local newspapers at the Sonoma County Library, at Newspapers.com, and at the California Digital Newspaper Project.

Photographs and Postcards provide information not available from any other sources. Entire neighborhoods may be shown in aerial views. Photos of street scenes may show your building as it looked originally and how it changed over time. It was also popular in the early 1900's to have photos of your residence or commercial building printed as postcards to send to friends and family. Searching public collections for former residents of your property may return other photos of the property at different times in its history. Some local collections available online include:
Sonoma County Library's Digital Collections
University of California's Collections - Calisphere
Museum of Sonoma County
Petaluma Historical Library and Museum
Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society's photo archives

Location of Selected Materials

This table gives a more detailed description of some of the different kinds of documents and records available, the information they might contain, and the Sonoma County locations that might have these kinds of records available to the public. Contact information for all these offices and organizations are provided below. (Alphabetical by document type.)

Materials	Potential Information	Potential Locations
Abstracts of Title (1850-present)	Summary of deeds, mortgages, and litigation. Owner names and dates, boundary descriptions	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library (select records for 1890s-1920s), other museums and local libraries, or title companies (for a fee, and for property owned by the researcher)
Architectural/Construction Drawings	Original plans, alterations, building materials, names of architect or builder	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library Sonoma County Archives (select records for prominent buildings, Wallace collection)
Assessment Rolls/ Tax Records	Value of property and value of improvements	Sonoma County Assessor's Office Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library on microfilm
Building Records	Names of owner, builder, architect, contractor, date of construction, cost	Sonoma County Assessor's Office Note: "Only the property owner or an authorized representative can view or purchase Assessor Building Records. Building Records are those the Assessor maintains that pertain to the assessment of the real or personal property. Identification (and a completed authorization form) is required to view or purchase copies of these documents."

Materials	Potential Information	Potential Locations
Cemetery and Church Records (1850-present)	Birth and death dates, baptism, marriages, family relationships	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, local museums, churches, cemeteries
Deeds	Buyer/Seller, property description, date and sales price	Sonoma County Recorder's Office
Directories - City and Counties	Occupants of dwellings, business listings, ads, names, including spouse and marriage status, 1860s to present. (Indexed by street and/or occupant's name).	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library Petaluma History Room Central Santa Rosa Library (Haines directories)
Federal Census Records	Name, age, ethnicity, family relationships, occupation, property size, crops, value. Information varies with each census. (Every decade, 1850-1950, no 1890)	Ancestry.com (Ancestry Library Edition available through the Sonoma County Library)
Genealogical Records/Personal papers	Family histories, biographies	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, local museums, past property owners
Great Register of Voters	Residence and occupation, information varies each year (1867-1898)	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library on microfilm, some local museums and libraries
Historic Building Surveys and Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs)	History of building and residents, neighborhood, architectural style	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, some local libraries and museums, some city planning offices

Materials	Potential Information	Potential Locations
Historical Atlases	Maps in historical atlases show owners and acreage, and other built features. Atlases can contain bios and business, commerce and real estate information.	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library, some local libraries and museums
Land Records (Official Public Records)	Information about property, people, dates, homestead records, mining claims	Sonoma County Recorder's Office
Maps including town maps, assessor's parcel maps, aerial photos, and land surveys	Locations, boundaries, dimensions	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library Sonoma County Recorder Sonoma County Assessor
Master's Theses/Doctoral Dissertations	Research papers on local subjects	Sonoma County Library Sonoma State University Library
Mortgages/Deeds of Trust	Loans on property	Sonoma County Recorder's Office
Newspapers	Birth, death, and wedding notices; obituaries, news articles about new buildings, architects, ads, relevant social history	Libraries, some museums, and historical societies
Photographs and Postcards	Architectural and landscape features; nearby structures, association with persons and events	Libraries and museums, historical societies

Materials	Potential Information	Potential Locations
Vital Records	Births, deaths, marriages, divorces	Sonoma County Clerk Sonoma County Genealogical Society
Water Hook Ups	Dates when properties were connected to municipal water services	Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library (Santa Rosa 1877-1947 Street Book), some city offices
Wills/Probate Records	Directions for property transfer to heirs following death of property owner, evaluations of estates of deceased for tax purposes	Sonoma County Superior Court Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library (Wills 1850-1900)

Contact Information for Relevant Agencies and Organizations in Sonoma County

This table provides a good beginning list of places that might be useful to check with in your research and their contact information. Please note that many of these organizations will need you to make an appointment to use their archives or access their records. Some will require fees. In some cases, some information will be restricted to property owners only. Be sure to check the websites listed before visiting to make sure you have all the information you need. (Listed alphabetically by name.)

California Historical Resources Information System Northwest Information Center, SSU 1400 Valley House Dr Ste 210 Rohnert Park, CA 94928	Website: http://nwic.sonoma.edu/ Email: nwic@sonoma.edu Phone: (707) 588-8455
Cloverdale City Hall 124 N Cloverdale Blvd Cloverdale, CA 95425	Website: https://www.cloverdale.net/
Cloverdale Historical Society 215 N Cloverdale Blvd Cloverdale, CA 95425	Website: https://www.cloverdalehistoricalsociety.org/ Email: office@cloverdalehistory.org
Cotati Planning Department 201 W Sierra Ave Cotati, CA 94931	Website: http://www.cotaticity.org/city_hall/departments/community_development/planning
Cotati Museum and Historical Society Cotati City Hall 201 W Sierra Ave Cotati, CA 94931	Website: http://cotatihistoricalsociety.org/
Family History Center, LDS Church 1725 Peterson Ln Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Santa_Rosa_California_Family_History_Center Phone: (707) 525-0399
Healdsburg Museum 221 Matheson Street Healdsburg, CA 95448	Website: https://www.healdsburgmuseum.org/ Email: info@healdsburgmuseum.org

Healdsburg Planning Department 435 Allen Ct. Healdsburg, CA 95448	Website: https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/348/Planning-Building
Petaluma City Clerk 11 English St. Petaluma, CA 94952	Website: https://cityofpetaluma.org/departments/city-clerk/
Petaluma Historical Library and Museum 20 Fourth St Petaluma, CA 94952	Website: https://www.petalumamuseum.com/ Email: research@petalumamuseum.com
Petaluma History Room Petaluma Regional Library 100 Fairgrounds Dr Petaluma, CA 94952	Website: https://sonomalibrary.org/locations/petaluma-history-room
Russian River Historical Society PO Box 484 Monte Rio, CA 95462	Website: https://www.russianriverhistory.org/
Sebastopol City Manager 6120 Bodega Ave Sebastopol, CA 95472	Website: https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/City-Government/Departments-Services/City-Manager-City-Attorney
Sebastopol Public Works 714 Johnson St Sebastopol, CA 95472	Website: https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/City-Government/Departments-Services/Public-Works
Sonoma City Clerk No. 1 The Plaza Sonoma, CA 95476	Website: https://www.sonomacity.org/departments/city-clerk/
Sonoma County Assessor 585 Fiscal Drive Rm 104F Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/cra/assessor/ Certain property files open only to the owner, or with the owner's written consent.
Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Dept (PermitSonoma). 2550 Ventura Ave Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-Sonoma/

Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder 585 Fiscal Drive Rm 103 Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CRA/Clerk-Recorder/
Sonoma County Genealogical Society	Website: https://www.scgsonline.org/
Sonoma County Historical Records Commission % County Clerk-Recorder 585 Fiscal Drive Rm 103 Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Historical-Records-Commission/ Research Publications for sale
Sonoma County Historical Society PO Box 1373 Santa Rosa, CA 95402	Website: https://www.sonomacountyhistory.org/
Sonoma County History and Genealogy Library 725 3rd Street Santa Rosa, CA 95404	Website: https://sonomalibrary.org/locations/sonoma-county-history-and-genealogy-library
Sonoma County Landmarks Commission 2550 Ventura Avenue Santa Rosa, CA 95403	Website: https://permitsonoma.org/boardscommissionsandcommittees/landmarkscommission
Sonoma County Library Central Santa Rosa Library 211 E Street Santa Rosa, CA 95404 **Local branch libraries**	Website: https://sonomalibrary.org/locations/central-santa-rosa-library https://sonomalibrary.org/locations
Sonoma State University Library Special Collections 1801 E. Cotati Ave. Rohnert Park, CA 94928	Website: https://library.sonoma.edu/specialcollections
Sonoma Valley Historical Society Depot Park Museum 270 1st Street West Sonoma, CA 95476	Website: https://depotparkmuseum.org/
West County Museum 261 S Main St. Sebastopol, CA 95472	Website: https://www.wschs.org/museum/

COULD YOUR PROPERTY BE A LANDMARK?

Researching a property or site for Sonoma County Landmarks or National Register designation differs from other purposes, as it must be directed toward determining the historic significance of that property.

- Is the structure or site associated with important events, activities, person, or eras?

- Does it provide a significant example of an architectural style of the past?

- Is this property unique or irreplaceable to the County and the community? Does it provide this and future generations with an example of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived?

Depending on where you live, you may wish to explore designation as a city landmark or a Sonoma County Landmark. Regardless of where you live, you might look into listing on the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places. These designations could provide the following benefits:

1. Proper historical rehabilitation of a site which can make possible a contemporary use while preserving the historical integrity. This can be important in the continued value of the property.

2. Property tax and federal tax credits, wherever available. Your city may have set historic building criteria based on the "Mills Act." This allows a property owner to enter into a ten-year contract with the city. The contract would provide for the property to be reassessed at its "income" value rather than the "sales" value (i.e., rent potential) in return for a plan of improvements that preserve and restore the building to its original design. The lower tax rate transfers with the property upon sale, along with the obligation for continued maintenance.

3. Continued preservation of a neighborhood which helps maintain the value of all concerned properties.

4. Documentation for any future reconstruction or restoration of the building. This is particularly important wherever "natural" damages have occurred, such as earthquakes, fires, or storms.

5. Documentation if there is a possibility that this historical building may be demolished, moved, or drastically altered in the future.

6. Ability to take advantage of the California State Historic Building Code

Since each community is unique and each historical site or structure individualized, one must contact the county, city, and/or state in which the property is located. Sonoma

County and most cities within our county have established ordinances and criteria for landmark designation. Each agency may have different requirements, in an attempt to fulfill local needs and conditions. Most ordinances require that a structure be at least 50 years of age. Some agencies charge a fee for landmark designation.

You can contact the Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Department or your city manager's office for the criteria. Also, most cities, planning departments, and public libraries have information for listing as a California State Historic Landmark or the National Register of Historic Places.

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) administers four registration programs: (1) National Register of Historic Places in conjunction with the National Parks Service for properties of national significance; (2) State Historic Landmarks for places of state or regional significance; (3) Points of Historical Interest for local significant buildings or sites; and (4) California Register of Historic Resources. The OHP's Architectural Review and Incentives Unit administers the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program and provides consultation and architectural review for the program that is ultimately administered by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service.

Additional information may be obtained from the Office of Historic Preservation's website by contacting them at 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816, or by emailing info.calshpo@parks.ca.gov.