

Researching a House in Weston

If you would like to find out more about your house the following information can get you started. This is only a beginning list of resources and will change from time to time as we learn more about 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 Some got lost, some got destroyed and others just have not been archived yet.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 |
| Wadsworth Ave. | Helen Ave. | May 6, 1968 |

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

Items Used to do Research:

Personal Information

- Survey, mortgage info, home insurance may all supply you with the lot number, plan number, frontage, type of house, date it was built, original owner etc.

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
- use a number of these to narrow down when a house was built
i.e. the house is on the 1923 plan but not on the 1910 one, then you know the house was built after 1910

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, but need further checking to determine if a general tax rise in the area was the real reason for increased assessed value.

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

-sometimes a survey or deed will be attached

-can be found in the form of copybooks and abstract indexes

Some definitions found at the Land Registry and its records:

Abstract – means condensed version

Copybook – has the formal documents in it

-usually listed by the instrument

Abstract Index – index to the abstracted version of the instruments

Instrument – each transaction that occurs on a piece of land

-an instrument number is given to each one

Transfer – when someone buys a piece of land

Charge – a mortgage

Building Permits

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

MPAC –Municipal Property Assessment Corporation

-this can be accessed online once you phone in to be registered

-your own info is free, additional info costs extra

-gives you Plan number, Lot description, frontage, and other initial information

Toronto Property System – Available at Toronto Archives

-on computer

-can access any Toronto address by typing in address

-gives address, owners, plan and lot info, frontage, depth and type of house

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
- Tip: Look at the Guide to Weston Assessment Rolls in the Weston Archives first so you know what books you will be needing. Order them as soon as you get in the Archives because it can take up to 45 minutes for them to be retrieved.

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

Ontario Archives

77 Grenville St.
416-327-1600
www.archives.gov.on.ca

Land Records

- Abstract property information concerning plans 5 to 274, no M-140 plan (abstract means a condensed version, lacking detail)
- for years circa 1846 to 1958
- in cabinet 50, Film No. GSU179768
- on the same roll of film you will find an Abstract Index, circa 1800 to 1958

- Film no. GS6418
- Instruments from 1852 to 1865
- Indexed by last name, use the no. on the left (instrument no.) to find the Instrument farther on in the reel

- Film no. GS6419
- has about 5 deeds on it starting in 1853

Assessment Rolls

- Film no. GS6415
- 1883-1900, alphabetical order by name

Metro Toronto Land Registry Office

Atrium on Bay
20 Dundas St. W.
3rd Floor
416-314-4400

Parcel Register

- this shows the most recent instruments pertaining to the property
- will give full legal description of property
- on computer, you have to ask for it
- ask how to go back further
- costs 8\$ for printout

Instrument or Copy Books

- using the parcel numbers you can trace the history of the property back to the original owners