Tidewater Farm

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Case Study in Researching Old Homes
Supporting Historic Preservation in Falmouth

The Falmouth Historical Society

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Challenge

Town of Falmouth acquires land
- Part of the Tidewater subdivision
- Intention is to turn it over to the Falmouth Land Trust

Old house and barn on the land
- Dilapidated—Town plans to raze
- Ford Reiche presses town to save the buildings

Town considers preservation
- FHS conducts basic research to date house (Answer: 1800-ish)
- Town council questions proposal to conduct a preservation feasibility study
- FHS conducts more research to answer "How historic?" (Answer: Very!)
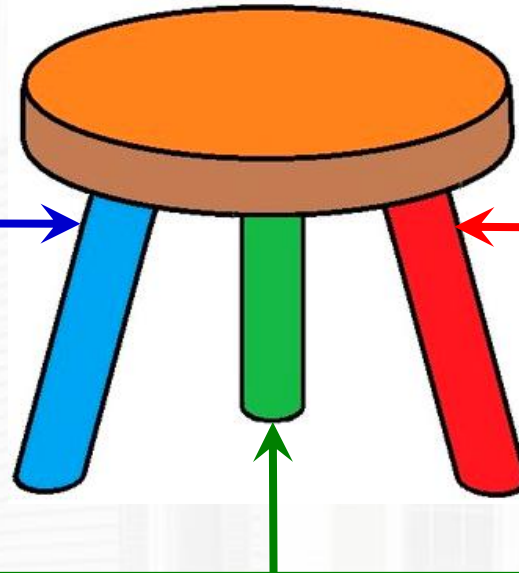
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Approach–The Three-legged Stool

Family History

- Stories of the people who lived on the property
- Standard genealogical research

Land History

- Stories of the land, its buildings, and its use
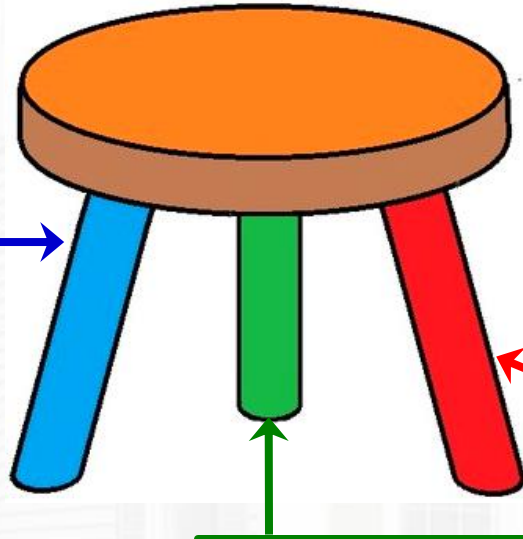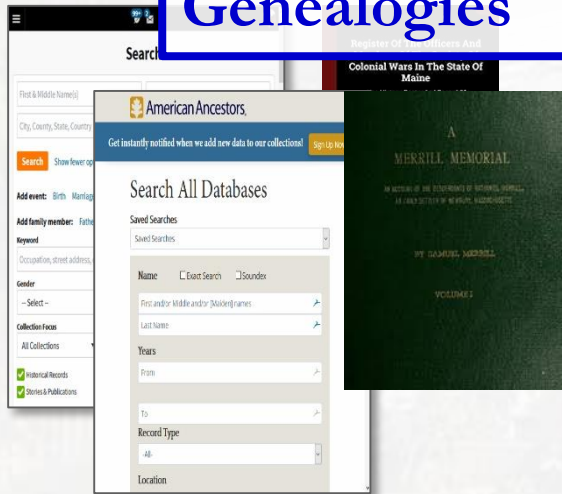- More advanced genealogical research

Local History

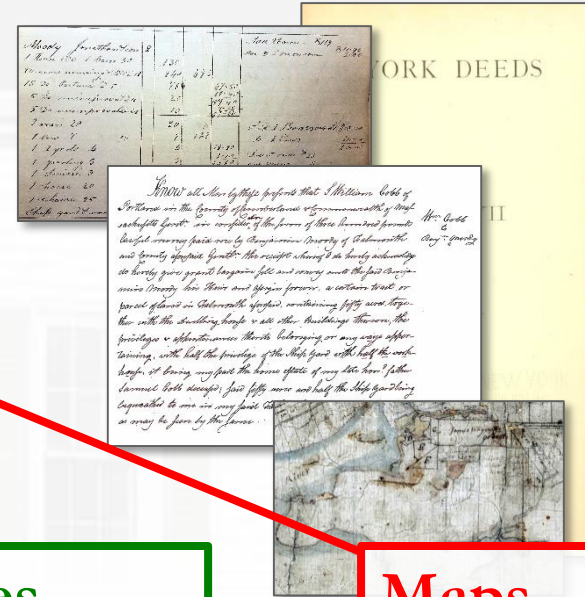- Context—Where historical societies excel!

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Resources

Vital records
Census Records
Immigration Records
Genealogies

Local Histories
Local Directories
Local Cemeteries

Maps
Deeds
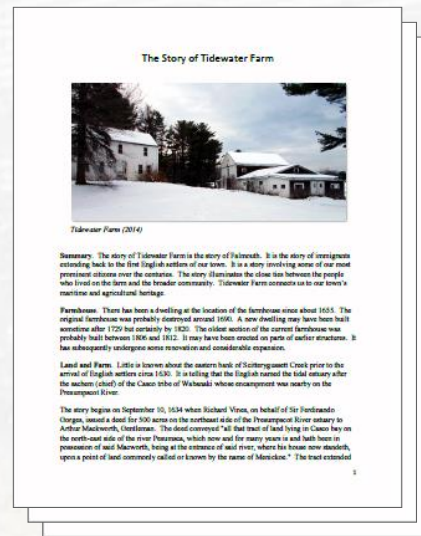**Tax Records**

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Result

"Story of Tidewater Farm"

- 14 page paper detailing the 385 year history of the land, buildings and people who lived there

Period	Owners	Period	Owners
1634-1658	Mackworth	1911-1914	Cookson
1658-1676	Neale	1914-1917	King
1676-1729	Holmes	1917-1933	Madsen
1729-1757	Wyman	1933-1946	Marchildon
1757-1806	Cobb	1946-2005	Finks
1806-1838	Moody	2005-2019	Tidewater LLC
1838-1911	Merrill	2019-	Town of Falmouth

Surprises!

Deep connections to Falmouth's history
- Farmhouse likely built on site of earlier home
- Goes back to Falmouth's oldest English family

Broad connections to Falmouth's history
- Assumed (and proved) ties to agriculture heritage
- 100 years of ties to maritime (shipbuilding & seafaring) heritage

Many owners were immigrants (or sons of immigrants)
- Lots of English "Great Migration" immigrants and descendants (no surprise)
- Past century included Danish, French-Canadian and Lithuanian (Ashkenazi)