

Genealogy Volunteer's Love of the Past Distinguishes Library's Future

Caroland reported to the downtown library in 1997, recalling the small room, wood bookshelves and a single microfilm reader. "My hope was to increase the use of the Kentucky Room in the former library on Main Street and to encourage genealogical research in general."

When the new location opened in 2000, Caroland was there to continue, too. Twice a month she spent afternoons in the Kentucky Room helping researchers get started. Often the most challenging part of the journey, she also shared resources and advice when they got stuck – a common and frustrating experience. There is no doubt the internet and access to new databases of original records are wonderful said Caroland, but she cautions to "take it as a clue and not as gospel. There can be many errors in old records."

As Caroland welcomed her replacement, Nikki Chowning, she looks forward to finishing a fascinating biography on her great-grandfather, the Civil War survivor. Ms. Chowning acknowledges she has big shoes to fill. "Ellie is truly dedicated to finding amazing stories and books. The library is so lucky to have had her for their volunteer."

"I have loved volunteering in the Kentucky Room," said Caroland. "The friendly, helpful and knowledgeable staff and the interesting people who came with their questions about their ancestors made it an enjoyable experience I will always cherish." The library pledges to continue that tradition of excellence, the standard set by Caroland, when renovations are complete.

Ms. Chowning will be available to answer questions and assist researchers the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month from 1-3:00 p.m.