

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

November 9, 2019

December 7, 2019-A date that will live in infamy because our regular meeting date has been taken over by the annual and wonderful Artisan's Faire.

Queset House 2:00-4:30

November Meeting

The November Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, November 9 at Queset House from 2:00-4:30.

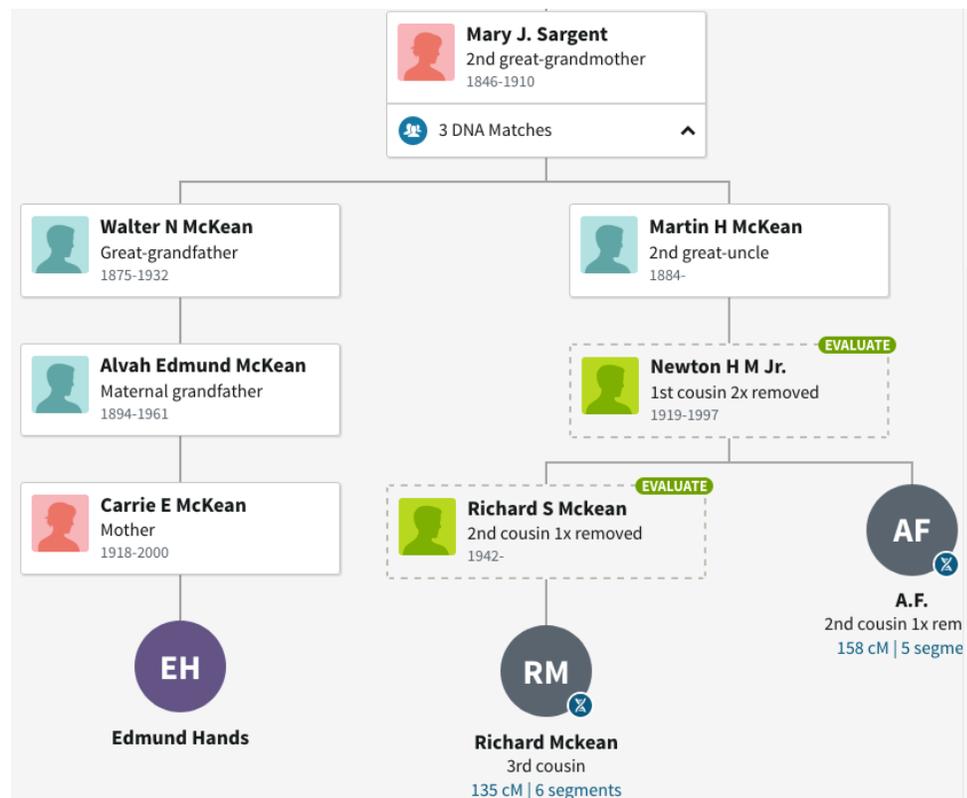
Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse

As we ended last month's meeting we were looking for an emigrant who allegedly left Bremen, Germany and arrived in New York on April 10, 1907 or "maybe 1906" or maybe arrived from South America. One problem was the emigrant was a Russian who spelled his name in a variety of ways. Searching Ancestry's indexed passenger lists produced no results. It looked like a dead end (and it still may be), but there was one work around.

In most ports in America newspapers printed a daily list of ship arrivals and departures. Using genealogybank.com I searched the New York papers for a few days before and after April 10, 1907, but no passenger ship arrived from Bremen during that time. I took a shot on April 10, 1906 and bingo! The German luxury liner Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse arrived in New York from Bremen on that date. Like the Titanic, it was designed to make most of its money by hauling hundreds of poor immigrants in steerage. Ancestry includes the indexed passenger list, but why didn't our Russian immigrant appear? A page by page search of the records shows why: too many illegible entries and pages. But we now have a ship from the right port arriving in New York on the right date.



More On Ancestry Thru-Lines



Here's an example of a ThruLine, the new DNA feature from Ancestry, but how do you determine if the information is accurate? A series of videos from Family History Fanatics on YouTube makes it simple enough for me to understand. Essentially what Ancestry does is use an algorithm to search for connections between your family tree and the family tree of your DNA matches. If it can't find a link the algorithm searches for common ancestors between the DNA trees and any other of their 100 million family trees. They then create a tree suggestion like the one above. Names in solid boxes are from your tree while the dotted boxes are Ancestry's suggestions. How do you know if they are real? Well, its important to remember that DNA genealogy only connects you to the people at the bottom of the chart in the circles. All the other connections are real or conjectural pencil and paper old school genealogy. The new evaluate feature lets you get a head start in checking sources, but since Ancestry's DNA claims to look back to your fifth great-grandparents, you could have hundreds of ThruLines to look through. Family History Fanatics suggests a way to sort worthwhile from sketchy ThruLines. First, a weak ThruLine connects you through only one line. The one above connects me with three DNA matches (two shown). Second, a line is weak when the DNA connection is below 10 centimorgans. Ancestry shows the centimorgans in my case as more than 100. Once these two criteria have been met, pull up the evaluate feature and check the sources-do they connect to primary sources or members day-dreams? In my case this ThruLine was very useful. Newton McKean had been excluded by me because I thought he was the same person as Newton Hastings, the son of Addie Mae McKean. Addie Mae was the younger sister of Walter and Martin in the ThruLine and she obviously named her son after her nephew.