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Basic
Resources
for
Researching
a Heritage
Property

Basic Resources for Researching a Heritage Property
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Abstract Index to Deeds

The place to start is at the Land Registry Office, which for Pickering is in Whitby at 590 Rossland Road East, east of Brock Street (north side). You need to know the Concession and Lot number. You can no longer look at the books, everything is on microfilm and that is what you have to use, even though some of the photography is of poor quality, and in some cases unreadable.

You can work forward or backward. Start with the original patentee (the person to whom the land was granted, or who first purchased the lot) and work forward to the present. Or, because of subdividing it is best to work backward, but you have then to know the present owner. If you know the present owner work backwards to the original patentee.

Pay attention to such things as mortgages, as these might give you an idea as to when a house was constructed on the property (or a major renovation).

Ownership Maps of Pickering Township

I actually usually start with these because I have copies of all of them at home and they give a quick overview of who owned the property at various times in our history. There are 6 ownership maps for Pickering, most of which are available at the Pickering Library:

1. 1823: Thomas Ridout, Pickering Township Map. It is difficult to read, but when decipherable can be of help. This map shows the situation not so much in 1823, as for the original grantees of each lot. One should compare this list with other lists of the earliest grantees. There is a copy in the Pickering Library (obtained from the Ontario Archives).

2. 1860: George C. Tremaine, Tremaine's Map of the County of Ontario, Upper Canada. Drawn by John Shier. Toronto: George C. Tremaine. This is a large wall map. The library has a damaged copy (probably unusable for most searches), so you will have to go elsewhere for this one if you need to see the actual map. You will find an original map hanging in the Whitby Library. The Pickering Library has a photocopy of the Pickering Township part. This map reflects the ownership as of 1860.

3. 1877: J.H. Beers, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Ontario, Ont.* Toronto: J.H. Beers. This is a book of maps as well as historical sketches, drawings of certain farms in the county, including Pickering, and other pertinent information. A very useful source. It has recently been reprinted, so if you have a spare \$100 buy a copy for yourself. It includes (ownership) maps for each of the townships in the former Ontario County, and there are also maps of most of the hamlets. Pickering Library has a copy. The maps may be viewed on line at:

<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/searchmaps3.php>.

4. 1895: Charles E. Goad, Atlas of Ontario County, Province of Ontario. Toronto: Chas. E. Goad. This is a series of maps made for insurance purposes. There is one for Pickering Township. Copy in Pickering Library.

5. 1917: Guidal Landowners' Map of Pickering Township. A map created for advertising purposes. Others exist for other townships. Copy in Pickering Library.

6. 1967: George Smith, Map of Pickering Township: Centennial Souvenir. Pickering: Pickering Township Historical Society. This was a creation of the original historical society, not the present one. For ownership purposes it is useful for the north, but not for most of the south because of the subdivisions. Copy in Pickering Library.

Censuses:

The first Census was taken in 1842. It is of little use for Pickering as it has only general information, not specific names. So we have available the Censuses for 1851 (actually completed in 1852), 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, and soon we will have 1911 as well. These are all (not 1842) available on microfilm in the library (C11742, etc.). The information provided in each differs slightly. You will learn what information each has as you work with them. For some years there is an agricultural census as well. This will place your family on a specific lot, or if you are working the other way, find the lot and you will find who is living on it.

The first two censuses (1851 and 1861) will tell you information about house types—log, frame, stone, or brick (or shanty). For houses built before 1851-52, or between 1851 and 1861, this is useful information indeed. The Censuses for 1871 and 1881 do not have this information. For 1891 and 1901 the information is provided but in a different fashion and you have to learn the code to know how to use the information.

Assessment Rolls:

Also on microfilm in the library are the Assessment Rolls from 1853 to about 1899 (MS 8115, etc). There is also a Collector's Roll for 1852, but not quite as useful. Assuming you know the Concession and Lot, or you know the name of the family (you can work either way with the AR), you will find such information as: occupation, age, type of holding, assessed value of property, value of personal property. Some of the AR will also tell you such things as religion, how many cattle, etc., how many carriages, how many dogs, how many people in the family, and sometimes other useful information. Some of the Rolls are arranged alphabetically by surname, others by Concession and Lot. As you get used to using them you will soon discover how they are arranged. If I am trying to determine when a house might have been built—by noting a large increase in the assessed value, I check every 10 years, then narrow the scope as I zero in on the increases. But, be careful for the years 1857-1859. You will find an apparent 4-fold increase for all the properties. However, all this really reflects is a change in currency from pounds to dollars in 1858 (the pound worth essentially 4 times what the dollar was worth).

Pickering Township Papers

Now available at the library on microfilm (MS 658, Reels 393-395). These are arranged by Concession and Lot. They have information about various lots that didn't make it into the Land Registry Office. The information can be very interesting at times, at other time very disappointing. Well worth a look, however. Not always easy to use.

Index to Land Patents

For this you have to go to the Ontario Archives in Toronto. MS 693, various reels. Obviously, provides information about the original grants. Can be surprising at times, however.

Directories:

There are a number of Directories for the Home District and later for York County and Ontario County, etc. Some are local, some national. The later the Directory the more information you might find. The early ones are useful to find who was on a certain lot (as of 1837 or 1846, e.g.). Later ones might tell you what occupations the individuals had. Locating these might be a problem. The Pickering Library has some of them; the Whitby Archives has some. You can even find some on line. The following are the ones I use most often, but the list is not exhaustive and I am always looking for more useful ones:

1. 1837: George Walton, *The City of Toronto and the Home District Commercial Directory and Register*. Toronto: T. Dalton and W.J. Coates.
2. 1846: George Brown, *Brown's Toronto City and Home District Directory, 1846-7*. Toronto: George Brown.
3. 1850: Henry Rowsell, *Rowsell's City of Toronto and County of York Directory for 1850-1*. Toronto: Henry Rowsell. In 1988, Norman Crowder published an undated version of this placing the names alphabetically. If you are searching for names, Crowder might be more useful; if you are searching for occupations or villages, or anything else, the original arrangement is preferable.
4. 1857: John Lovell, *The Canadian Directory for 1857-58*. Montreal: John Lovell.
5. 1869: C.E. Anderson, *The Province of Ontario Gazetteer and Directory* Toronto: Robertson & Cook.
6. 1869: J.C. Connor and J.W. Colton, *The County of Ontario Directory for 1869-70*. Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co.
7. 1871: James Randle Nason, *Nason's East and West Ridings of the County of York* Toronto: Dudley & Burns.
8. 1876: J.A. Crawford, *Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Ontario for the Year 1876*. Uxbridge: W. Pemberton.
9. 1896: *Union Publishing Co's (of Ingersoll) Farmers and Business Directory for the Counties of Bruce, Muskoka, Ontario and Simcoe for 1896*. Ingersoll: Union Publishing Co.

Cemetery Listings

Available at www.pada.ca, or in hard copies from readings made about 10-15 years ago by the Ontario Genealogical Society.

Minutes of the Pickering Township Council, 1811-1876.

Available on microfilm in the library (MS 282, etc.). Records the names of many of the early settlers.

Voters Lists

Useful when you can find them. Pickering Library has several (e.g., 1878, 1879, 1880, 1883).

Local Histories

There are a number of histories that cover Ontario County, Pickering Township, and some of the villages/hamlets in Pickering Township. Pickering Library has all of those listed below.

For the County:

J.H. Beers, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Ontario, Ont.* Toronto: J.H. Beers.

J.E. Farewell, *County of Ontario*. Whitby: Gazette-Chronicle Press, 1907.

Leo A. Johnson, *History of the County of Ontario 1615-1875*. Whitby: Corporation of the County of Ontario, 1973.

Also some useful information in W.H. Higgins, *The Life and Times of Joseph Gould*. Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1887.

For the Township:

William R. Wood, *Past Years in Pickering*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1911. (Written for Pickering's centennial).

William A. McKay, *The Pickering Story*. Pickering: The Township of Pickering Historical Society, 1961. (Written for Pickering's sesquicentennial).

John W. Sabean, *Time Present and Time Past: A Pictorial History of Pickering*. Pickering: Pickering Township Historical Society and the City of Pickering Millennium Committee, 2000.

For various villages, etc.

Robert A. Miller, *The Ontario Village of Brougham: Past! Present! Future?* Brougham, the author, 1873.

Lillian M. Gauslin, *From Paths to Planes: A Story of the Claremont Area*. Claremont: the author, 1974.

Mrs. Irvn McLean and Beatrice R. McLean, *Greenwood Through the Years*. Greenwood: The Greenwood farm Forum, 1960.

Leslie M. Morley, *The Village of Pickering 1800-1970*. [Pickering:] The Corporation of the Village of Pickering, 1970.

Archie MacDonald, ed., *A Town Called Ajax*. Ajax: Ajax Historical Board, 1995.

For Ajax and some other hamlets there are some shorter histories. Also check the Tweedsmuir histories.

Some people find useful: Michelle Greenwald, *The Historical Complexities of Pickering, Markham, Scarborough and Uxbridge*. [Toronto:] North Pickering Community Development Project, 1973.

In some of these works there are family histories at the back: Wood, McKay, Miller, and Gauslin. McLean has a breakdown by Lot & Concession.

Pathmaster

There is also some useful information in *Pathmaster*, the newsletter of the Pickering Township Historical Society, including the 1883-1884 articles written by "Traveller" for the *Whitby Chronicle*, and now being reprinted an article at a time. These are all on line through the library's database (www.pada.ca). Unfortunately, I have the only index available for all of the issues.

So, there are the basic resources. Pick a Lot—there are about 350 of them in Pickering Township—and get researching them. Just make sure that when you complete your work to deposit a copy of the research in the library for future researchers. **Document** everything as you go. *Your information is only as good as your documentation.*

Township of Pickering, Concession 3, Lot 30

Instrument		Date of Execution	Date of Registration	Grantor	Grantee	Quantity of Land	Consideration or Amount of Mortgage	Remarks
Number	Type							
	Patent	6/11/1837			Robinson, Hon. Peter	200 ac		
26422	B&S	9/3/1846	13/3/1846	Robinson, Hon. Jno. B.	Burkholder, Joseph	N 1/2		
33256	B&S	1/12/1848	4/1/1849	McCreight, Jas.	The District Council	4 Sq Rods		Described by metes
34054	B&S	27/12/1848	23/3/1849	Robinson, Hon. Jn. B.	McCreight, James.	S 1/2		
13741	B&S	28/1/1860	3/2/1860	McCreight, James.	Trustees of School Sec. No. 7	1/2 ac		See No. D103514
603	B&S	21/3/1870	24/3/1870	Burkholder, Joseph	Burkholder, Abraham	N 1/2		
6896	B&S	28/2/1889	2/3/1889	Burkholder, Abraham	Davidson, George	pt N 1/2		
6897	Mort	28/2/1889	2/3/1889	Davidson, George	Robinson, Mary M.		\$1022	
8584	B&S	29/6/1895		Burkholder, Eva, et al.	Burkholder, Wm	pt N 1/2		In Re Registration no ? ? 31.3 Con to record ?
8903	B&S	28/10/1896		Burkholder, Abraham C. & wife	Davidson, George	NW 1/4		
8408	Dis-of Mort	31/10/1896	5/11/1896	Robinson, Mary M.	Davidson, George		?	?
10443	B&S	12/6/1903		Armstrong, Jane, et al. (heirs at law of Jas. McCreight)	Armstrong, Arthur E. McCreight, Margaret	S 1/2 (ex 1/2 ac)	\$6000.00	
G.R.4051	Will	4/6/1920		McCreight, Margaret	Armstrong, Arthur E.	S 1/2 (ex pt)		

G.R. 14143	Will	8/1/1952	17/6/1955	Armstrong, Arthur Ernest	Armstrong, James McC	Part		Subj. to life interest of widow
52419	Grant	2/1/1957	1/5/1957	Armstrong, James McCreight (surviving ext' of trustees of last will of Arthur Ernest Armstrong)	Armstrong, James McCreight	S 1/2 ex part	\$2.00 etc	100 ac ⁺ ex S. 393' of W 225.50' Subj. to easement
453672	Mort.	15/5/1967	23/5/1967	Armstrong, James & wife	Farm Credit Corp.	S 1/2 ex part	\$30,000.00	Subj. to easement as des ^d in no 52419 (For DM see no 195801)
195801	D. of M.	23/3/1970	14/4/1970	Farm Credit Corp.	Armstrong, James M.	S 1/2 ex part		Dis of no 153672
223748	Grant	31/5/1972	31/5/1972	Armstrong, James & wife	Armstro Properties Ltd.	pt S 1/2	\$170,000.90 &c	S 1/2 ex S. 393 of W 225.50' (153.26 ac) being also pt of lot 29 des ^d by metes & bounds subj. to easement —survey attached
223749	Mort.	31/5/1972	31/5/1972	Armstro Properties Ltd.	Armstrong, James M.	pt S 1/2	\$636,913.90	Subj. to easement as des ^d in no 223748
Expropriation		1/2/1974	4/2/1974	Crown	Ministry of Housing Province of Ontario			—————
251532	Grant	23/1/1974	14/2/1974	Armstro Properties Limited	Her Majesty the Queen in the right of the Province of Ontario		\$2.00	Part (153.26 ac +-) Subj. to Easements as des ^d in no 223748

Censuses: Headings:

1851:

Names of Inmates; Occupation; Place of Birth; Religion; (Non-Residence); Age; Sex; Marital Status; (Coloured); (Indians); Residents; (Deaf or Dumb; Blind; Lunatic); School age; Birth in 1851; Death in 1851; **House type**; Number of Stories; Number of Families; (Vacant; Building); Shops, etc; Public Buildings; Churches; Information re Mills, etc.; Number Employed; General Remarks (of Enumerator).

1861:

Names of Inmates; Occupation; Place of Birth; (Married during year); Religion; (Non-Residence); Age; Sex; Marital Status; (Widowed); (Coloured, etc.); Residents; (Deaf, Blind, Lunatic); School Age; Literacy; Births in 1860; Deaths in 1860; **House Type**, Number of Stories, Number of Families, Vacant, Under Construction.

1871:

[Numbered in the order of visitation: vessels; shanties; houses in construction; houses uninhabited; houses inhabited; families];
Names; Sex; Age; Birth in 1870; Place of Birth; Religion; Origin; Occupation; Marital Status; Literacy; Infirmities (deaf, blind, unsound mind); Remarks.

1881:

[Numbered in the order of visitation: vessels; shanties; houses in construction; houses uninhabited; houses inhabited; families];
Names; Sex; Age; Born in 1880; Place of Birth; Religion; Origin; Occupation; Marital Status; School age; Infirmities (deaf, blind, unsound mind); Remarks

1891: --

[Numbered in the order of visitation: vessels & shanties; houses in construction; houses uninhabited; houses inhabited; families];
Names; Sex; Age; Marital Status; Relationship; Place of Birth; **French Canadian**; Place of Parents' Birth; Religion; Occupation; Employment Status; Literacy; Infirmities (deaf, blind, unsound mind).

1901:

[Numbered in the order of visitation: dwellings, families];
Personal description: Names; Sex; **Colour**; Relationship; Marital Status; **Date of Birth**; Age
Citizenship (etc); Place of Birth; Year of Naturalization; Racial or Tribal Origin; Nationality;
Religion
Profession: Occupation; Employment Status
Wage Earner: [6 categories]
Education: [6 categories, including **Speak French**, Mother Tongue

Assessment Rolls: Headings

1853: Arranged by Concession & Lot

Names of taxable parties; **Age; Profession;** Freeholder or householder; **Concession, Lot;** Number of **Acres;** Street Address, lot, footage; **Value of each Lot; Total value of Real Property;** Number of **Horses,** Value of horses; Number of **Cattle,** Value of cattle; Number of **Carriages,** Value of carriages; Value of merchandise; Value of stock; Value of Taxable **Personal Property; Total Value of Real and Personal Property;** Statute Labour (number of days).

1863: Arranged Alphabetically, then by Concession & Lot

Occupants; Profession; Freeholder or householder; Age; Owner; Non-resident; **School Section;** Concession; Lot; Number of Acres; Value of each Lot; Total Value of Real Property; Taxable income; Total Value of Personal Property; Total Value of Real and Personal Property; **Quakers, Mennonites, or Tunkers;** Statute labour.

1873: Arranged Alphabetically, then by Concession & Lot

Name of Taxable Property; Occupation; Freeholder or Householder; Age; Owner (name & address); School Section; Concession; Lot; Number of Acres; **Number of Cleared Acres;** Value of each property; Total Value of Real Property; Value of Personal Property; Total Value of real and Personal Property; Statute labour (no of days); number of dogs; **Number of Persons in Family; Religion; Livestock numbers** (Cattle, Sheep, Hogs, Horses).

1883: Arranged Alphabetically, then by Concession & Lot

Name and Post Office Address of Taxable Party; Occupation; Freeholder or householder; Age; Owner (name & address); Non-residents; School Section; **Number of Children** (of various ages); Concession; Lot; Number of Acres; Amount cleared; Value of Real Property; Total Value of Real Property; Value of Personal Property; Total Value of Real and Personal Property; Statute Labour; **Dog Tax;** Number of Persons in Family; Religion; Livestock numbers (Cattle, Sheep, Hogs, Horses); **Births; Deaths; Acres of Woodland; Acres of Wasteland; Acres of Orchards.**

Assessment Rolls: James McCreight, Concession 3, Lot 30

Year	Name	Occ	Hold- ing	Age	Con	Lot	No of Acres	Cleared	Value of Lot	Total Value Real Property	Value of Personal Property	Total
1853	James McCreight	Yeoman	F H	42	3	30	100		575	575	43	618
1857	James McCreight	Yeoman	F	42	3	30	100		700	700	100	800
1859	James McCreight	Yeoman	F	45	3	30	100		2800	2800	400	3200
1863	McCreight, James	Yeomen	F	48	3	30	99 1/2		2700	2700	400	3100
1873	McCreight, James	Yeoman	F	58	3	S 1/2 30	99 1/2	75	2487	2487	400	2887
1883	McCreight, James	Yeoman	F	68	3	S 1/2 30	99 1/2	89 1/2	4975	4975	400	5375