

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 8, 2020

Queset House 2:00-4:30

November Meeting

The February Meeting of the Ames Free Library Genealogy Club will take place this Saturday, February 8 at Queset House from 2:00-4:30.

Newspaper Archives Online

Newspapers can be a great source of information for the genealogist, but what day of all days in the last couple of centuries did your ancestor do something newsworthy? For years newspaper research was time consuming and headache inducing as you scanned through pages and pages of microfilmed papers. Recently, however, technology has come to the rescue with databases of scanned newspapers that are keyword searchable.

I decided to put three of these newspaper archives to the test by searching for articles on my grandfather Carville Hands. All three archives provide search boxes like a typical ancestry search. You enter names, dates (or a range of dates), and the state or states whose papers you want searched. You can also add keywords.

The first archive I tried was newspapers.com. This is provided as an add-on to Ancestry or as a stand alone website. It claims to index more than 7,000,000 pages from 24 different Massachusetts newspapers alone. More than 4,000,000 indexed pages come from a complete run of the Boston Globe. There is also a run

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of Boston Posts from 1831 to 1921 as well as several Fall Fiver papers. I entered my grandfather's name and searched the range of his life from 1890 to 1955. This brought up 8 articles, all from the Globe. The two most interesting was an 1895 article indicating that he recited in an Easter service along with his brother and a 1928 article announcing his first appointment to a managers position in the phone company.

The next database I checked was NewspaperArchive.com, a for pay site that provides vital records as well as newspapers. It claims to index about 5,000,000 Massachusetts newspaper pages. Its major paper is the Sunday Globe from 1877 to 2016. The same search for my grandfather yielded only 2 articles from the Globe.

The final archive I tried was genealogybank.com. I have to admit I have used this site for years and it is my favorite. Like the previous site it also includes searches for vital records. Developed in association with the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, it indexes 676 Massachusetts newspapers. Its biggest run is for the papers that are now the Boston Herald, but the Globe is not indexed. The Quincy Patriot Ledger covers 1916 to 1950 and 2000 to the present, but the Brockton Enterprise is not available. This time a search returned 76 articles of which 5 had the word "hands" instead of Grandpa Hands. The articles were fairly evenly split between the Herald and the Ledger. Most of the articles dealt with his membership in Kiwanis or his job as a district manager in the phone company. Nowhere else did I discover that he led war bond drives in Rockland. I also found my parents engagement announcement, and most importantly a photo of my grandfather as a junior in high school when he won a prize as a fifer.

Sorry, I don't have any cost figures, but if you want just one product go with genealogy bank.