

# 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

**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**

## March Meeting

**The March Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, March 9 at Queset House from 2:30-4:30.**

### Free, Free, Free

Let's face it while genealogy isn't as expensive as golf or art collecting, the annual dues for Ancestry can be more money than many want to spend. There is a free alternative that has a very large research base and the ability to maintain your own online family tree. This is [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org), the genealogy arm of the Church of Latter Day Saints. The site is generally considered to be the grand daddy of online genealogy sites because it stems from LDS genealogical libraries that once allowed researchers to borrow microfilmed records (they still do). The site predates [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com).

Let's skip for a minute why the LDS church provides this service and jump into the details of the site. When you sign in the first time you are asked to create a free account, this opens up the full range of the site's services including an online tree. The home page looks very much like the one at Ancestry, and the menu bar presents four choices: Family Tree, Search, Memories, and Indexing. That last brings you to a page where you can join as a volunteer to index primary sources. The Memories section is where you can post family photos, documents, stories, and audio files. The last two Cont'd



menu items lead to drop down submenus. The Family Tree menu gives you access to the tree you created as well as handy ways to search your tree including an option to create tags for lists (more on this in the next article). This menu also leads to an option to create a booklet of family stories.

The Search menu is the best part of this website. The core of Ancestry's original records come from material collected by the LDS church so this free site gives you access to billions of records from around the world including the US censuses from 1790 through 1940. Ancestry now has more records, but Family Search is still a formidable research tool with many comparable features like hints. The Search menu also has a large collection of genealogies contributed by members, and while this is a secondary source that should be checked, I find their members are more careful genealogists than the folks we "steal" from on Ancestry.

Like the Internet Archive, Family Search is linked to a number of libraries noted for their collection of genealogical books that you can download. The Search menu also leads to a wiki that can help you find sources outside of the website in other parts of the Internet—I find this more helpful than the help site on Ancestry.

Each person entered into your family tree is given a unique ID number. If someone else is working on "your" ancestor, any changes they make will be reported to you and added to that person's profile. You get to check sources and restore any inaccuracies. This is potentially great. My great aunt Molly had a son who drowned. In family circles he was always called

Buddy. Last year a Family Search member found his birth certificate and updated Aunt Molly. Buddy was Buddy because he was a junior named after my Uncle Harold. In general, the individual profile pages work in about the same way as on Ancestry without some of the visual bells and whistles. Family Search really emphasizes sources and is quick to offer pop-up help. I really like this site! There is also a mobile app that offers a version of the full site that doesn't seem quite as limited as Ancestry.

### **Ancestry Announces Tags**

When I do a database, I often color code items, and then, of course, forget what the colors mean. Prior to this week if you wanted to, say, indicate who each of your immigrant ancestors were on Ancestry you had no easy way to do that and no way to generate a list when you were done. This week Ancestry began beta testing a "tag" system where you can add keywords in four categories: DNA, Reference, Research, and Relationships. You can also create custom tags. The DNA tag lets you label a common DNA ancestor and the individuals who lead from them to you, Reference tags have keywords for immigrant ancestors, military service, and royalty, Relationship tags can indicate adoptive status. The most useful category is Research with tags like Actively Researching, Brick Wall, Complete, Hypothesis, Unverified, and Verified. Definitions are provided for each term. Once you've labelled your tree members you can search by tag and generate a list of all your immigrants, for instance. Ancestry has copyrighted this feature so it would be rude of me to point out that Family Search has had its own tag system for some time,