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**Using Sanborn Fire Insurance  
Maps for Genealogy**

by  
Jeanette Sheliga

# Using Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Genealogy

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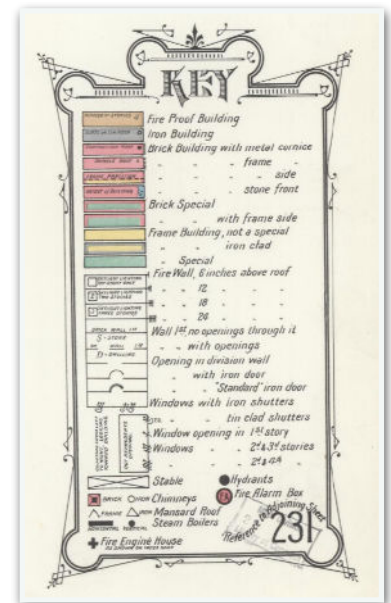


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## Map Keys, Legends and Symbols:

Most Sanborn Maps include a key at the beginning of each volume. Below are some online guides and references to understand the various colors and markings.

- Interpreting Sanborn Maps: <https://guides.loc.gov/fire-insurance-maps/sanborn-interpreting>
- Sanborn Map Legend: [https://web.mit.edu/thecity/resources/abbreviations\\_for\\_sanborn\\_maps.pdf](https://web.mit.edu/thecity/resources/abbreviations_for_sanborn_maps.pdf)
- How to Interpret Sanborn Maps: <https://www.historicalinfo.com/fimo-interpret-sanborn-maps/>



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## Library of Congress:

Geography & Map Reading Room: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/>



There are many helpful articles at the bottom of the above site including:

- Keys & Colors
- Symbols
- Title Pages
- Indexes
- Abbreviations
- Introduction to the Collection
- Related Resources
- About the Collection
- FAQs
- Copyright Information

**NEW:** Library of Congress Resource Guide and Atlas Volume Finder:  
<https://guides.loc.gov/fire-insurance-maps/sanborn>

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## Public Library Subscriptions:

Local public libraries may subscribe to companies with access to digitized Sanborn Maps. Popular ones include:

- ProQuest: <https://proquest.libguides.com/dsm>
- Fire Insurance Maps Online (FIMo): <https://www.historicalinfo.com/fimo/>

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## Correlate with other Records:

Using Sanborn Maps can be a powerful visual to help tell your ancestors' stories. Examples of correlation can include:

- Deeds
- City Directories
- Newspaper Articles
- Census Records
- Maps
- Photographs

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## Additional Resources:

Family Tree Magazine:

- “How to Use the Library of Congress New Sanborn Maps for Genealogy” by Diane Haddad: <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/records/maps/how-to-use-sanborn-maps-genealogy/>

Family Tree Webinars (\$) <https://familytreewebinars.com>

- “Fire Insurance Maps - The Google Maps of Their Day” by Jill Morelli, CG

The Story of the Sanborn Mapping Company on YouTube:

- <https://youtu.be/LnCZ-flnT1E>