History of a House

SOURCES AT HERRICK DISTRICT LIBRARY

Books
- Discovering the History of Your House and Your Neighborhood, / Betsy J. Green 907.2 Gre
- House Histories: a guide to tracing the genealogy of your home, / Sally Light 728.09 Lig
- How to research your house: every home tells a story, / Pamela Brooks Gen 929.1072 Bro, 929.1072 Bro
- Land & Property Research in the United States, / E. Wade Hone, 929.1 Hon
- Researching American Land Records, / Kyle J. Betit 929.1072

City Directories
Herrick has Holland/Zeeland City Directories available beginning in 1894. From 1894 until 1921 the directories list residents alphabetically by name only, but beginning in 1921 there is a list of names and also of streets and house numbers. These directories can tell you who was living in the house in a specific year.

Historic District
If you own a home in Holland’s Historic District there may be information about your house at the library. Check the Holland Area Resources Collection.

Newspapers
The Holland City News (1872-1977) and the Holland Sentinel (1912-present) are available on microfilm at the library. However, there is only a partial index available which was compiled by a local historian, and houses are not generally indexed, so newspapers are most helpful if you have a specific date you are searching. The partial index is available online at: jointarchives.org/collections/index.html. Choose Newspaper Collection.

Plat Maps
These maps document ownership of property. They are available for Ottawa and Allegan Counties (and some other Michigan counties) beginning in the mid 1800s.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
Maps that were created for insurance companies who wanted detailed information about buildings for insurance purposes. Herrick has the following years on microfilm for Holland (1883, 1889, 1893, 1896, 1902, 1908, 1916, 1925).
OTHER SOURCES

Assessor’s Office - https://bsaonline.com
Construction date, legal description, sketches of lot and plan, recent photographs, recent sales, building permits. Construction dates are not always accurate but provide good starting point.

Holland Museum
For older records you can check the Holland Museum for tax records for Holland City and Holland Township. Tax records should be available beginning when Holland became a city in 1867. You should bring a legal description of your property which is on your title or mortgage. A legal description might begin “Lot 21, Ex N 8 Ft Thereof …” The Holland Museum also has Multiple Listing Service Cards from real estate offices for some of the houses that were sold in the Holland area from approximately the 1950s to the 1980s. These cards list detailed information about the houses including the selling price, and many of these cards contain photos of the houses.

Register of Deeds*
For searches in Ottawa County 1946 or later:
Ottawa County Register of Deeds
12220 Fillmore Street
West Olive, MI 49460
616-994-4510

For searches in Ottawa County before 1946, the best place for historical information:
Ottawa County Courthouse
Public Resource Center
414 Washington
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616-846-8109

For searches in Allegan County:
Allegan County Register of Deeds
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-0390

*For more detailed information on what is available at the Register of Deeds it is best to call with questions. The Register of Deeds will not be able to tell you when a house was built.

Additional Websites
- www.diedinhouse.com. This website was launched in June, 2013. It claims to answer whether someone died at a certain home or apartment, who died, when they died, and the cause of death. ($, not endorsed by Herrick District Library)
- www.cyndislist.com has a page dedicated to House & Building histories. It also has links to businesses that provide research services. Scroll down to the ‘H’, choose House & Building Histories.