

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

March 11, 2017

April 8, 2017

May 13, 2017

June 10, 2017

Queset House 2:30-4:30

March Meeting

The March Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, March 11 at Queset House from 2:30-4:30.

Two Interesting Points about DNA Research

I just downloaded an interesting book on DNA genealogical research for my Kindle. It is Blaine Bettinger's **The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy** from 2016. I took high school biology before DNA so this book provides a clear, but detailed examination of how DNA research works. I'm just into the book and already I am learning tons of stuff. I think we have all heard by now about Y-DNA testing that traces a male line back through time, but did you that of the 1024 people you have in the first ten generations of your tree, Y-DNA testing only gives you information on just 10? The book looks at all types of DNA testing including what is known as "autosomal" DNA that looks at 22 of our 23 genes. That's the most common type of testing for genealogists today, and it's the one used by ancestry.com.

Two things in the early pages of the book have really hit me as important. The first is something my father told me back when I was a youngster and he, a poultry geneticist in the days before DNA, was helping a friend select horse pedigrees to produce new thoroughbreds. Cont'd next page



Brick Wall Ancestors

From Ancestry's Crista Cowan five reasons why you might hit a brick wall while researching a family line.

1. Too much emphasis on family stories and information.

Always check stories with reference to official records.

2. Using someone else's unsourced tree as the starting point for discovering more.

Lot's of family trees on Ancestry are by people who don't know about genealogical proof.

3. Searching for records that don't exist, or don't exist in the place you are looking.

Ancestry might have a listing for marriages from Alabama 1790-1900, but the county your ancestor came from might only have records from 1820. Check the card catalog for the detailed information about the source.

4. Stuck in a search rut. Doing research in exactly the same way for every search.

If you always start checking births, deaths and marriages, try changing up by searching other records first.

5. Not looking at your ancestor's whole life.

Trying to find your grandfather's parents? Look instead at his sister's records, or the schools and clubs he attended.

When I asked him why he never looked beyond a horse's great grandparents even when there was a spectacular star horse further back he told me that when you get back to great grandparents you only get 12.5% of your DNA from each one. The book points out that each parent gives each child just 50% of their DNA and that your non-twin siblings are very likely to get a mostly different 50% from the same parents. In order to share DNA with a cousin all three of the following conditions must be met: 1. You inherited DNA from a common ancestor, 2. Your genealogical cousin inherited DNA from that common cousin, and 3. You and your genealogical cousin inherited at least some DNA from that shared ancestor. The chances of this happening with first and second cousins is near 100%, but drops off quickly thereafter.

The second insight I've gotten from the book is that you have both a genetic and a genealogical family tree. Your genealogical tree is based on your records research while your genetic tree only ties you to people who share DNA with you. You have many more real relatives than show up in DNA. On the other hand sometimes DNA can give you a relative that your research can't prove.

For example, Ancestry recently informed me that I and another Ancestry member are descended from a woman named Experience Hinckley. It's rather cool because Experience married twice and I am descended from one marriage and the other guy from the other. The problem is that the records show two Experience Hinckleys and I can't get a handle on which one is the "real" Experience. Is it the Experience who was born in 1720 to Samuel Hinckley and Mary Freeman and who married Timothy Tibbetts (the other guy's ancestor) before she died in 1798 in Brunswick, Maine? Or was it the Experience Hinckley born in 1736 to Seth Hinckley and Thankful Atwood and married Jesse Higgins (my ancestor) and also died in Maine at some undetermined time?

The older Experience was married twenty years before the younger so it is possible as the DNA seems to suggest that one woman married both Tibbetts and Higgins and that the birth records are somehow awry. But could Ancestry's DNA evidence be in error? Potential fathers Seth and Samuel Hinckley were brothers so is it possible that the two Experiences, who were first cousins (if they both existed), shared enough DNA from their parents to trigger ancestry's notification? My new book says its possible. Either way DNA has found something to ponder.