Get Started with…

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

The Sanborn Maps were originally created for assessing fire insurance liability in urbanized areas in the United States. Our collection includes over 40,000 detailed maps of Ohio cities drawn between 1882 and 1962. Each map includes detailed information regarding town and building information. Although these maps were originally published in color, our collection is digitized from microfilm and is in black and white.

You can use this collection to:

- Locate the residences and workplaces of ancestors.
- Understand the significance and historical evolution of buildings.
- See what your town looked like in the past and how it has changed over time.

1. To begin, go to OhioWebLibrary.org.
2. Click on the arrow beside the word Genealogy.
3. Click on the words “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.”

Begin by typing a city or town’s name into this box. Then, hit the Enter key.

For important details about the maps, including a key to various symbols, click on this link from the Library of Congress.
Here are sample search results. To view a map, click its title.

You can download and print this map using these links.

Use these tools to move the map view, to zoom in and out, and to enlarge or shrink the view.

Did you know?
The most common abbreviations on the maps are: "D" or "Dwg" for a dwelling, "F" for a flat or apartment, "S" for a store, "Sal" for a saloon.

Some maps lack a detailed description. When there’s no description, the page reads “No metadata available”. Instead, just click on the map’s name to view it.

Here’s a map of Athens, Ohio in May 1885.

Many maps have multiple pages. You can jump to the next sheet using the “Next” link.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are brought to you by the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN).