

# 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](http://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

**May 13, 2017**

**June 10, 2017**

**Queset House 2:30-4:30**

## May Meeting

**The May Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, May 13 at Queset House from 2:30-4:30.**

### About That Holy Grail

If you read this newsletter last month, you know I set out to see if it would be possible to track down all the people who lived in Easton from its founding to about 1850. I decided to use people with surnames beginning with the letter A as a test case. The sources we have at hand today seem to be much richer than those available to the town's first historian William Chaffin when he tried to do a town genealogy in the 1880's.

How did things work out? Not very well, but I learned a lot. I started with Easton's births, deaths, and marriage records from 1725 to 1843. The births and deaths were organized by families so I followed that same pattern. I then added, where possible, entries from the marriage section of the records. Then I checked the Cemetery Commission's extensive database of burials in town adding those deaths records. I followed this with checking the printed death records from 1872 onwards. Finally, I used censuses and valuations from 1771, 1776, 1790-1840 to create additional family cards.

The census records should have given me    Cont'd next page



## What's New at Ancestry.com

### New Irish Records

In the last two months Ancestry has added 92 million records including Episcopal Diocese of New York Church Records from 1767 to 1970, US Army Transport Records from 1910 to 1939, and more German Lutheran records. Most important for New Englanders might be a collection of Irish city and regional directory records from 1847-1946.

As Crista Cowan points out, city directories in general fill in the gaps between censuses and since most Irish censuses were destroyed directories are all we have. She also notes that by following a line of directory entries you can get a good idea of when someone died or emigrated.

This is a pretty remarkable source. I typed in my Irish ancestor Joseph Hosford because it's a less common name than my Donovan ancestors. What popped up isn't definitive-there is no way of determining whether this is my Joseph Hosford, but so much detail is provided that matches what I already knew that it looks possible.

In 1856 he was living in Maryville a neighborhood of Bandon located southwest of Cork in an area where other members of my family were centered. Bandon was a Protestant majority town and some of my Irish connections were Protestant.

This could be a breakthrough for you especially if you have a known location for your ancestor!

pause since those records list only the name of the head of household and then the number of people in that household but no names.

Using those criteria there were 41 families beginning with the letter A from 1700 to 1840. During that same time there were 70 marriages where at least one person had an A surname. Of those 70 marriages 27 had people who could not be assigned to a family. Looking a little more closely at those 27, in 11 cases the A person was a non-resident of Easton, most often boys marrying Easton girls, but in 16 cases the person involved was "of Easton" with no connection to any family despite having A surnames that matched families that were in my list of 41.

Add in census records that show more people in families than are listed in the birth records, and we quickly find that getting the names of everyone born in town during this period is impossible. It's even impossible to follow the connections between families with the same surname. For example there are five families with the surname Austin in my database. One is John Austin who Chaffin says was born about 1671 outside Easton. John is the man who had three wives in the course of about 15 months. We have the death records for two of the three wives and two children, but no death records for John and his third wife. Did they leave town? Did they have more children that sired the later Austin's? What was his relationship to Ebenezer Austin who came from Dighton about the same time? What was his relationship to the Ebenezer who married in 1790 and was included in the 1790 census? And what was his relationship to the Daniel Austin also in the 1790 census? And then there are at least two William Austins, where do they fit in?

Conclusion: The records of Easton are not complete enough to accomplish the Genealogical History first envisioned by William Chaffin. The good news is that by pursuing this unicorn both Chaffin and I have improved the records that are available to researchers.