

marriage and death about parents and all siblings in your tree for you, your father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

10. Read and learn: Some recommended reading: "Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family's Genealogy" by Ralph Crandall is one key source, as well as the "Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research," edited by Marcia Melnyk of the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), and "Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources," edited by Alice Eichholz. Studying the locations in which your ancestors dwelled and the history of the periods during which they lived is also important.

11. Avoid assumptions: Spellings of names and dates of events, found in census indexes and on Internet sites, can sometimes be inaccurate. McCoy recommends researching family stories to distinguish truth from myth.

12. Use a genealogy computer program: Software like Family Tree Maker can help you record and organize what you know as well as share it with others.

13. Visit and support historical societies and libraries: The Maine Historical Society in Portland, NEHGS in Boston and the Maine State Archives and the Maine State Library in Augusta have librarians and materials that can be of great help.

14. Research city directories: These may supply information on where your family was living each year, who was living with them, and when members died or relocated.

15. Research censuses: U.S. censuses are available from 1790 to 1930. Originals should be copied and recorded, instead of checking only indexes.

16. Research deeds: You should check every location where ancestors lived, creating a form to keep track of information. Deeds can contain information on the names of an ancestor's heirs.

17. Use the Internet, but with caution: Important sites include google.com, genealogy.com, ancestry.com, familysearch.org and

ellislandrecords.org. Subscriptions will allow you to view a variety of sources without leaving your computer.

18. Hire help, if needed: Genealogists like McCoy can do legwork for researchers or show them how to do the work themselves.

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"Where else can I look?"

There are a number of sources in the community for the aspiring genealogist.

Marge Devine, director of the Falmouth Historical Society, said she has done genealogical work for the past three years, handling between 40 and 60 queries a year, from as far away as Oregon and Washington State, concerning history of both families and old houses.

"Once you begin the search, you begin to find new names," she reflected. "I think one of the motivators is the connections you make when you do the briefest of searches."

She also remarked that "you find a lot of people in the community who are from the same family lineage. It starts you comparing notes."

Devine said the society has a entire drawer filled with

family files, located in the Whipple House at Ocean View, to which she is constantly making additions. "I make no claim to be a professional, but I know where to look in the records and to tell them where to go from there," she said. While some younger people conduct genealogical research, Devine finds herself mostly approached by retired individuals who either finally have time or have lost a parent and wish they had asked more questions.

Devine said she has been in contact with other societies in the area, mentioning that "every local society can help in some way."

As can libraries. Assistant Librarian Vicki Lowe runs the Freeport Community Library's local history area, which includes books on her town, Brunswick, Topsham,

Harpwell and Yarmouth. Town histories, how-to-do-research books, and other materials are available there, Lowe said, mentioning proudly that the core of the collection stems from the work of Col. Thurlow Dunning, who started researching his own family and branched out into many others. "I facilitate local history," Lowe said, adding that while she doesn't consider herself a genealogist, she has been able to help those needing assistance who contact her by phone, e-mail, or just show up.

Like Devine, Lowe finds most of those making queries are in their elder years. "They're starting to think about who they are and where they came from, and they want to do something for their children," she said.



LEFT Dr. Carol McCoy points to the location of her home on Johnson Road in Falmouth on a map from 1857.

RIGHT McCoy scans old family photographs and documents that she keeps in archival sheet protectors. Tim Greenway photos