

Researching a House in Weston

In order for you to research a house you need to know a little about the history of the area. Weston can be difficult to research because every time it got incorporated or amalgamated documents were moved. Some got lost, some got destroyed and others just have not been archived yet.

Important Dates in Weston's history:

Pre 1850	In Home District (Ontario had districts before there were provinces)
1851	York County formed
January 1, 1850	Township of York is incorporated
1881	Separates from York Township and becomes incorporated as Village of Weston, effectively reducing the size of York Township
January 1, 1882	First Village council meeting
1915	Incorporated as a town
April 15, 1953	York and Weston become two of thirteen municipalities in the new Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto
January 1, 1967	York and Weston amalgamate and are incorporated as the Borough of York
June 10, 1983	York is incorporated as a city
January 1, 1998	York ceases to be an individual city and becomes part of the amalgamated City of Toronto

Weston has also been found in the records of York North Township, Etobicoke Township, York West Township and Toronto

It is also important to know if and when the street name changed:

Present Name	Former Name	Date changed
Fern Ave	LaMaire Ave	Feb 18, 1924
Queen's Drive	Maria Street	Dec. 10, 1923
Church Street	Beach Street	June 14, 1920
Bellevue Street	Mill Street	Nov 14, 1924
Clouston Ave.	St. John's Road	March 2, 1964
Helen Ave.	Wadsworth Ave.	May 6, 1968

Sometimes the street numbering has changed, even though the street name has not.

Items Used to do Research:

Goad's Fire Insurance Atlases

-first published in 1880 and updated at regular intervals,

- 1st one to have Weston in it is dated 1910
- taken over by Underwriters Insurance Company
- are street maps showing the shape, size and material of buildings
- watch for ones that have the original date on them but have been changed after that date

City Directories

- City of Toronto Directories were published from 1833, approx. every 5 years until 1861, when they were done yearly
- organized alphabetically by both street name and surname
- a year by year check of the directories may indicate when the site you are researching was developed, be aware that the information in any volume was usually compiled the previous year
- directories list the occupants not necessarily the owner
- will say what adults are living there, or if the lot is vacant, under construction, etc.
- if there is no number, this does not necessarily mean there is no house i.e. looked up 153 King Street, it was there some years, vacant others and not there in others.
- sometimes gives occupation or association person belonged to, this helps determine historical importance of the individual

Property Tax Assessment Rolls

- information was compiled each year for tax collection the following year.
- organized by city ward, indicates the name and address of the owner and occupant, status of property (vacant or built on) and the assessed value of the land and buildings.
- these can give you an idea of when the house was built

Former Owners, Neighbours, etc.

- talk to people living in the house right now and in the past, even rumours and legends are a good place to start
- see if they have plans, old mortgages, actual deed, or surveys.
- it is important that you get the lot and plan number, not just the street address.

Old Newspapers

- Weston Times and Guide can mention subdivisions of farms, lots for sale etc.

Land Records

- these give you the complete history of who owned the land that your house is on.
- they can also tell you when the house was built

Building Permits

- waiting to hear from this department to see if the records for Weston are still intact

General Research Information

Talk to people living in the house first

- find out all you can
- even the smallest detail can lead to finding documented info
- most important find out the original lot number

Site your sources

- write down where you found the information in as much detail as you can

Photocopy the information whenever you can

- this produces fewer mistakes
- also tends to gather more information in one shot than just copying down just what is needed for that house
- keep receipts and note what they are for so you can be reimbursed for them (if you are researching someone else's house for the study)

Places to Research

Weston Historical Society Archives

1901 Weston Road

Photographs

- a few photo albums have been compiled that tell some history of certain homes

Fire Insurance Maps

- May 1910, 1923 and 1963

Directories

- Weston Directory for 1911, listed by last name of occupant only

Assessment Rolls

- Guide to Weston Assessment Rolls
 - will show you what rolls are available at the Toronto Archives
 - lists the wards that Weston is split into after 1910

City of Toronto Archives

255 Spadina Road

416-397-0778

www.city.toronto.on.ca/archives

Assessment Rolls

- see the “Guide to Weston Assessment Rolls” in the grey tin tie folder in the Former York area
- from 1883 to 1966
- but for the years 1925 to 1947 the rolls are restricted
- in alphabetical order by last name of occupant of house
- alphabetical order is not perfect either, if there are two people owning the same property, they are listed together, which puts one of them out of order
- year 1925 they are listed by street
- in book form (very large books)
- look for the lot number of your house, i.e. my house is now 153, but the records go by the lot number and I found it used to be 209
- early years do not even have a house number listed
- assessment of unfinished houses can be found between wards
- 1919 Assessment List Totals are at the beginning of the year
- 1910 and after: Weston is split into 4 wards or divisions

Directories

Might’s Toronto City directories

1911 to 1929	On microfilm, found in self-serve cabinets in the right back corner of the Microfilm Room at back of Research Hall	Weston is listed in a separate suburban section (see each year’s table of contents near beginning of reel for page numbers)
1930 to 1941	On microfilm, as above	Weston listings are part of the main directory in the rest of the streets
1941 to 1986	In book form on self-serve cabinets in Research Hall. Not allowed to photocopy due to condition of books	In pink, blue or green sections. Look up street name, then no.
1989 to 1995	In book form, as above, no 1987 or 1988	Weston listings in the “central” and “west” editions, not published every year
After 1995	In book form, as above	Weston listings appear in one volume along with parts of City of Toronto

Fire Insurance Maps

- Parts of York for 1948, 1957, 1962 and 1964
- found in metal cabinets in the Microfilm Room at the back of the Research Hall (boxes titled “Goad’s” or “Underwriters”)

Toronto Reference Library

789 Yonge Street

416-393-7131

www.tpl.toronto.on.ca

-all info on the 4th floor in the Special Collections, Genealogy & Maps Centre

Fire Insurance Maps

-May 1910, 1923 and 1955

City Directories

-Complete holdings from 1833 but see breakdown for York in Toronto Archives notes

-in book form and microfilm

-pre 1900 Canadian directories are on CIHM microfiche

North York Central Library

5120 Yonge Street

416-395-5623 (Canadiana Room, 6th floor)

www.tpl.toronto.on.ca

Newspapers

-Weton Times & County of York Herald, 1890-1894

-Times & Guide, 1908-1913

-Weston Times – Advertiser, 1961-1965

-Weston Times, 1965-1970

-Weston-York Times, 1971-1973

-Times, 1973

-all on microfilm