

Ancestry and researching migrants in the North West

Intro: Alison's already shown how we can use the British Newspaper Archive to research the lives of the migrants. I'd like to take a few minutes to show you how the family history website "Ancestry" can take your research further. Although the site is clearly aimed at people researching their own family history the site continues to add more sources of historical information, that aids that search both nationally and internationally.

So, if we take Frederick Kramer as our example – we know he was naturalised in 1912 and that he was in Lancaster. We have British Census returns from 1841, every decade until 1911. The 1921 Census has just been issued but it does cost £3.50 per original page to view and is only available on the rival family history website, Find My Past.

So we enter the website, log in, go to search on the top bar and click on "Census and Electoral Rolls". (Slide 2) On the right hand side we can narrow the field down to 1911, which we do. (Slide 3)

We enter our information of name, place known (Lancaster) and we have a birth date – but we could search without that.

Slide4: the search resulted in 7 Frederick Kramers in 1911. Note one was living in Manchester and may be worth investigating, but we have the first one on the list is resident in Lancaster

Slide 5: So we look at that – look at the transcript first and it tells us he's married (and has a child, Minnie, aged 5, even though the Naturalisation Certificate said no children!) We're pretty certain this is the same person because the address is 53 Penny Street and he's a Pork Butcher. Note as well the helpful suggestions (on the right of the page) from Ancestry which include the Naturalization Certificates, but also the National Probate Calendar for wills 1858 – 1995. Earlier wills may be found in County Archives or sometimes in family papers in County Archives. But before we go off on that tack, let's see what else we can find out about our immigrant by looking at the actual Enumerator's Returns. There are names on the household list that are not of Kramer's family.

Slide 6: 1911 Census Return form: It tells us that Frederick is an employer and one of his workers (Alice Newsham) is living in the household and is an assistant in the pork butcher business/servant. If we hadn't known Frederick was born in 1872, we could work that out from his age of 38 (born c1873). We learn that he married Lena, a German born woman 12 years ago, so a marriage of around 1899, and his daughter, a British citizen was born about 1906 in Lancaster as she's aged 5. Also note the number of rooms – gives an idea of social standing, as does the number of servants (though these are also employees in the family pork butcher business).

Slide 7: There is a transcript to help you with the text on a scroll down bar at the bottom of the page.

Key Question: so where was he between 1872 and 1911?– time to check out the other censuses. We can do this census by census, or search all of them.

Slide 8: Look at top left of screen and there is in blue “All Results” to take you back - or use back arrow (top left)

Start a new search of the Census – pull down menu and enter details of name, birth year, Germany, lived in Lancaster and add in wife, Lena. Make sure the Focus box is where you want it to be – UK and Ireland, but we could look at German Census if we wanted to. You can do a wide sweep of all the Census, but it does give you a lot of data that’s not relevant, so let’s look at 1901 as we know he’s in Lancaster in 1911, take the next census.

Slide9: Shows the transcript of the 1901 census but is not as helpful as the 1911 Census transcript, we have to look at the original Enumerator’s Returns for that information. However, one of the names listed in the household is Sophia Reichert, could be German?

Slide 10: 1901 Enumerator’s Return shows the family living at 53 Penny Street, Lancaster as a Pork Butcher with his wife, Lena, both Frederick and Lena are German subjects at this time, but also is Sophie Reichert, a servant, born in Germany, aged 21 and a male servant/pork butcher called George Boardman. Again use the transcript if the handwriting is difficult.

Slide 11: So where was he in 1891? Same idea and process- However, this time it’s not so obvious. Seven results but which is he? and that will require you looking at each of them and using other historical sources to determine which he is – Trade Directories would be useful. Possibly parish registers, but remember that in 1891 he is only 20 years old so he may not have left Germany and it may involve checking German resources on Ancestry. The most likely entry is for Kendal and the age/status etc fits and he’s with a German pork butcher.

Slide 12 – so having used the census – what else will help us? Remember the list on the left hand side of the 1911 Census search result? Alison found the Naturalisation Certificate in the National Archives – but we could search it. In the interests of time lets look at other suggestions:

Slide 13 Quickest way in is to start a new search and search “ Immigration and Travel “ on the search pull down menu. Put in all the information you have.

Slide 14 shows over a thousand hits, but the first 6 look very useful. The first on Naturalisation Certificate we know about via Alison, so let’s open up the second hit on the list -

Slide 15: Results from the Wurttemberg search has a slightly different name but correct birthdate and place of birth. Tells us he left Germany in 1888, aged just 16

Slide 16: US Naturalisation Certificate for 1923 and suddenly we find that Frederick and Lena Kramer became American Citizens in 1923– look at type of info it gives – when where from, how travelled and where living now. Note he says he married in California, but that is incorrect.

You need to go through the passenger lists to find when he and his family migrated to Canada/USA

Slide 17: Always look at the actual certificate = this gives his port of departure as Dublin – so another mystery of why was he sailing from there and not Liverpool?

Slide 18: How to find the list of documents on the site. Go to search and select “Card Catalogue . First search for Lancashire as key word pulls up parish registers, electoral rolls etc. Note the range of documents as well as printed books.

Slide 19: German* as a search.

Slide 20: “Emigration” as a search, but only ticked for UK and Ireland, so a limited result. Always check which collections you are searching.

Slide 21: Another way to see the card catalogue is to go to Search and click on a category – e.g. Immigration and Travel. Before you put in any search criteria, look to the right where you can specialise by selecting say passenger lists and also note that you can see the whole card catalogue for this category.

Slide 22: shows the result for clicking on passenger lists. Note you can search it and use filters to narrow down your search.

Slide 23: Another search using the “Immigration and Emigration Books Category. Note you can see all the records for Immigration and Travel by selecting “View all in Card Catalogue

Slide 24: Don’t forget to look at the Family Trees. They are to be treated with extreme caution and all facts should be checked, but they can give you clues to follow up. This one has the correct birthdate and wife’s name, so looks promising.

Slide 25: Actual page of the family tree entry for John Frederick Kramer

Slides 26 and 27: The 1939 England and Wales Register may also be useful to find your migrant. Note anyone still alive is redacted. This shows the problems of transcription as regards his occupation. It could be the Frederick Kramer we are interested in, but actually is not!

