



Kit Houses

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This pathfinder will be useful in finding information about kit or catalog houses. Sears Houses seem to have the most information available, but other manufacturers, including Montgomery Ward's Wardway Homes will also be covered.

Resources

Catalog Reprints

- *California's kit homes : a reprint of the 1925 Pacific Ready-Cut Homes Catalog* (2004) [ISBN 0971558833]
- *Homes in a Box* (1998) – This is a reprint of the Sears house catalog for 1912. [ISBN 0764304321]
- *Sears house designs of the thirties* (2003) – This is a reprint of the 1932 Sears house catalog, unfortunately without the color.[ISBN 0486429946]
- *Sears Modern Homes, 1913* (2006) [ISBN 0486429946]
- *Sears, Roebuck home builder's catalog: the complete illustrated 1910 edition* (1990) [ISBN 0486263207]
- *Small Houses of the Twenties: The Sears, Roebuck 1926 House Catalog* (1991) [ISBN 0486267091]
- *Wardway homes, bungalows, and cottages, 1925* (2004) [ISBN 0486433013]

Books

- *Houses By Mail* by Katherine Cole Steven and H. Ward Jandl (1986) – A field guide to Sears houses arranged to make identification easy. They list known Sears houses with a drawing and a floor plan, if available. [ISBN 0471143944]
- *Finding the houses that Sears built : a guide to the 60 most popular designs* by Rosemary Thornton (2004) [ISBN 0971558825]
- *The Houses That Sears Built* by Rosemary Thornton (2002) – A guide to many of the questions you might have about kit houses. [ISBN 0971558809]

Magazine Articles

- "Exploring Big Store's Kit Houses." *Crane's Chicago Business Daily* (October 5, 1998)
- "The House Is In the Mail" by L. Wayne Hicks. *American History* (April 2000)
- "Houses that Came in the Mail" by David M. Schwarts (May/June 1986)

Search Aids

Search Terms

(Use for computer searches)

- "Sears homes"
- "Sears houses"
- "kit houses"

Subject Headings

(Use in card catalogs and print indexes)

- Sears, Roebuck, and Company—Catalogs.
- Montgomery Wards—Catalogs.
- Prefabricated houses.
- Architecture, Domestic.

Call Number

- 728 (Dewey Decimal)
- TH4819.P7 (Library of Congress)
- NA7205 .H668 (Library of Congress)
- NA7208 .M59 (Library of Congress)

Indexes and Abstracts

- EBSCOhost
- First Search
- Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

Library catalogs

- Your local library catalog
- SILO - State-wide catalog
- World Cat - World-wide Catalog

Web Pages and Web Portals

- The Old House Web: Sears Kit Houses
www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/Features/Sears_Kit_Houses This collection of articles on Sears Kit Houses include information on history, identification, and living in a Sears Kit House.
- Fred J. Becker, Architect: Kit Homes
www.fredbecker.org/News%20Letter/KitHomes.htm This is an article from an architect's newsletter about Kit Homes. It mentions several different manufactures and gives many details on the Aladdin Homes of Bay City, Michigan. [NOTE: The %20 in the above URL is actually part of the address and not a computer mistranslation.]
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: Mail Order Homes and Barns
www.nationaltrust.org/help/mail_order_homes.html
This article provides their suggestions for identifying a kit house.
- Kit Houses www.lib.umd.edu/NTL/kithomes.html
This is another article on identifying kit houses. It also has a nice bibliography, links for more information, and lists from the holdings of the University of Maryland library.
- Sears Archives: Sears Modern Homes
www.searsarchives.com/homes/index.htm
Although Sears is still an active company, the home manufacturing division was sold off and declared bankruptcy long ago. This is the information about it from the Sears Archives.
- History Detectives: Building Background
www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/diy/building.html
The accompanying website for the popular PBS show makes these suggestions for identifying the history of a building. One of there first projects was identifying a possible Sears Kit House.
- Sears Homes . Org www.searshomes.org/
This is Rosemary Thorton's (also known as the Sears Lady) personal webpage. Three of her books are also listed on this pathfinder.
- Arts and Crafts Movement: Kit Homes www.arts-crafts.com/archive/kithome.shtml
This is a great site to get ideas on where else to look. It includes a nice list of kit home companies, some citations to articles and notes on archives for you to check out.

** You can evaluate other resources using criteria at: www.THEpathfinderproject.org/evaluate.html **

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