



### **Guide to Researching Your House**

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The Archives at Whitby Public Library has many sources that can assist you as you research the history of your house. This guide explains the best sources for your research and the type of information you can expect to find. It's a good idea to write down the source, title, page number, microfilm reel number, or any other available references that will allow you to locate the information again, if necessary. Before beginning your research you will need to examine your deed or tax assessment to determine your property's lot and concession number or plan number.

Please keep in mind that some of these resources are located in our closed stacks and you will need to contact a staff member for assistance. Most of these resources are part of our non-circulating collections and will need to be used in the Library.

### **Building and Property Files**

The Archives at Whitby Public Library may have files on specific addresses and properties. Files contain transcribed newspaper articles about events on or relating to the property, including real estate sales, fires, histories, and/or demolition information. Staff will help you determine if a file exists for your property. You will need to know the address or the lot and concession number. Please contact staff for assistance with this resource.

### **Photographs**

Many of Whitby's historic homes have been photographed and digitized and are available through our [online database](#). You can search our website using keywords, addresses, and lot and concession numbers. If you don't find your house right away, try searching your street name. [www.ourontario.ca/whitby](http://www.ourontario.ca/whitby)

### **Maps and Atlases**

Early atlases show the names of landowners, lot layout, and lot and concession numbers. We have two maps that may assist you in determining past ownership of your house. Consider these as a jumping off point to your research.

- Tremaine Map of Ontario County, 1860 hanging in the Archives and Local History Gallery
- Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Ontario, 1877 in the Archives and the atlas stand on the Library floor 911.71355 JHB 1972

## **Fire Insurance Plans**

Fire insurance plans provide detailed information about buildings and neighbourhoods. They can be used to determine when a building was built or demolished, details of building materials, position of building on a lot, address numbers, and lot sizes and shapes. The Archives has fire insurance plans for downtown Whitby for the early 20th century. Please contact staff for assistance with this resource.

## **Directories**

Town directories give the name and occupation of the head of the household, usually a male, at a given address. By finding the first year your home appears in the city directories, you can arrive at a probable date of construction. Working forward, you can compile a list of property owners and/or tenants. The earliest directories include information for all the municipalities in York and later, Ontario Counties. These directories only provide either the occupation or a lot and concession number.

- Vernon Directories, 1960-2002 Local History Room 917.13560025 Ver
- 19<sup>th</sup> century County and Town directories are located in the Archives. Please contact staff for assistance with these resources.

## **Voters Lists**

Voters lists contain the names and addresses of eligible voters within a particular area or polling station. They may be helpful in determining the residents of a home during an election year. Voters lists are similar to directories, however, since they list individuals alphabetically by polling station, voters lists are considerably less useful. It is also important to consider that eligible voters did not include women, minorities, and indigenous people until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- Voters List Town and Township of Whitby 1886-1891 Local History Room 324.60971356 VOT
- Voters List Town of Whitby 1968-1970 Local History Room 324.640971356 WHI
- Voters List Town of Whitby 1972-1994 Local History Room 324.640971356 WHI

## **Land Abstract Indexes**

The Land Abstract Indexes provide information about land transactions concerning a specific property over time. They identify when a mortgage was registered on a piece of property thereby providing clues as to possible dates of construction of structures. You will need to know your lot and concession number to use this resource. This resource is available on microfilm.

- REF 346.7130438 ONT Reel 19: Township of Whitby; Reel 20: Whitby Town East of Brock; Reel 21: Whitby Town West of Brock

## **Township Papers**

This collection, created by the Department of Lands and Forests, consists of miscellaneous records relating to land in Ontario. The documents have been arranged by township name, then by concession and lot or by town name and lot number. This resource is available on microfilm.

- REF 333.30971356 ONT MS 658 Reel 516

## **Questions? Contact Us:**

Email: [archives@whitbylibrary.on.ca](mailto:archives@whitbylibrary.on.ca)

Phone: 905-668-6531

Website: [Online historic images](#)

## **Hours**

Monday to Friday 9:30 – 1:00 and 2:00 – 5:00; or by appointment.