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

December 15, 2018

January 12, 2019

February 9, 2019

March 9, 2019

April 13, 2019

May 11, 2019

June 8, 2019

Queset House 2:30-4:30

Dates in Red are the 3rd Saturday

December Meeting

The December Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, December 15 at Queset House from 2:30-4:30.

Using Timelines to Help Research

With so many of us doing our genealogical research online with Ancestry, it's easy to forget the usefulness of traditional methods like creating research timelines. Ironically, I use timelines in local history research all the time, but never think to build one for the thorny cases in my family tree. I recently viewed a webinar at YouTube called "Answers Hiding in Plain Sight" by Kathryn Grant. She recommends creating a timeline for single nuclear families in countries where there is a regular census by using a table format as a way of gathering what is generally the most pertinent information into one place. This allows you to find clues that might allow you to solve genealogical road blocks.

With its focus on English census records, Ms. Grant's presentation not only highlights a good method, but provides insights into the differences between British and American records. Ms. Grant is a Mormon so there is some reference to temple work etc., but I highly recommend the video. I'll give a quick summary of how to set up the table on the back page

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Crista Cowan announced a number of minor database additions at Ancestry, but probably the most important announcements related to changes in the search experience. First, in Gallery view a PDF reader has been added. In the past you could view jpegs in Gallery, but you had to download PDFs. Now you can view both file types easily.

Second and probably most important, under the Share menu you can now "share a link." This feature creates a link to your tree that can be pasted into any format and shared with relatives, etc. The feature includes controls on what a viewer can see or change, but Crista strongly reminded everyone that once the link is created, it creates access for anyone who has the link. Be careful!

There were upgrades in examining shared matches in Ancestry DNA.

As you can see below, the set up of the table is very simple. You can use Word, Excel, or any other program that creates a table. You are going to compare a family across decades of censuses so you put the census date as the head of your column and include the information on the top of the census page as the header. Each row then becomes the spot for the same individual census after census. You can make the table a little more sophisticated by adding and color coding children's information for the first census when they leave home. Some programs even allow you to create a hyperlink to a new page that includes the child's new family or to a particular piece of supporting data like a marriage license.

First, using this method enables you to trace a family's changing fortunes which can provide clues for things like emigration. Second, this method points out gaps. The author notes that it's rare for English census takers to miss a family outside the largest cities. So if a family is in the 1871 and 1891 census they were likely misindexed in the 1881 census. Normally, what I would do is search the pertinent census in the same town after entering the family surname and any other information I had. The author suggests an alternate. Since the surname is generally the cause of any misindexing, she suggest proceeding as above, but searching on first names. This works best in small towns and for unusual first names. Timelines have always worked for me in historical research. Give them a try!

Enter the names of the family head at first census including name of predeceased spouse if known. Add maiden name and parents of wife

ID and Vitals	1871 Census	1881 Census	1891 Cents
	Enter Census District, Town, Street	District 11, Doddington, Cambridgeshire, 11 Dumbarton Ln.	District 11, Doddington, Cambridgeshire, 11 Dumbarton Ln.
Enter Name, Birth, Death	**Type key info from census: position in household, age, marital status, occupation**	Thomas Smith, head, married, 47, laborer	Thomas Smith, head, married, 57, farmer
Ann, b. abt. 1840		Ann Smith, wife, 40	Ann Smith, wife, 53