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OLD YORK TRANSFERS LOCAL GENEALOGIES TO THE YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

York, Maine—Following a year-long discussion, Old York Historical Society (OYHS) has transferring published genealogies and genealogy files of local and northern New England families to the York Public Library (YPL). In a strategic partnership, the two organizations will be providing greater public access to York’s genealogical materials.

Genealogical research is America’s number one hobby. Realizing that Old York can only provide limited access to genealogical materials, Director Joel Lefever approached YPL Director Michelle Sampson in 2017 about developing a partnership. Sampson was interested—because the materials would strengthen YPL’s existing genealogy and local history collections—areas often collected by public libraries.

YPL has extended weekday and weekend open hours, while the OYHS archives is available by appointment only for only three hours each week. YPL also provides free access to internet-based genealogical sites, such as Ancestry.com and AmericanAncestors.com in its reading room. OYHS, as a privately-funded institution, was not able to obtain the same access to these sites.

“Being a genealogist myself,” says Lefever, “I realized that OYHS is not open evenings and weekends when genealogists have the time to do their family research. Transferring Old York’s genealogy collection to the York Public Library enhances our shared goal of providing greater access and better serving the York community.”

“We’re thrilled to be able to partner with Old York,” says Sampson, “and to add such a treasure trove of materials to our collections. It will be a large undertaking to get everything entered into our online catalog, but with staff assistance, we’re committed to making the materials available and accessible to genealogists during that time.”

Transferred materials include published and unpublished family genealogies, folders containing family genealogy correspondence and references, compact discs of genealogy registers, and other related materials. The transfer began in January, 2019 and will continue throughout the spring to allow the materials to be processed and made available at the library. OYHS will continue to maintain its extensive collection of original historical documents, manuscripts, photographs, maps, rare books, etc.

ABOUT OLD YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Old York is a vital part of the York, Maine community. The organization maintains 16 buildings and 20 properties including the 17-acre Steedman Woods; has 4 full-time and 25 part-time employees; more than 20,000 artifacts and 50,000 archival materials in the library; and serves thousands of people year-round through tours, educational programs, and special events. For more information please visit the website oldyork.org.

ABOUT THE YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Founded in 1922, the York Public Library Association is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that provides access to books and materials, programs, and services for all ages. The Library has 5 full-time and 6 part-time staff members as well as many volunteers; hosts over 400 programs each year; has a collection of 50,000+ books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, and DVDs for all ages; provides access to research databases and thousands of e-books and downloadable audiobooks. We welcome nearly 100,000 visitors each year.

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