

THE STORY OF YOUR HOME

Whether you live in the country or in town, an apartment or a bungalow, a new building or an old one, there's lots you can find out about your home. If you live in a big city, you'll find documents, photographs, drawings, maps and other old stuff at the city archives. If you're in a smaller city or town, the reference section of the library (librarians always like to help!) is a good place to start. You can also try your town hall or municipal office. And if your home is quite new, you can always find out more about what used to be on the land where your house or apartment now stands.



In her video for the 2017 Young Citizens program, Klaire explored some old houses in Bonavista, NL, and why it is important to protect them.

WHO WAS THERE FIRST?

Did your home area become part of Canada through a treaty with an Indigenous group? Is there a First Nation that says it never gave up the land? Start your research with a quick online search of something like "Is [your community] covered by a treaty?"



istockphoto, Klaire Hayward, from the 2017 Young Citizens program





TIP

Keep in mind that street and road names change over time. For instance, in the country, many roads were only given names when emergency services started needing addresses to answer calls. Even towns and cities change their names sometimes!

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

Assessment rolls are lists of people who have paid taxes at your address. They may only show the men, but often include the job and religion of the “head of household” and how much money he made.

Maps are especially helpful if you live in the country because they usually show how land was divided into lots and the name of the owner

City directories also list the “head of the household” at your address. Finding the first year

the address appears will give you a good idea of when your house or apartment was built.

Fire insurance plans can tell you the size and shape of a lot, when a building was built or demolished, and even what materials were used in constructing it.

Aerial photographs (photos taken looking down from a low-flying airplane) can show buildings under construction or being demolished

TIP

Sometimes big lots were divided up after a house was built and given a number, which means addresses sometimes change. They could be given $\frac{1}{2}$ or A or B after the number, or the numbering system might have changed completely.

