

Researching Jo Daviess County Property

Preliminary Steps:

1. Obtain the abstract for the property if possible. Usually the original abstract, or a copy, can be obtained from the mortgager. The abstract will give the legal description of the land and show the chain of title or ownership as far back as records exist.
2. If you're researching a house, what style is it? Different styles were popular at different times and this will help you date the house. Staff at the Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society, the Historical Collections Room of the Galena Public Library may also be helpful. Each has a variety of resources available for determining architectural styles.
3. Talk to neighbors, especially the long time residents. This is a wonderful way to learn about personalities of previous owners, what paint colors were on the house, as well as its previous interior design and decoration. They, as well as previous owners, may have photographs showing your home in earlier times.

SOURCES

First note that this is not a complete list of sources available. Those listed offer an abundance of information and can often provide you with further leads on the history of your house or property.

Note: Fees may apply for all of these sources.

Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society & Museum

211 S. Bench St, Galena, IL 61036

815.777.9129

info@galenahistorymuseum.org

Open daily, 9am-4:30pm

- General information and guidance offered.
- Plat books of Jo Daviess County and communities available through the curator (please call ahead to make an appointment).
- Photographs and maps of Galena and the county.
- Historical research center, offering a way for the visitor to browse the museum's collection, including that which is in storage.

Jo Daviess County Courthouse

330 N. Bench St.

Galena, IL 61036

- **County Clerk's Office, 815.777.0161**
Deed records
- **Circuit Clerk's Office, 815.777.0037**
Probate Records from 1828 onward. May show a previous owner's household inventory, bills of improvements made on property that the estate must pay, etc. Useful for determining the furnishing and décor of the home and general improvements.
- **County Treasurer's Office, 815.777.0355**
Tax collector's books: From 1850s to present. Requests must include the township in which the property is located. Beware of financial depressions (Use the value of a neighboring lot for comparison.)

Historical Collections Room

Galena Public Library

601 S. Bench St.

Galena, IL 61036

815.777.0200

info@galenalibrary.org

Open M, Tu, Th, F 3pm-5pm; W 3pm-8pm, Sat 12pm-4pm

Staffed by local historians H. Scott Wolfe and Steve Repp. Wolfe and Repp will respond to written and e-mailed inquiries for a small fee. Donations welcome.
Documents available (intact or on microfilm):

- City of Galena Tax and Assessor's Books from 1850s-WWII
- County & community histories
- Galena City Directories beginning in 1847
- Area newspapers from 1834-1982
- Photographs, maps, etc.
- Federal and Illinois censuses from 1830s-1910
- Access to the private photograph collection of Alfred Mueller through historian Steve Repp