

AMES FREE LIBRARY GENEALOGY CLUB

Who We Are

The Ames Free Library Genealogy Club is a group dedicated to helping each other with genealogical research. The group is free and open to all who have an interest in family history. We meet monthly to use the library's free access to ancestry.com. Research help and access to the New England Historic Genealogical Society databases will be provided by local historian Ed Hands. Now in our third season, the group is adding this monthly newsletter and other features during the year.

Meeting Dates

June 10, 2017

Queset House 2:30-4:30

June Meeting

The June Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, May 13 at Queset House from 2:30-4:30. This will be the last meeting of the group until September.

I hope to open the new season with a series of three evening sessions on how to do genealogy including options in DNA testing. I will e-mail more information during the summer.

A Revolutionary War Memorial

Memorial Day gave me an opportunity to catch up with VFW Commander Al Smart and his goal of creating a monument to the Easton men who served in the Revolutionary War. After being disappointed in creating a genealogical history of Easton, I was happy to consider a genealogical problem that I had spent some time on years ago, pre-Ancestry. Figuring out this puzzle is fraught with problems, and inevitably there will be inaccuracies, but at least it's not quite as bad as ending up with the wrong great-great grandmother.

Luckily, Reverend Chaffin, our first town historian, combed the state archives to find Easton's Revolutionary veterans. He knew that most Easton men served together in units led by Easton captains. Find the captain's rosters, he believed, and you find most of Easton veterans. *Cont'd next page*



New at Ancestry

In May, Ancestry added 98 million records that are only accessible through the card catalog function in the search menu. In general this month's additions are none too helpful for our genealogical efforts. They include: California voter registrations 1900-1968; Montana, County Births and Deaths, 1830-2011; Washington State, Marriage and Divorce Indexes, 1969-2014 and Wiltshire, England, Episcopal Marriages and Banns from 1754-1916.

I probably shouldn't denigrate those California voter registrations since like the ancient Easton voter lists they serve as a good census substitute. They would have been useful when I was researching Easton's first Swede who eventually moved to California.

The addition most significant to us is New York Marriage Indexes, 1907-1995. Unfortunately, this record and the other records for New York leave a gap in marriage records between about 1880 and 1906 just the time when my possible ne'er-do-well great grandfather may have gotten married there.

Remember that currently, at least, these marriage records probably when appear in a normal Ancestry search.

Most, but not all, since some men served alone in units from Norton, Mansfield or further afield. Some enlisted in units that happened to be staying at a place like Boston while just visiting with a relative. It worked the other way too—Norton and Mansfield men served with Easton neighbors “over the line.” Other “foreigners” enlisted solely to fill out our town's quota, and some of them apparently never spent one minute in Easton.

Then there is the question of service. The Revolution was a war of citizen soldiers who served in the militia, technically all men ages 16-60. Our oldest “soldier” Joshua Howard was in his 70s when he served four days marching to and from the coast to counter a non-existent British threat. Compare that to the soldier who served for four years in the Continental Army. Problem there is he was a Scottish Highlander captured in Boston, sent to Easton for safeguarding, and given the choice of serving in our army or staying here. Risking death was apparently the better choice, but does his involuntary visit here make him “of Easton?” Chaffin wasn't always consistent with his designations either. He lists Benjamin Tupper as Easton's highest ranking officer despite his being born in Dorchester and living in Chesterfield when the war broke out, and what about veterans like Lyman Wheelock who moved to Easton after their service was over?

Thus, the genealogist who is working on the Revolutionary War monument has a number of complex issues of criteria to figure out. The next step would be to use the usual genealogical methods with records that we have already determined to be not quite adequate. For instance, there is the question of identity: was the Simeon Keith who served in 1775, the same Simeon who served in 1777? Beside pension records and the monumental **Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War** that were not available to Chaffin, one key may be local tax records. Two kinds of these records exist. One type is voters lists; during this period only men who owned 20 pounds of real and personal property could vote. Naturally the older you are the more property you are likely to have so to get a truer census of militia eligible men you need property valuation records which are available for the period for years here and there. That should leave out boys between 16 and 21, but the Revolution lasted from 1775 to 1783 so if we can find valuations from the beginning and end of that time we might be able to catch everyone. I'll let you know how it goes in September.