

House History Research at the Portsmouth Athenaeum

Website: portsmouthathenaeum.org

Catalog: Click on the “Search Catalog” icon on our home page

Maps: The Portsmouth Athenaeum owns numerous maps of Portsmouth, most dating from the early 19th century.

- The 1813, 1850 and 1877 maps of Portsmouth which show the placement of buildings in the city are frequently used to date houses in Portsmouth. Links to digital copies of these maps can be found in from our online catalog.
- The Sanborn Insurance Maps are also a good source for dating late 19th century houses in the more highly populated sections of Portsmouth. They show detailed information on the shape and construction of houses and out buildings from 1878-1956. Links to digital copies of these maps can be found from our online catalog.
- A couple of maps show not only the property, but also the owners of the property these include the 1876 Beers map and the 1892 New Hampshire Atlas. These maps also show some of the outlying properties not found on the Sanborn Insurance Maps. Links to digital copies of these maps can be found from our online catalog.

Street Files: The Portsmouth Athenaeum keeps files of information on the streets in Portsmouth. These files include information on individual houses and buildings and includes architectural surveys, newspaper articles and in some cases property research.

- The Architectural surveys done in Portsmouth include the Historic District, West End and Islington Street Surveys. These surveys include architectural information, possibly a photo and in some cases a brief history of the property. Not all streets in Portsmouth have had a survey. Many of these surveys have been digitized and a link can found on our online catalog - search by street name.

City Directories: The Portsmouth Athenaeum owns most if not all the Portsmouth city directories. Most of the city directories list people alphabetically and also have a cross directory by address.

- Early city directories came out sporadically (1821-1864). Links to digitized copies of most of the early city directories can be found from our online catalog.
- Later city directories came out every other year. There are only a few digital copies available of these later city directories. Links are available from our online catalog.

Photographs: The Portsmouth Athenaeum has scanned most of the photographs collections. There are 35,000 scanned photographs in our online catalog.

- Photographs can be searched by street name and in some cases by the address number.

Deeds: Although the Portsmouth Athenaeum owns many deeds, it is not likely we will have a deed for your property. Deeds for Rockingham County can be searched at <https://www.nhdeeds.org>

People: If you are searching for information on a person who occupied your house.

- The Portsmouth Athenaeum keeps files of information on families and individuals who have lived in Portsmouth. They include newspaper articles, genealogy from online sources and family sourced genealogy.
- The Portsmouth Athenaeum also has a database of individuals that can be searched from our online catalog. From the catalog click “Search by Term” in the header and click alphabetically under the “People” section.
- The Portsmouth Athenaeum also has extensive church and cemetery records, some of which has been digitized.

Note: Between the years 1904 and 1910 major street address renumbering occurred. Check the 1910 Sanborn Insurance Maps to see both the old street number and the new street address.