

MARK WEISLEDER

Real Estate Lawyer, Author, Speaker

Every real estate title tells a story

When Bill Verutis bought his home on Thompson Road East in Waterford, Ontario a few years ago, he received a unique gift from his real estate agent, Penny Plunkett. It was a history of the property going back to the original deed granted on behalf of King George III in 1802 to the first owner Paul Averill.

Plunkett is also a title searcher and member of the Ontario Genealogical Society. She used both of these resources to create a list of owners going back to 1802 along with some of the more interesting family biographies.

“Properties can be purchased, but their history is inherited,” Plunkett says. “I try to give clients the whole picture when they buy real estate.”

Averill built the first saw mill in the area. He sold the property to the Sovereign families in 1804 who owned the property until 1843. The mill was burned during the War of 1812 by the forces of American General Duncan McArthur. Morris Sovereign developed a substantial milling business in Waterford and was one of the founders of the village of Waterford in 1826.

Robert Hamilton, a successful settler in Queenston, lent the first mortgage on the Thompson Road property. According to the web site, “few men in Upper Canada had the affluence of Robert Hamilton, Queenston’s most prominent and illustrious citizen. Judge, politician and entrepreneur, this “scotch pedlar” lived the lifestyle of a gentleman, entertaining at his magnificent home overlooking the Niagara River.”

Hamilton’s son George was a successful businessman and amassed huge real estate holdings. He served as a Captain with the Niagara Light Dragoons in the War of 1812 and in 1815 bought 257 acres of land in what is now the east end of the city of Hamilton. The family name became the city’s name.

The Thompson Road property changed hands several times and in Dec. 1866 was sold to William McMichael who was the owner when the Dominion of Canada was proclaimed in July 1, 1867.

You can search title using the computerized records at the land registry office in your county or at some Service Ontario locations. Use your existing deed to find the legal description so that you can start your search. If you give your address to the Ministry staff, they should be able to assist you.

It then costs \$8 to find the first page of your search and to go back further in time, each additional page costs \$1 each. You should then have access to a microfilm machine with an index to assist in your search. If you are interested in any deed that was registered on the property, you can order a copy of the document for fifty cents a page. You reach the beginning when you get back to the Crown Patent, which is typically between 1795-1803.

You can get help from staff at the registry offices, but there is an excellent resource that can be purchased from the Ontario Genealogical Society called: History of your Home for \$9.95, from the Society website.

A home isn't just an investment. It is a place where a family history is born. One of my parents' proudest moments after arriving in Canada after the Second World War, was the day they purchased their first home in Toronto. It brought me a great sense of warmth and satisfaction when I took my own children to the home I grew up in, which my parents owned for 35 years.

In my law practice, I am privileged to act for people buying their first home in Ontario, starting their own family history in this great country. It's something to think about as we celebrate Canada Day.

Mark Weisleder
62 Hillmount Ave. Toronto, Ontario, M6B 1X4
(416) 702-2499
170 Wilkinson Rd., Brampton, Ontario, L6T 4Z5
(905) 454-9606
mark@markweisleder.com
<http://www.markweisleder.com>