

Researching the History of Your West Pittston Home

West Pittston Historical Society

1. **VISIT THE RECORDER OF DEEDS** – The Recorder of Deeds is located at the Courthouse Annex, across from the Luzerne County Courthouse in Wilkes-Barre. Take the deed to your home. Don't worry if you can't find it. You will be able to search out your current deed at the deed office. You will be able to use your deed to trace back the previous deeds and owners of your home by following the deed book and page numbers listed in each deed. If you need assistance, the staff at the Deed office will be able to help you to get started. If you purchased your home prior to **1993** you can research your deed online at <https://www.searchiqs.com/paluze/Login.aspx>

Before West Pittston Borough was chartered and developed into building lots, most of the town was owned by either the **West Pittston Land Association** or the **West Pittston Coal Company**. When you locate a deed that lists either of these organizations as the owner, you will have gone back about as far as possible with your deed. You can refer to the 1873 Beers map on the West Pittston Historical Society web site

<https://westpittstonhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Beers-Map-1873-of-WP-Full-scaled.jpg> to see who was the original landowner in your part of town.

2. **FORMER OWNERS** - The next step is to look over the deeds to see what names are listed as former owners of your property. Remember, many lots in town had several owners before homes were actually built on them. You can use the Pittston/West Pittston City Directories on Ancestry.com or at the West Pittston Library to search the homeowner names. You should hope to be able to match up the names to the address of your home during the years you would expect they lived there from your deed research.

Another way to confirm this is to search the homeowner names in old census records that also can be found on **Ancestry.com**

You can set up a free Ancestry.com account to access Pennsylvania records only at <https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx>

Both of these research tools can reveal interesting information about the families who lived in your home and their occupations.

Newspapers.com is an online subscription service featuring newspaper archives. The site holds collections of the Pittston Gazette (1850-1965), the Sunday Dispatch (1947-2001) and most Wilkes-Barre newspapers. Searching your address and the names of previous owners of your home is another tool for locating information on your home. You can access Pennsylvania newspapers on Newspapers.com at no charge through link on the Osterhout Library website. <http://osterhout.info/online-resources/databases/>

3. **IS THIS MY HOME?** – So maybe your research tells you that there was a family living in your home in 1890 but when you look at your house it doesn't seem nearly that old. It might actually be 25 years newer than that. It is quite possible that your current home is not the original home on the lot. You can get a look at the footprint of your home by checking out the **Sanborn Map collection**. These are available on the West Pittston Historical Society web site <https://westpittstonhistory.org/resources/>

By looking at the Sanborn map for your home, you can possibly tell if your home was the same one that is shown on the vintage map books. Sanborn maps span the years from 1891 – 1950.

4. **WHEN EXACTLY WAS MY HOME BUILT?** – This information is not necessarily clear from looking at a deed. You can often narrow the time period to a few years but it is usually difficult to pin point the exact date of construction from the deed.

5. **ARE THERE ORIGINAL BUILDING PLANS FOR MY HOME?** - Much like today, building plans either stayed with the architect or were given to the original homeowner. The borough or county never held copies of building plans. Sometimes plans were either passed down through families or left with the home as it was sold.