

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

February 10, 2018

March 10, 2018

April 14, 2018

May 14, 2018

Queset House 2:30-4:30

The sixth meeting of the second season of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place Saturday, February 10th at Queset House from 2:30-4:30.

Using Probate Records

Recently I've been researching Easton's oldest house, the 1717 Josiah Keith place at 479 Bay Road. The early history of the house is shrouded in mystery partly because there were three Josiah Keith's in a row. The first Josiah built the house and turned it into an inn/tavern by 1724 and the third Josiah also had a tavern when he died in 1803 although that was probably at the Five Corners. The question at hand is whether Josiah, Jr. lived in the old house and continued it as an inn.

Tavern keepers had to be licensed and some of those records still exist although I've never seen them digitized. I decided that if you owned an inn you probably had extra silverware and glasses on hand so I began to track down the estate inventories of the three Josiahs. Years ago I found Josiah III in the probate records at Taunton so I knew that they existed. As I noted in an earlier newsletter, Massachusetts Probate Records have been digitized and are available on both ancestry.com and American Ancestors with our own Bristol County as the last one to be put online.

Using American Ancestors I quickly found the third Josiah's estate records. The search presented single pages one at a time. Since this Josiah died owning everyone in town, the single pages went on and on making it hard Cont'd



Ancestry on YouTube

Crista Cowan "What's New on Ancestry?" column for February focuses on several new databases from the western US, not something that should be too useful for New Englanders doing research, but in her section on New Mexico she reminds readers that when faced with a word or record in a foreign language, you can usually get an answer by using Google's Translate feature.

Ancestry's Research Center also has glossaries of genealogical terms translated from Latin, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Swedish.

Sometimes its not the language that throws you a curve, but the writing itself. Crisa sends us to an online tutorial at the British National Archives that I found particularly interesting. It can be found at:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/>

to find the property inventory.

That left the first two Josiahs. The house builder died in 1754 and his son died in 1759. No probate records for the first Josiah have turned up, but I quickly found the records for his son. Josiah, Jr. was a prosperous man with a large estate and a detailed inventory. On first glance it seems that he was not an innkeeper, but only a detailed perusal of the records will tell if he was owning and living in the oldest house.

Since more of you can access ancestry.com than American Ancestors, I checked out the same records there. The big surprise on Ancestry was that while each page was presented singly there was a navigation strip at the bottom where each was labelled as to purpose and could be accessed with a click. That's a sign that Ancestry's team of indexers had been at work. In general they did a pretty good job. I would have indexed some of the inventory pages as division of estate pages, but in general I preferred the Ancestry approach to that at American Ancestors. However, I then noticed that Josiah Jr's file in Ancestry was twice as large as the other one. A few minutes later, this puzzle was solved when I discovered that the indexer at Ancestry had confused Josiah II and Josiah III and included records for both men in the file for Josiah II. Since many of the pages were dated, this wasn't a too much of a problem. On the other hand it seems to prove that the folks at American Ancestors were more careful in building their collection of probate records. The conclusion? If you can't find a Massachusetts probate record in Ancestry, then you should probably search American Ancestors.

