

Finding Family – December 2018
Persistence, Networking and Luck Lead to Exciting Discovery
by Sandy Hoover

I was lucky. My ancestor literally dropped into my lap.

I had not researched one of my third great grandmothers for some months. Truthfully, I was a bit discouraged about finding anything about her. Over the last year, I had put in a lot of time and effort looking for her parents, my fourth great grandparents, with no results.

One day while I was at the genealogy library I decided to stay a little longer and check online for this grandmother, just to see if any new information had been added.

I was sitting at the computer; another researcher was sitting next to me. We were chatting about our elusive relatives and the importance of preserving with our research. We knew that online research sites continuously add new information.

I went to Ancestry.com and typed in my third great grandmother's name. Amazingly, I found a new record I had never seen before. It was an obituary for my third great grandmother's father, my fourth great grandfather. I opened up the obituary and found my third great grandmother was listed as a surviving child. Bingo! At last, I knew the name of my fourth great grandfather.

Excited by this discovery, I couldn't help but share the information with my fellow researcher. Amazingly, she recognized my fourth great grandfather's name. She told me that my ancestor was related to John Howland. I asked, "Who is John Howland?"

It took just a minute for her to pull *John Howland of the Mayflower* from the shelf in the library's book room. "It's all in there," she said, as she dumped the book in my lap. I was dumbstruck. Could it be that I was a Mayflower descendant? Sure enough. There it was in black and white. Using the book as a reference, I was able to track my ancestry all the way back to the legendary Mayflower that sailed to the New World in 1620.

What a find! Persistence and a chance conversation with a fellow genealogist paid off. She was familiar with names that I was not. Thanks to her, I made an exciting discovery about my family history.

Genealogists are friendly bunch and always willing to share. If you would like help discovering your personal family story, stop by the Napa Valley Genealogical Society's library, 1701 Menlo Ave. Friendly library volunteers are available to help you begin your search for your roots. Check www.napavalleygenealogy.org or call 252-2252 for library hours.

Maybe your family history will fall into your lap like mine did.