



*Dulox – Ben E. West – Helen Osier home that was located at  
2100 Robinson Road SE, 1904 - 1955*

## **RESEARCHING YOUR HOUSE HISTORY**

### **Finding out about your East Grand Rapids Home**

There are many ways to locate information on your home. Searching for house history is often like detective work. And sometimes there is not a good deal of history to be found.

This guide will take you through steps to do basic research.

**The following entities are repositories for information on homes in East Grand Rapids:**

**City of East Grand Rapids** 750 Lakeside Drive SE

[www.Eastgr.org](http://www.Eastgr.org)

**East Grand Rapids History Room**, City of East Grand Rapids Located on the upper level of the EGR Library 746 Lakeside Drive SE, Mary Dersch, curator

<https://www.eastgr.org/569/East-Grand-Rapids-History-Room> or Eastgr.org click on "About" then "East Grand Rapids History Room"

Like and follow the East Grand Rapids History Room on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/EastGrandRapidsHistoryRoom>

**Contact us at:**

[egrhistoryroom@gmail.com](mailto:egrhistoryroom@gmail.com)

616-241-2092

**Grand Rapids Public Library** – a variety of resources

Local History 111 Library Street NE Grand Rapids, MI 616.988.5400

<http://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

## FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO DO YOUR HOUSE HISTORY:

**Find out what year your house was built, find property values and see historical and current photos:**

Visit the East Grand Rapids Property Information System: <https://bsaonline.com/?uid=320>  
Search by address, name or parcel number.

**Find out who lived in your home through the years using *R.L. Polk Grand Rapids City Directories***

Locate streets, addresses, people and their occupations from the late 1800s to the current day. **Please** note that current years are lacking in information about residents and occupations.

1. Begin by searching for your street and house number in the back of the directory to see the name of the person residing in your home.
2. Then search that person in the main section of the directory for more complete information.

### ***R.L. Polk's Grand Rapids City Directories***

Visit the EGR History Room's partial collection and follow up with current Directories on the EGR Library REFERENCE shelf - and then use Grand Rapids Public Library's complete collection to fill in gaps.

***R.L. Polk's Grand Rapids City Directories via HathiTrust Digital Library – some years available:***

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/mb?a=listis;c=1648165062>

### ***R.L. Polk's Grand Rapids City Directories via Ancestry.com***

Many directories can be found online via Ancestry.com (Library edition) in library only via <https://kdl.org/resources/biography-genealogy-history/>  
Or via your own full subscription at home

**To obtain historical records, zoning variances and other issues regarding your home:**

Contact the EGR City Assessor's Office:

750 Lakeside Drive SE Phone: Stacey Hayes 616-940-4818

Photocopies can be made these documents. Sometimes additional photographs are available. The City has photographs of homes from the 1940s or later. Not all homes are represented.

**To obtain house plans/blueprints for East Grand Rapids homes**

Contact EGR Engineering Services Division, City of EGR, EGR Community Center, 750 Lakeside Drive SE Phone: (616) 940-4817

There is a fee for obtaining copies of your home's blueprints.

**Blueprints are not available for all homes.**

**To view historical tax assessment rolls – Please contact Mary Dersch  
egrhistoryroom@gmail.com**

The large ledger roll books are located in storage. They include assessments and reassessments street paving, storm sewers. These are historical, not current. Not all addresses are represented.

**To view real estate clippings and articles about your home:**

Visit the EGR History Room, EGR Library.

Use the vertical file entitled, "HOMES." CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION = AVAILABLE SOON.

Articles **are not** available for every home.

**To locate full-text historical newspaper articles about your home via databases:**

*East Grand Rapids Cadence Newspaper, 1975 - 1990* (EGR collection) and CMU collection  
1991-1994 and 1997-2007 full-text and fully searchable

**Link coming soon!**

via <https://digmichnews.cmich.edu/>

**Historical Grand Rapids Press articles, 1893 to 1970 and from 2000 to current:**

<https://kdl.org/resources-types/newspapers/>

You must be a current KDL card holder.

**Grand Rapids Press Articles, 1892 - present via the Library of Michigan**

<https://tinyurl.com/3vbt9rjp>

You will need to follow this link to first obtain a Library of Michigan Card:

<https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/public/get-a-library-card>

**To locate EGR City Commission Minutes pertaining to your home:**

**1931 to the present**

<https://www.eastgr.org/Archive.aspx?AMID=43>

Once open, use Ctrl+F function to search keywords

**To view articles about East Grand Rapids' people, places and things –**

Use the Vertical File in the EGR History Room – located in the file cabinet, right side of room.  
Access the EGR History Room vertical file index to see if there is a file on your subject:

<https://www.eastgr.org/DocumentCenter/View/3432/Vertical-File-Index>

**Grand Rapids Public Library – Resources**  
Special Collections Department, 111 Library NE, Grand Rapids, MI

***Betty Gibout Real Estate Listing Cards – print only***

Real Estate Cards on your home from the 1950s – 1990s

Visit:

Ask at the information desk for these cards. Main Library, downtown.

To Locate Historical Articles on Your Home

Visit Grand Rapids Public Library’s Special Collections Department to make photocopies.

**Streets Files – print only**

Ask staff to see the “Streets” vertical files. Not all homes are represented. These are arranged alphabetically by street name. These typically are articles from GR newspapers. These articles may contain info about who built and bought a home. Sometimes a photo is included.

**To Locate Articles on Prominent Homes –**

**Grand Rapids Mirror Magazine circa 1930s – 1940s**

Visit Grand Rapids Public Library’s Special Collections Department and use the print index to these magazines.

Ask to see the issues of the Grand Rapids Mirror magazines. Indexing on this title is hit or miss.

**Grand Rapids Public Library index to, *Grand Rapids Progress, 1912-15; the Grand Rapids Spectator, 1927-31 and Grand Rapids Mirror, 1933-42* – call number: M 071.7456 G762p 2.**

**To Find Out About the Architect of Your Home**

Visit this Grand Rapids Public Library site:

***Architectural Database***

<https://grplweb.grpl.org/homes.php>

This resource indexes “ 2,800 properties in Grand Rapids and the metropolitan area 1907-1942”

**This is an index** to Grand Rapids newspaper articles on your home and its architect. Some photos. **Not all homes are represented. Articles and related materials are housed in this vertical file collection at the Grand Rapids Public Library. You may photocopy articles.**

**Grand Rapids Public Library – History Department - Resources**

<https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

## OTHER SOURCES OF INTEREST

Research GR – Grand Rapids Historical Society Links

A great list of resources!

<https://grhistory.org/research-gr>

Grand Rapids Public Museum

<https://www.grpmcollections.org/>

Search tool:

<https://www.grpmcollections.org/Search/advanced/objects>

Library of Michigan – Resources

<https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/public/online-resources-for-library-cardholders>

To access these resources you must register for a Library of Michigan card via this site.

Recommended databases:

Grand Rapids Press Historical and Current Collection (Newsbank)

HeritageHub (NewsBank)