



## House History Research Basics

If you are looking for the story of your house, here are some easy ways to find out more information and research its history. The key part of your research is getting an historic name (or family) associated with the house (as most records at historical societies/museums are kept by last name, not current address). Here are some places to start:

- 1) **York County Deeds:** Start with your street address or last name, picking “Kennebunk” as the city. Work back from there by using the book/page numbers as a “chain” backwards through time. Pay careful attention to the seller/buyer (grantor/grantee) to make sure you are following the chain of sale correctly. Any individual’s names (especially pre-1950) can then be used for the next step in your research. The York County Deeds office has records online from 1966 to the present. All prior records can be found at the York County Registry of Deeds at the York County Court House.

Contact Information for the Registry of Deeds:

45 Kennebunk Road, Alfred, ME 04002

(207)324-1576

<https://www.yorkcountymaine.gov/registry-of-deed-splash>

Additionally, the Brick Store Museum’s History Corps (Volunteer Team) is lucky to include a retired Title Researcher, who currently volunteers to research your title/deed questions. If you would like to use this service, please contact Leanne Hayden, Collections Manager, at [lhayden@brickstoremuseum.org](mailto:lhayden@brickstoremuseum.org) and include your current address and full name.

- 2) **Museum Local History Files & Archives**

The Museum is fortunate to have a myriad of different sources for family and house research in our collections. Local history files, genealogies, family archives, house histories, newspapers, maps and photographs (of structures and/or people) are among the materials you may find relating to your home or the families that lived there over time. When planning to do research at the Museum, it is *incredibly important* to make an appointment to view materials – we cannot always guarantee that staff or volunteers will be available unless you call/email ahead. Additionally, much of your information can be provided via email – to request an appointment, email: Leanne Hayden, Collections Manager, [lhayden@brickstoremuseum.org](mailto:lhayden@brickstoremuseum.org).

3) **The Landing Survey**

In addition to the information above, the Museum is lucky to have The Landing Survey in its archival collection, which is an incredibly-detailed report of homes in the Landing area of Summer Street, conducted by local historian Joyce Butler in the 1990s.

4) **Ancestry.com**

Free access to Ancestry.com is offered through the services of both the Kennebunk Free Library and the Brick Store Museum. Once you have the names of prior owners (especially pre-1900), Ancestry.com may provide some interesting information via its family trees. A Museum membership or Library Card are needed to use either organization's Ancestry subscription.

5) **Google/Internet Search**

Believe it or not, a simple Google search (or any search engine of your choice) may turn up additional information about your person/people. This may lead you to specific resources, like news articles, blogs, historical journals, and other publications that are digitized.

6) **Local History Books**

There are a host of local authors that have written about Kennebunk and regional history. Most of their books are online, or found in the Museum's Archives for your research. To mention a few:

*Archival:*

- "A History of Kennebunk from its Earliest Settlement to 1890," by Daniel Remich, 1911.
- "The History of Wells and Kennebunk," Edward Emerson Bourne, 1875.

*Current Books:*

- "Windows on the Past: An Illustrated Guide to Kennebunk's History Through Architecture," by Tracy Baetz & Roz Magnuson, 2010.
- "Images of America: Kennebunk Main Street," by Steven Burr, 1995.
- "Mills on the Mousam," by Joe Hardy, 2020.
- "The Kennebunks in Vintage Postcards," by Leanne Hayden & Cynthia Walker, 2020.
- "Learning is an Ornament: Education in Kennebunk," by Roz Magnuson, 2010.
- "Quiet, Well-Kept, for Sensible People: The Development of Kennebunk Beach," by Roz Magnuson, 2000.
- "Trunks, Textiles & Transits: Manufacturing on the Mousam River," by Roz Magnuson, 2005.
- "Images of America: Kennebunk," by Kathy Ostrander-Roberts, 2005.
- "Remembering the Kennebunks," by Kathy Ostrander-Roberts, 2009.