



## HISTORIC BUILDING RESEARCH INSTRUCTIONS

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### Purpose

The deed and directory research required in Part II of the application is necessary to identify the date that the structure being proposed for a historic plaque was built and, if desired for the plaque, the name of the original owners and occupation. This documentation will become a part of the historical records of Covington and the Kenton County Library; therefore, it is necessary for this information to be as accurate as possible.

The research of each property is not generally a difficult process, although there may be some deviations. Staff at the Kenton County Public Library and Kenton County Courthouse have proven to be very helpful in aiding the research when problems arise.

The City of Covington can supply a general period for the construction of each house and the address of the property prior to 1914. The latter information is important as many city addresses changed when a uniform numbering system was adopted by the City of Covington. For example, 1811 Garrard Street was 181 5 Garrard Street in 1914.

Once the general time period and relevant address information has been established, it will be necessary to go to the Kenton County Recorder's Office and proceed with the deed research. The Kenton County Recorder's Office is on the first floor in the Kenton County Government Building at 301 Court Street in Covington. For directions to the Courthouse, one may call 491-0702.

### Procedure

#### *Step 1 -Deed Research*

Begin the deed research by identifying the book and page number of the present owner's deed. This should be listed on the deed or can be obtained at the County Recorder's office property computer. The deed search can then be conducted by using the individual deed *books* which record each separate deed. Locate the book and page of the most recent deed of the property. Enter the information on the worksheet for this owner. Be sure to accurately record the legal description of the property. For example, the legal description for 1811 Garrard Street, which is typical, reads:

"Beginning at a point in the West line of Garrard Street, One Hundred Seventy (170) feet and five (5) inches South of the center of 18th street; thence Southwardly along the West line of Garrard Street, Twenty-eight (28) feet and six (6) inches, and from this frontage extending back Westwardly and at right angles from Garrard Street, and between parallel lines, One Hundred Fifty (1 50) feet in depth."

This type of description gives the exact dimensions of the parcel or lot. It usually appears the same from one deed to the prior deed of a parcel, back in time, to that period at which a larger parcel was subdivided. The subdivision of a larger parcel into smaller lots generally is a good clue to indicate the approximate construction date of a structure.

Note that the previous deed book and page of the prior owner (grantor) are listed on each deed. Using this new information, go to the previous deed book and page. Using this new information, go to the previous deed book and page. Repeat the process until the property description changes. The first owner of the individual lot is probably the initial resident or owner of the structure. This can be confirmed by using city directories.

### *Step 2 -City Directory Research*

The city directories, found in the local history section of the Kenton County Public Library, can be used to finalize the name of the original residents of a particular address. Today, residents are listed by both name and property address. In the 1800s, residents were listed only by name.

Frequently, the city directory listings will also identify the occupation of the occupants. If the occupation is not listed, the Census of Population can be used. The census should also be used to verify the accuracy of the city directories.

The purpose of using the city directory is to identify when a resident began occupying a particular structure. It may be necessary to begin several years before the date one suspects is the construction date of a building. By tracing the address of a resident in the city directory, it can be determined when an occupant moved from one residence to another. Using the city directory research form, complete each entry with date of publication and director year date. The dates of these last two items seldom are the same. The latter date is the most accurate date, as city directories were published for several years use in advance.

### *Other Sources of Information*

The primary source of information which the city uses to identify and date structures on land parcels are maps such as the Sanborn Insurance Maps. Available maps were published in 1877, 1888, 1894, and 1906. Sanborn Maps are also available at the Kenton County Public Library. These may be used to verify whether a structure appeared in a certain location by the date of publication.

The U.S. Census of Population gives detailed information regarding residents; however, the specific details of the census for any given decade cannot be published for at least 70 years after it is taken. The most current census available at the Kenton County Public Library is from the year 1990 to. The census will list each occupant of a structure, children, place of birth, personal description, education, occupation, relations, and the place of birth of the parents.

Obituaries and newspaper articles are also a useful tool to establish information about residents. Generally an occupation or trade of the individual is discussed in the text of the obituary. These can also be found in the Kenton County Public Library.

Wills are also often used to research properties. All wills used for transfer of property are recorded in the Will books at the Kenton County Recorder's Office. If a property transfer occurred in this manner, a notation will be seen on the deed.

### *Conclusion*

The deed search is not required to establish the construction date for a structure, however, it is the most common method. Newspaper articles, historical records and other documented sources of information may be used for this process.