



## Jersey Archive Information Leaflets

# House History

### General Information

Researching house history in Jersey can be a long and confusing task. This leaflet is designed to offer suggestions of where to look for useful sources of information. The study of house history can be roughly divided into two separate categories of research; the lives of people who have owned or lived in a house and the physical structure and architecture of the house over a period of time.

Whilst we currently have planning laws which require us to apply for permission to make changes to a property this was not always the case. Planning legislation was not enacted until the Twentieth Century; therefore the Archive has little information on physical changes to a property that were made before this date.

As ownership of property was always transferred before the Royal Court it is possible for the house historian to trace the ownership of their property and find out about the lives of the people who lived in their house. Whilst looking at records that can tell us more about the people who owned a property we can also find information on details of boundaries and outbuildings which will indicate more about the physical structure.

Before you start your research at the Jersey Archive it is important to make sure that you write down all the information that you currently know about your property. Try talking to neighbours who have lived in the area for a number of years. Look at the property in the context of the surrounding area – are there other houses that look a similar age, are there aspects of the interior of the property that can help you find a construction date.

### Access

Once you have compiled all the information that you currently know about your property it is time to start looking for sources at the Jersey Archive. The Archive indexes all its catalogued records by name, place and subject. Therefore any place mentioned in the catalogue description of a record will be indexed on the Open Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), which is available to view in the Help Desk area of the Jersey Archive and on the Internet at [www.jerseyheritagetrust.org](http://www.jerseyheritagetrust.org). Simply enter the name of the house you are looking for under places on the OPAC. If this initial search proves to be unsuccessful please try entering the name of the area in which the house stands/stood, e.g. Grands Vaux, this may provide valuable information concerning the area surrounding the house. If you are looking for a hotel, public house, shop or school, please enter the name under names on the OPAC.

Amongst the records indexed under places on the OPAC are a series of testaments of personal property from c.1660 – 1971 and over 31,000 German Occupation registration cards; both of which give details of individuals' addresses. As we are continually

cataloguing collections at the Archive it is always worth checking the OPAC on a regular basis for recent additions. If the OPAC does not have any indexed records relating to the house you are interested in please try looking at the sources described in this leaflet.

Each collection held by Jersey Archive has a unique reference code. These references have been included in the following information after the title. Should you wish to find out more about a certain collection simply go to one of the public OPACs in the Help Desk area of the Jersey Archive. Click on [reference](#) and enter the reference given under [collection reference](#), e.g. L/F/120.

## **Sources held by the Jersey Archive**

### **Public Registry D/Y/K & S/06**

Sir Walter Raleigh instituted registration of documents at the Public Registry in 1602. From this date all contracts of immovable property should, by law, be recorded in the registers of the Public Registry. We do know that some seventeenth-century contracts were not registered. Partages, which concern the division of land between heirs, were included in the registers, by law, from 1840 onwards. However partages before this date can be found in the registers. Wills concerning land and property were registered from 1851 onwards.

Contracts concern the transfer of property from one individual to another and therefore contain vital information for house historians. They often give detailed descriptions of the land or piece of property involved in the transaction, including details of the borders of the property and any conditions the purchaser is subject to. (See Jersey Archive Information Leaflets – Understanding Contracts)

The land registry consists of volumes called *Tables*, which act as personal name indexes to the *Livres*, which contain copies of transactions. The Judicial Greffe has now deposited the original Tables and Livres registers from 1602 to 2002 with the Jersey Archive. There are also microfilms (S/06) of the registers available to view in the Audio Visual Area of the Archive.

### **PRIDE System**

The Public Registry Index and Document Enrolment (PRIDE) computer system allows you to search the Public Registry volumes from c.1790. The system is administered and housed at the Public Registry, with two terminals available for use at Jersey Archive. The registers have all been indexed by the names of the parties buying or selling the property and, after 1984, the name of the house. Digital images of the registers are available to view through the PRIDE system.

### **Cour d'Héritage, D/Y/C1**

The Cour d'Héritage is one of the divisions of the Royal Court of Jersey. It deals with cases relating to title (right) to real property, the ownership of immovable property and its division on intestacy, the annulment of hereditary contracts and boundary disputes. Originally held three times a year the court was reduced to two sittings in 1771 and to one in the 1980s. The registers of the Cour d'Héritage begin in 1506.

### **Census of Jersey, 1841 – 1901, Help Desk and AV Area**

Censuses of the population of Jersey were compiled every 10 years from 1841 onwards. Censuses are closed for 100 years from the date of their creation and therefore at

present only the censuses from 1841 – 1901 are available for public consultation. Microfilm copies and transcriptions of the census for the Channel Islands are available to view at Jersey Archive. The census includes the following information concerning houses and households in Jersey; number of house, name of street, place, road, or house, and details of inhabitants of the house. It is important to remember that individuals who are listed as living in a property on the census may only be tenants rather than the owners.

### **Listes du Rât, D/AP/AC**

Listes du Rât (Rate lists) are available on the open shelving at the back of the Reading Room at the Archive, 1861 – 1965 (not inclusive), and from the strongroom through the OPAC under the reference, D/AP/AC, 1880 – 1970 (not inclusive). Rate lists are indexed by persons name under each separate Vingtaine (an administrative unit smaller than a Parish). Rate lists contain details of all rates to be paid on property and include the name of the ratepayer, their address from 1906 onwards and the amount of rates to be paid.

### **Parish Records, F**

Jersey Archive holds the civil parish records from all of the twelve parishes in Jersey. Parish records reflect the administrative duties of the civil parish. They therefore include more detailed information on the rates process than the printed rates lists described above. This information is listed in the rates schedules which can give details of the amount of rooms a property has and also details of any tenants. Rates schedules are closed to public access for 30 years.

The Parish collections also include the minutes of the Parish Assembly and the Roads Committee. These minute books will often mention details of property within the Parish, particularly if it has been affected by the construction or widening of a road.

### **Maps, Plans and Aerial Photographs**

Maps are useful sources for approximately dating properties if little other evidence survives. The 1795 Richmond Map shows the property units in existence and their position in relation to roads and fields, unfortunately no names of owners are provided. Jersey Archive holds a copy of the Richmond map which is located on the wall in the Help Desk area. The 1849 Godfray Map divides the Island into parishes and vingtaines, all roads and lanes are marked, and country houses are marked with the name of their proprietor. A copy of the Godfray Map can be found at the Archive Rest and Refreshment area.

Jersey Archive also holds ordnance survey maps of Jersey from 1935 and 1981. These maps can be accessed through the OPAC by choosing the [Detailed Subjects](#) option and entering the words **ordnance survey maps**. Jersey Archive holds aerial photographs of the Island from 1943-5, 1965, 1974, 1979, 1992 and 1997.

### **Clarke Map Collection – L/F/120**

The Clarke Map Collection contains nearly two hundred maps of Jersey dating from the very earliest medieval maps through to maps of St Helier in the 1970s. The collection includes maps by several of the most famous mapmakers and publishers of the seventeenth century as well as copies of later, more detailed maps of Jersey such as the Richmond and Godfray. The collection contains plans of St Helier Town and Harbour

including a copy of a manuscript map showing plans of the Town of St Helier in 1800 and 1860.

### **Public Services Plans - D/AL**

Public Services are currently in the process of transferring many of their archive plans to the Jersey Archive for safe storage and public accessibility. So far we have received plans of the Opera House, Mont Orgueil Castle, the Jersey Railway, the States Building, road widening schemes, various hotels, the harbours and many public buildings. These plans are being catalogued as they arrive at the Archive. The growing collection will provide an invaluable resource into building work in the Island.

### **Almanacs L/D/21/A**

The Channel Islands Family History Society currently owns a set of Almanacs from 1863 onwards, which have been deposited at the Archive. Almanacs give lists of residents with their addresses and trades. Early almanacs contain lists of landed and rate-paying inhabitants of Jersey with their addresses.

### **Useful Resources**

Jersey Archive holds a number of collections that can contain useful information for some properties.

- D/Y/F3 - Décrets – Give details of the property of bankrupt individuals.
- Fief/Seigneurial Courts – Give details of actions between tenants and Seigneurs.
- Aveu/Aveux – A list of property that a tenant holds from the Seigneur.
- D/Z/K27 – Requisitioning Registers – Contain a list of properties requisitioned by the German Authorities during the Occupation.
- L/A/20 – West of England Insurance Registers – Give details of property insured.

### **Printed Sources**

The following printed sources are available at the Jersey Archive.

- Stevens, Charles, Arthur, Jean & Stevens, Joan, *Jersey Place Names I: A Corpus of Jersey Toponymy. The Dictionary*, Société Jersiaise, 1986
- Stevens, Charles & Stevens, Collette, *Jersey Place Names II: The Maps*, Société Jersiaise, 1986
- Stevens, Joan, *Old Jersey Houses and Those who Lived in Them. Vol. I. 1500-1700*, Five Oaks Press, Jersey, 1965
- Stevens, Joan, *Old Jersey Houses. Vol. II. From 1700 onwards*, Phillimore, 1977

The purpose of the Jersey Archive is to identify, select, collect, manage, preserve and provide access to the Island's Records on behalf of the whole community, promoting Jersey's culture, heritage and sense of place, both within its shores and beyond.

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Opening Hours: 9am to 5pm, Tuesday to Thursday. The Reading Room and Help Desk are closed between 1-2pm. Late night till 7pm the last Thursday of the month.

The information in this leaflet is accurate as of March 2010. Please be aware that the Jersey Archive receives new collections on a regular basis and ask staff if you have any queries.