

# Power of Place – Using MyHeritage to Tell the Stories of Buildings & Places

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This syllabus provides a high-level outline with links to resources.  
For the slides, checklists, and questions to ask, get my tool kit instantly (*it's free*):  
<https://evalogue.life/buildings/>



## ORAL HISTORY



Start by interviewing owners & others with knowledge.

Ask who else knows anything about the property.

Consider doing more oral history later after you know more.

See the tool kit for resources.

## DO A TITLE SEARCH



A title search can be an invaluable source of information.

A title search will tell you who owned the property, when & for how long.

Mortgages recorded may also tell when improvements were done.

This step is a hassle, but I have learned the hard way that it is so helpful.

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### MYHERITAGE CITY DIRECTORIES & VITAL RECORDS



City directories tell who lived in a home or what businesses were there.

This is key if the owner was different than residents, i.e., a rental.

City directory ads can be a great source about businesses.

Research census and other vital records.

### PULL MAPS



Sanborn maps show outbuildings & when property changes were made.

Universities (such as U of U special collections) often have Sanborns.

Larger cities often have “Birds-eye view” maps with exquisite detail.

Try the U.S. Library of Congress for the “Birds-eye-view” maps.

Look for unchanging landmarks in a neighborhood like cemeteries.

### SEARCH NEWSPAPERS ON MYHERITAGE



If you don't have a Newspapers.com subscription, try library or university.

Check copyright rules before posting or publishing images.

Search by the names & variations of residents & owners through time.

### GO ONSITE TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



Treasures await at special collections archives in universities & museums.

Search online first, then ask the archivist for help.

You may have to go onsite. Plan ahead to digitize while you are there.

### DO FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH



Once you have the names of residents, search MyHeritage stories.

Also do internet searches.

This is where you will find many of the interesting details.

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### POST A CALL FOR HISTORY ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Most communities have social media groups devoted to local history.

Post a call for memories & sources about the property.

You might be amazed what comes out of the woodwork!

### DO SECONDARY RESEARCH



Once you have a feel for the property, read books & blogs for context.

Doing your own research first will help you spot inaccuracies.

Secondary research fills in color and perspective you may have missed.

### WRITE & EDIT THE STORY



Keep a running narrative of research notes & citations as you go.

Write your first draft from memory without consulting or quoting sources.

Storyboard for narrative arc. Edit. Let it rest. Read it aloud.

### SHARE!



Your final product might be a written report, blog, or video.

If you have permission, post on MyHeritage.

Be sure to respect copyright thank those who helped you along the way.

## 10 Steps for Researching Ancestral Homes and Buildings

1. Ask current owners or anyone with knowledge
2. Do a title search
3. Research city directories
4. Pull fire insurance maps and birds-eye view map
5. Do a search of newspaper articles and a general internet search
6. Do family history research
7. Post a call for history on social media
8. Consider oral history
9. Do secondary research
10. Write the story or make a video and share

*Evangelical*

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### Further reference

#### Resources for oral history, audio, and transcribing:

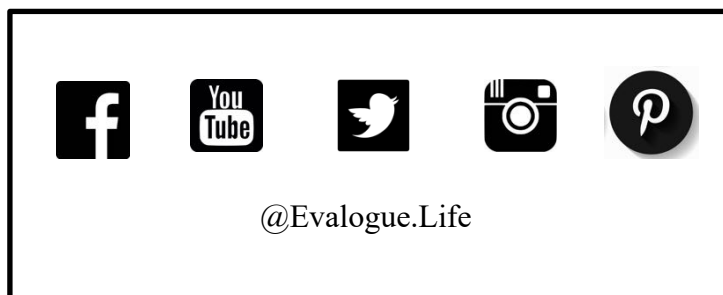
- For the up-to-date slides & tool kit: <https://evalogue.life/buildings/>
- 16 tips to digitize slides, photos, and other family history: <https://evalogue.life/digitize/>
- Video tutorial - How I digitize large quantities of photos & docs fast: <https://youtu.be/-0N8x9Ny5J0>
- Video tutorial - How I organize big writing projects: <https://youtu.be/yzohIPyeVc4>
- A round-up page of great interview questions, tools, & resources: <https://evalogue.life/interview>
- Transcription tools and reviews: <https://evalogue.life/transcription>
- Oral history mini course with video tutorials and exercises: <https://learning.evalogue.life/courses/oral-history-start-here>
- Family history video resources: <https://evalogue.life/video-resources>
- Free tool kit for life story professionals: <https://evalogue.life/professional/>
- Index of resources for memoir and family history writers: <http://evalogue.life/writing>



I would love to connect with you!

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