

Useful Resource Materials for House Research - continued

Assessment Rolls

Tax assessment rolls list property identified by legal description (current description is listed on your tax assessment notice, although the older legal description may differ somewhat). By tracing these rolls to the approximate date of construction, you may find the original owner. Sometimes you can also determine the date of construction by checking the change in value of any property improvements shown.

Fire Insurance Plans

Insurance companies compiled these maps of properties throughout major cities. The earliest ones for Victoria are of the downtown core. They show footprints of buildings, what the building was constructed of and property lines. The BC Archives and Saanich Archives have plans relating to parts of Oak Bay. The BC Archives also has maps and plans of the Oak Bay municipality.

Clipping Files

Newspaper clipping files can provide information about families. The BC Archives has a microfiche index of selected 19th Century British Columbia newspapers and 20th Century newspaper clipping files (1952-1982). The City of Victoria Archives has newspaper clipping files; the list of clipping headings is available on the City of Victoria website at: www.city.victoria.bc.ca/archives.



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Researching Your Older Oak Bay



Oak Bay Heritage



Where to Start

Oak Bay Municipal Hall

The best place to start is the Municipal Hall, 2167 Oak Bay Avenue, telephone (250) 598-2042, ext 2203; website www.oakbaybc.org.

The Building Department has house plans for many existing Oak Bay residences. The original plans may provide the architect, date of construction and original owner. The Building Department also keeps "property cards" for each property in Oak Bay. These cards provide dates of permits taken out and often provide additional information such as plumbing connections. Information can be provided by staff.

Oak Bay Archives

Located on the lower level of the Municipal Hall, the Oak Bay Archives maintains a collection of photographs, papers, municipal records and family collections. It also contains files on most of the homes described in Stuart Stark's book; *Oak Bay's Heritage Buildings: More Than Just Brick and Boards*. Jean Sparks, the Oak Bay Archivist, is a long time resident of Oak Bay. She, or Archives volunteers, can be reached at (250) 598-3290. Ms. Sparks is also a member of the Oak Bay Heritage Steering Committee.

City of Victoria Archives

Located at # 8 Centennial Sq. the City of Victoria Archives can be contacted at (250) 361-0375. The website, www.city.victoria.bc.ca/archives provides excellent information on researching houses and buildings. Most of the information applies to Victoria, but the basics of house research apply to any municipality. The Archives also holds a large collection of photographs and

manuscript materials. Some Oak Bay family materials may be found here.

British Columbia Archives

Located at 655 Belleville Street, telephone (250) 387-1952, website: www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca, next to the Royal BC Museum, the BC Archives contains a large collection of useful material. The office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:30am to 3:30pm. Partial service is available to previously registered clients on Wednesdays. New researchers must register on their first calendar year visit with photo ID. The BC Archives holds manuscript materials, photographs (over 75,000 online images), maps and plans, library material, clipping files, business (city) directories, tax assessment rolls and fire plans. The BC Archival Union List (BCAUL), accessible from the BC Archives website, is a database of archival records throughout BC.

Greater Victoria Public Library

Located at 735 Broughton Street, the Greater Victoria Public Library's (GVPL) website is www.gvpl.victoria.bc.ca. The GVPL has a collection of Victoria business (city) directories. For access information, contact the GVPL at (250) 382-7241.

Hallmark Society

The Hallmark Society. They can be contacted by telephone at (250) 382-4755 or through their website, www.hallmarksociety.ca. The Hallmark Society has a collection of over 8,000 house files. Non-members must pay a small fee to use their reference materials.

Land Titles Office

Located at 850 Burdett, telephone: (250) 387-6331, the Land Titles Office will do title searches

on properties for a charge. A charge is levied each time the property title changes ownership. You may be able to locate some of this information on property title through the tax assessment rolls at the BC Archives and the City of Victoria Archives.

Saanich Archives

Located at 770 Vernon Avenue, telephone (250) 475-1775, website: www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/community/heritage. The Archives preserves some fire insurance maps for portions of Oak Bay.

Useful Resource Materials for House Research

Business (City) Directories

The best research method to determine former residents is through business (city) directory listings. These directories stopped being produced in 2000, but are available for Victoria beginning in 1860. The directories provide street listings, residents and occupations. The best method is to start in the later years and work backwards until the house disappears from the listings. Keep in mind that throughout the years some street names have changed, and, on occasion, street numbering as well. Once the names of former residents have been determined, you can then search for information about these families.

Photographs

Family photographs can sometimes include residences. The BC Archives has "General Files" which include streetscapes and family collections. As of June 2002, there were over 120 online photographs at the BC Archives retrievable with the exact phrase "Oak Bay".