**January Genealogy Tip :Using Ancestry for Homework Assignments**

**Ancestry is a wonderful tool for people researching their family trees, but did you know it can also be a useful tool for helping students locate primary sources?**

It’s true! Many of the same documents and records we use for genealogical research can also be used to help children and teens complete their history or social studies reports. Patrons can research in the library and either save the documents on a flash drive or email them home for further study. Ancestry has many databases that can be used for these purposes, here are some of my favorites:

**U.S., Interviews with Former Slaves, 1936-1938**

Compiled as part of a WPA work project in the 1930s, this is a collection of 2300 first person accounts of slavery and 500 photos of former slaves. You can browse by state or search by location. Once you are in the document you can read the entire book. This collection is an incredibly valuable historical document, but be aware that as a direct transcription it uses language of the times, including words that are considered highly offensive. You can find this database by following the path Search>Card Catalog>Stories, Memories & Histories>Oral Histories and Interviews.

**Revolutionary War Courts Martial 1775-1783**

This database is just what it sounds like, it gives the names of Revolutionary War Soldiers, the charges brought against them, and the disposition of each case. With both minor and major offenses listed crimes and punishments range from stealing a pair of breeches and receiving one hundred lashes, to desertion, which carried a penalty of death. You can find this database through the following path Search>Card Catalog>Military>Disciplinary actions.

**UK American Loyalist Claims 1776-1835**

This database has claims that were filed by colonists that stayed loyal to Britain and suffered losses during the Revolutionary War. Students can read their handwritten claims where they seek compensation for losses ranging from acres of land to horse bridles. You can find this database by following the path Search>Card Catalog>Military>USA>Histories

**Georgia Civil War Correspondence 1861-1865**

This database compiles letters received by the Governor of Georgia. While the handwriting makes the letters difficult to decipher at times, the documents offer an interesting glimpse into political life. The letters run the gamut from the Civil War equivalent of junk mail advertisements to heartfelt appeals from young men trying to discern if there’s a way they can avoid the enlisting. You can find this database by following the path Search>Card Catalog>Military>US>News

**New York, Ellis Island Oral Histories 1892-1976**

Listen to immigrants who passed through Ellis Island tell their stories in their own words. If you want to browse the entire database simply search by “Ellis” in the “Arrival Location” field. These audio files cannot be emailed home or saved to a flash drive, so your patrons will have to listen in the library. You can find this database by following the path Search>Card Catalog>Stories, Memories & Histories>Oral Histories and Interviews.