

**Harris County Archives
Houston, Texas**

Finding Aid

**ASSESSOR AND COLLECTOR OF TAXES
CR01
Sanborn Maps
(1924 - 1938)**

Size: 6 volumes

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: Some use may be limited due to conservation concerns. Microfilm of the maps is available.

Acquisition: Transferred by the Assessor and Collector of Taxes, Paul

Bettencourt, December 2002 and April 2003.

Accession Number: 2003.001

Processed by: Sarah Canby Jackson, 2004

Citation: [Identification of Item], Assessor and Collector of Taxes, Harris County Archives, Houston, Texas.

Brief History of Sanborn Maps

Founded in 1867 by D. A. Sanborn, the Sanborn Map Company produced detailed maps of city neighborhoods for underwriters of fire insurance. By 1905 the company established a system of standards for accuracy and design and by 1920 held a monopoly in the field of fire insurance maps. Due to the expense and size of the maps, limited editions were made of each map and often bought by insurance associations for the use of their members. By 1950 modern construction methods, building codes, and improved fire protection methods made the use of Sanborn Maps increasingly unnecessary. The company soon stopped producing new maps and only provided updates into the early 1960s.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps were hand-drawn, lithographed and then hand-colored on 21-by-25 inch sheets of paper which were then bound in volumes for sale. A scale of 1 inch to 50 feet allowed for the rendering of precise detail. Buildings were identified by a system of color-coding for building materials and included information such as current use, heating systems, windows, skylights, and building heights. Street widths and materials were noted along with utility lines.

Each folio of maps is unique. Information to the maps was often added by the owner in addition to the employees of the Sanborn Map Company who pasted in the corrections

annually. Aside from being rich sources of information, the maps are often works of art in and of themselves.

Highly valued by genealogists, geographers, urban planners, historians, environmentalists, and architectural historians, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps contain the information not readily available from any other source.

Scope and Contents Note:

Volumes 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the *Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas* published by the Sanborn Map Company of New York document the land use and built environment of Houston, Texas from 1924 to 1938.

Archivist's Note:

Local Sources of Sanborn Maps

Two local institutions, the Texas Room at the Houston Public Library and the Special Collections and Archives at the University of Houston, have the 1924 – 1929 editions of Sanborn Maps for Houston, Texas. However, the corrections in these maps were continued until at least 1961. Therefore, it is often difficult and nearly impossible to determine land usage in the earlier decades. The Harris County maps are the only maps in Houston which reveal so accurately the growth of the city in the 1920s and 1930s.

Current Condition Report

At some point while in the possession of the Assessor and Collector of Taxes, these six volumes of Sanborn maps suffered water damage. Allowed to remain in conditions ideal for the growth of mold and mildew and without any type of intervention, the volumes deteriorated. After being transferred to the Harris County Archives, they were wrapped and kept frozen to retard continuing damage. In the spring of 2004, Louisiana Binding Company stabilized the maps. After disbinding the maps, each page was dried, deacidified, and vacuumed for mold and mildew. The pages were then microfilmed and placed in Mylar D envelopes. All loose corrections were placed in envelopes within the page envelopes. The next phase will require conservation of the maps with the pages cleaned and the loose corrections replaced.

Due to the water and consequent mold and mildew damage, there are volumes where 25 per cent or more of the information may be missing. There also may be missing pages.

Inventory

Title	Vol.	Block Nos.	Date	Location
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] New Index March 1934 Additional Index June 1938 Graphic Map of Volumes Block Map of Congest District of Houston, Texas Key to Symbols Corrections 1928 - 1938	1	1 - 88	1924 - 1938	1231-E-04
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] New Index June 1934 Additional Index June 1936 Addenda July 1938 Graphic Map of Volumes Block Map of Volume 4 Corrections 192[] – 193[8]	4	401 - 480	1925 - 1938	1231-E-04
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] New Index March 1934 Additional Index August [] Block Map of Volume 5 Key to Symbols Corrections 1937	5	501-599	1925 - 1937	1231-D-04
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] New Index June 1934 Additional Index June 1936 Addenda July 1938 Graphic Map of Volumes Block Map to 600 Series Block Map to 900 Series Key to Symbols	6	601-615 901-969	1925 - 1938	1231-D-04
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] New Index [] Additional Index December 1937] Addenda November 1938 Composite Index [] Block Map to 700 Series Block Map to 1100 Series Key to Symbols	7	[701] – 772 1101 - 1126	1925 - 1937	1231-C-04
Insurance Maps of Houston, Texas [Sanborn] Additional Index December 1938 Composite Index October 1935	8	801 – 849 1001 - 1029	1929 - 1938	1231-C-04

Title	Vol.	Block Nos.	Date	Location
Graphic Map of Volumes				
Block Map to 800 Series				
Block Map to 1000 Series				
Key to Symbols				
Corrections 1937 - 1938				