

## Research for National Register Nominations

1. If the history of the ownership of the land is unknown and is relevant to the nomination, go to the Register of Deeds (or equivalent) office in the county's courthouse to trace the ownership. This information will apply only to the land and not to the building or buildings. If there were multiple owners, the process can be very time-consuming, and in many cases, family histories or other sources can provide sufficient information about land ownership. Title companies may also have this information, but will not necessarily be willing to share it for research purposes.
2. Tax assessment records, also available at the county courthouse, will provide information on the location, dimensions, and valuations of buildings. They will also include dates of construction and additions, although these dates are often inaccurate estimates and need to be compared with other research.
3. For sites located in towns and cities, Sanborn maps (created by a company providing fire insurance) provide an overview of the construction materials of the buildings, their locations and addresses, and changes made to them over periods of time. Sanborn maps are usually available in city planning offices and local and state archives.
4. Polk Directories, also available in many planning offices and local and state archives, list addresses and owners of properties. Before 1927, the Polk Directories listed this information by owner or business name; after 1927, the directories included a "reverse directory" which allows the researcher to track the property by address. The Polk Directories are particularly useful in tracing the history of commercial properties or the ownership or occupancy of residential properties.
5. Published community histories often include family histories or individual biographies that can include valuable information about properties.
6. Local libraries and archives usually hold vertical files, manuscript collections and photograph collections that may illuminate the history of properties. The Latah County Historical Society Museum and the Special Collections at the University of Idaho are particularly rich resources for this type of information.
7. Microfilm/microfiche of area newspapers can provide additional information about properties, although such research is very time-consuming. If specific dates important to the property's history can be identified, scanning the local newspapers around that date may yield good information. The Latah County Historical Society Museum has a newspaper index which can be helpful in finding news stories on specific families, individuals, or businesses.
8. Owners, previous owners, or descendants of owners of properties can often provide information about changes in the property, uses of the property, etc., and may hold photographs, newspaper clippings, or other records valuable to the research, especially in noting changes to the property.
9. Sketch maps can be hand produced, duplicated from Sanborn Maps or aerial photos, or created from other sources. The main objective is to show the property in relation to the ones around it (or in the case of a group of buildings or a district, the relation of properties to each other). The sketch map does not need to be elaborate or in precise scale, but should provide enough information to allow identification of the property and its components.
10. USGS maps can be purchased or ordered from a variety of sources, especially local map and blueprint stores. If they are not available locally, maps can be ordered from USGS on-line. Both the map stores and USGS also sell instruments and instructions used in determining UTM measurements. The maps generally cost \$6-7 each.
11. Consult with the state or federal agency regarding their preferences in terms of photographs. In general, you will need three sets of prints: one for the local commission, one for the state agency, and one for the National Park Service. Park Service prints should be 5 by 7 or 8 by 10; state and local agencies may

be willing to accept smaller prints. The NPS requirements ask for sufficient photographs to adequately represent the property; again, a discussion with the state office will provide a guideline to how many and what type of photos are considered adequate representation. For one building without significant interior integrity, for instance, five photographs showing each side as well as the wider setting might be adequate. Until recently, the Park Service required black and white photos developed by true black and white processing. Within the last two or three years, they have begun to allow digital photos with certain requirements, which Tricia Canaday has probably provided. Most state agencies also ask for a group of less formal slides or color photos that they can use in review board and other public discussions of the property.