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HIGHLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Edmonton

How to Research the History of Your Home and it's Occupants

There are four or five things you need to do with your historical search (historic designation will be dealt with on another page TBA). This usually takes a few hours, most of which costs nothing, and you'll often find out some very interesting things about your home, the previous occupants, and your neighbourhood:

1) Local Lore

Investigate local lore about your house or the previous occupants. This is a great way to get to know neighbours, but also find some unique facts about the previous occupants or the building itself.

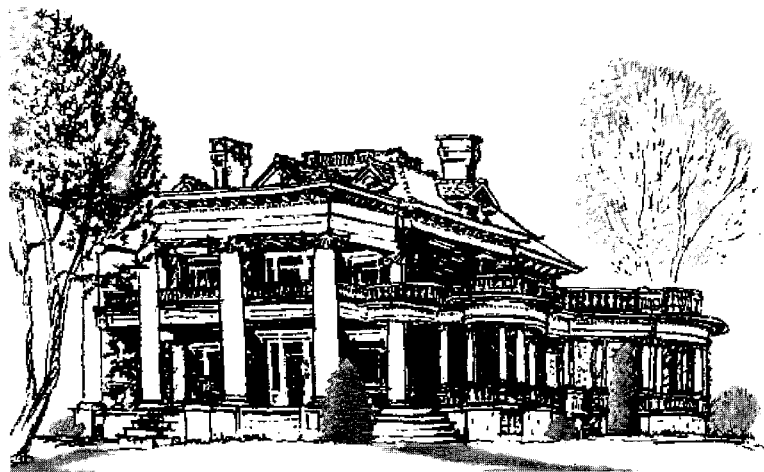
2) Henderson's Directory

Conduct a search of the previous occupants of your home by checking the Henderson's Directory. These Directories document not only the date of the home, but the occupant of your home, and their occupation - all based on your address. There are two ways to do this:

a) The first is to go online and do searches with the digitized catalogue at <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/2962.html>. Often the Henderson's census was completed sometime after the house was built, depending on the build date. Start with the volume one or two years later than you believe your house to be built and look for your address. Then work backwards to your date and earlier if possible -- some folks have found that their home was much older than they thought. Use your street address as the search term (if you live at 12345 63rd Street and would use the 12345 as the search term). Once you find the address, the name of the occupant will be next to it. Using the same search term (e.g., 12345 in our case), find the appropriate page near the back of the volume and search by name for that person -- there you will find their occupation, including company, with a verification of the home address.

Only volumes 1908 to 1953 have been digitized, you'll likely have to go to plan (b) below if your home is older than 1953.

b) Go to the Stanley Milner Library downtown and find the Henderson's Directories -- they are in one of the climate controlled rooms with old books upstairs. These Directories document not only the occupant of your home, but also their occupation. Edmonton has a complete set from about 1908 until 1987 when all the privacy rules came in. Search all the way to 1987 -- it can be a little time



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consuming -- but it's quite fun and you'll never know what you'll turn up.

### 3) Land Titles Search

To verify the year your home was built, you'll have to do a Land Titles Search. There are two ways:

a) Go online to do a Land Titles Search at <http://alta.registries.gov.ab.ca/spinii/>. Only the last two land titles are listed for purchase. So, it's still likely best to pay for a search at the Brownlee Building in plan (b) below.

b) Go to Edmonton's Land Title Office and do a title search on your property. Land Titles Office John E. Brownlee Building 10365 - 97th Street Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3W7 Tel: (780) 427-274, Fax: (780) 422-4290, Email: [lto@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lto@gov.ab.ca). The office is hidden in a corner behind the main area, so don't get into a big line-up in the main area. You'll need the lot number, etc., which is usually associated with your real property report when you buy your house. Go back as far as you want -- I went back to 1900 to see who owned the property our 1924 house is built on -- all of the way to the present. You'll pay \$2.00/photocopy, so expect to pay \$10.00 - \$30.00, or maybe a little more. Well worth it, as you'll find out who actually owned your home and perhaps with a few surprises. We found out that our home was built by a 22 year old single school teacher at Highlands school! We would never have known this with just a Henderson's Directory search.

### 4) City Archives

Go to the Edmonton City Archives in the Prince of Wales Armoury downtown and do a microfiche search to find the building permit for your home. You may also find out who was the architect. You will find out how much your house cost to build -- our house cost \$2600 in 1924, and the single car garage cost \$100 in 1928! You can make photocopies for 0.25. While there, also do a photo or other documents search, plus look at the fire insurance maps to see what your house was made of at that time.

### 5) Provincial Archives

There may also be information at the Provincial Archives on the south side of the city, particularly if someone associated with your home is noteworthy.