Using the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

The Sanborn maps are available online through the University Libraries (you will need to sign in with your x500 username and password): http://www.lib.umn.edu/get/12356

- Click "Browse Maps"
- Select "Minnesota" from the drop down menu
- Select your city (Minneapolis, e.g.)
- Select a date or date range (1912-1930, e.g.)
- Some cities are displayed in multiple volumes for the date range you selected (check for multiple volumes using the "Select a Volume" drop down menu at the top-right of the screen)
    o Each volume should have a Key Sheet – this is your index to the other sheets
    o Find the volume that has a Key Sheet that shows the area of interest
    o Click the sheet to view it → zoom in to your area → the large black numbers indicate the sheet number for the detailed view of your area

Tips & Tricks

- When viewing a particular sheet, click "Download Map" at the top of the window to download the sheet as a PDF file for easier viewing
- A black and white map legend is available online: http://sanborn.umi.com/HelpFiles/bwkey.pdf
- Color and black & white versions of the original keys are available online: Sanborn Keys
- The Library of Congress has information as well (refer to the "Interpretation" section of the page): http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/