



family ties

A kin-do guide to researching roots:

STEP 1: Interview relatives.

Get a snapshot of the era they lived in by asking targeted questions like "What did you collect as a child?," suggests Jennifer Worick, author of *Beyond the Family Tree*, which includes 1,000 sample questions.

STEP 2: Set the records

straight. **FamilySearch.org**, a free genealogy organization, allows you to search census documents and marriage and death certificates.

STEP 3: Check the National Archives.

Submit a relative's name to the Archives (archives.gov/genealogy) and for \$75 you'll get copies of draft cards and pension applications filled with letters, testimonials and marriage licenses, says Jan Alpert, president of the National Genealogical Society.

STEP 4: Hit the road. Visit your relatives' hometowns to find wills and property records. Can't make it? Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (raogk.org) has 4,000 volunteers willing to do the legwork for you; you just pay expenses like postage fees. *Brooke Nevils*

TECH CONNECT

These cutting-edge gadgets are the future of connecting—no time machine required.

HP Photosmart e-All-In-One Printer D110a:

This genius printer has its own email address, so once it's been set up, your friends and relatives can send you photos, recipes, coupons and more from their phone or laptop—and you'll have a high-quality printout almost instantly. It also copies and scans. (\$129.99; hp.com)



Skype TV: The computer-based video chat program is now available on select Panasonic Viera Cast and Samsung LED high-definition televisions. Dial using your remote and you're connected to fellow Skypers through software in the TV. The service is free when you purchase the television, but the cameras range from \$99.99 to \$169.95.



Kodak EasyShare M590 Digital Camera:

Want to share a picture or video from your trip to the Caribbean the minute you get home? The M590 can transmit it directly to your Facebook, Flickr or YouTube account. It will even send the shots to a list of specified email addresses. (\$199.95; kodak.com)

Brian Barrett



online miracles

In *Facebook Fairytales*, author Emily Liebert offers 25 stories about the remarkable ways the social networking site has brought people together. Three standouts:

● **Beth Abramowitz, 36**, needed a kidney transplant to save her life. There were no family matches, so her friend Scott wrote a Facebook message explaining her situation. Enter **Cathy Schroeder, 37**—Scott's ex, who donated her kidney after reading his post.

● **Deb Balzer, 49**, and **Renee Butorovich, 47**, had given up on finding their half-sister **Stacy Balzer** after 35 painful years apart. But Stacy, 38, who knew she had two sisters somewhere, wasn't willing to quit. She found Deb on Facebook and the sisters reunited.

● At age 4, **Daniel Mulvaney** lost the ability to speak due to a rare disorder. His mother, **Barbara, 55**, worried he'd never connect with anyone. But in 2008, when he was 21, Barbara showed Daniel Facebook. The short text and photos of familiar faces have allowed him to communicate in a new way. *B.N.*

For more stories of how social media have changed lives, visit womansday.com/change.

