

What is F.A.N. Club Research?

Overview

What is FAN club research? The term F.A.N. was first coined by Elizabeth Shown Mills as Friends, Associates, and Neighbors. Also known as “cluster research,” the strategy is to research the “Friends, Associates, and Neighbors,” or the community at large and those who surround the target ancestor in which you are researching.

Using cluster research is truly one of the best ways to prove that the records you are reviewing do belong to your ancestors. It is those associations that help tie those records together with your ancestor.

A simple example might be a marriage certificate (naming the bride’s birth name) where one of the witnesses was the sister of the bride (with the same maiden surname).

Taking the FAN Club strategy one step further... let us say you find a census record where you are not sure if the ancestor listed is your ancestor or not. Comparing the census record and the above-mentioned marriage record, you see the bride’s sister (who was the witness in the marriage records) is living next door on the census record. You know this because she has the same maiden-name as the woman named one the marriage record. You also compare ages with earlier census records where the sisters are living together as children. You have now tied three records and family members together.

Case Study

Let us look at a real example where multiple records are proven to be a cluster tying the records and family together but with a surprising twist...

...AND... this is another reason you want to you keep good research notes in chronological order, because it helps you tell a story just like this one.



Meet my great grandfather Herman Miller Madsen. Herman was born in 1880 in Laramie, Wyoming and married a Danish immigrant named Frances Johnson (born in 1880 as Franciska Emilie Kornelia Jensen). Herman and Frances married in 1905 in Laramie Wyoming.¹

¹ 1880 U.S. census, Laramie City, Albany County, Wyoming, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 20, p. 28-C (stamped), dwelling 467, family 496, Christopher and Laura Matson; National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T9, roll 1454.





Also, meet Herman Madsen's father, Christopher Madsen (also a Danish immigrant) born in 1805 in Denmark.²

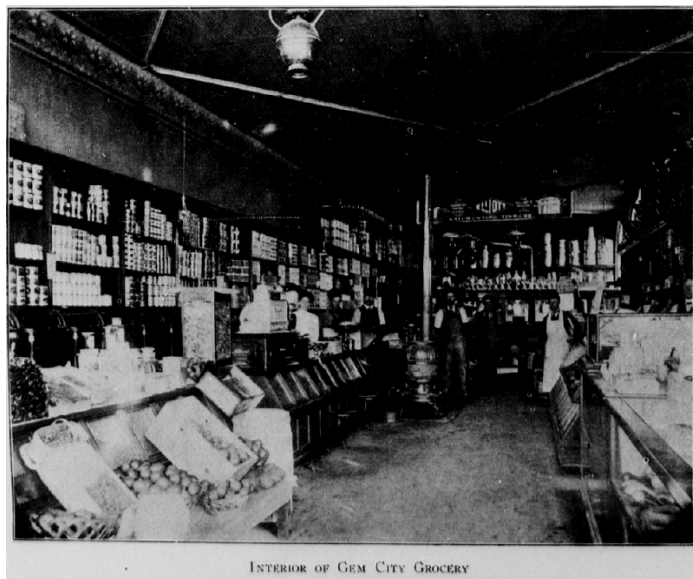
Christopher and his son Herman owned a grocery store in Laramie, WY called the Gem City Grocery.³



GEM CITY GROCERY. Located on the northwest corner of Second Street and Grand Avenue, this store first opened its doors in 1902. It was a stock company owned and operated by the employees as well as the owners of the company. James "Sunny Jim" Christensen, with Helen Ryan as his secretary, managed it. The store served Laramie until about 1949.

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The first tip about F.A.N. Club or cluster research is to read everything in every piece of evidence!



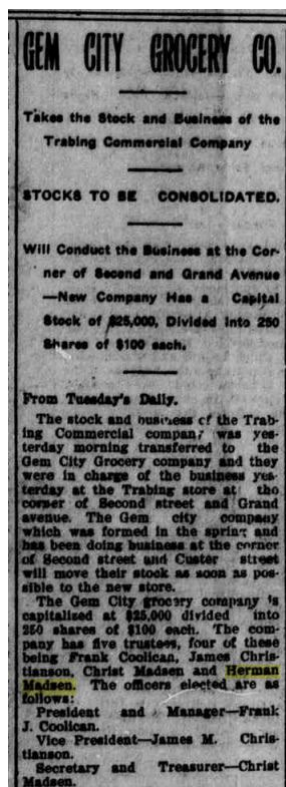
Note that the caption under the photo says the grocery store is located on the corner of 2nd and Grand Avenue. Hold that thought.

² Rigsarkivet [Danish National Archives,] "Arkivalieonline [Online Archive]," online database, (<https://www.sa.dk> : accessed 18 June 2017), Kirkeboger [Church Books] > Kirkebøger fra hele landet [Church Books from Around the Country] > Svenborg County, Lindelse Sogn [Parish] > Kontraministerialbog (1813 - 2003) [Ministers Log] > 1843 F – 1859 F > image 42, line 19.

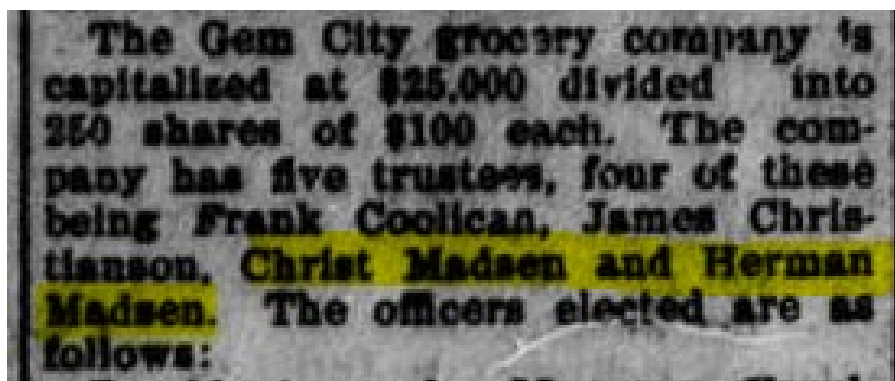
³ "Gem City Grocery... Stocks To Be Consolidated," *Weekly Boomerang (Laramie, Wyoming)*, 24 July 1902, p. 1, col. 3; image copy, *Wyoming Newspapers*, Wyoming State Library (newspapers.wyo.gov : accessed 27 June 2024).

⁴ Charlie Petersen and Laramie Plains Museum, *Images of America Laramie*. (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 94.

Herman was found in numerous newspaper articles which also helped tell his story and helped to fill in some of the clusters, or community in which my great grandfather Herman and family lived.



In this newspaper article we find Herman Madsen and Christ Madsen together named regarding the grocery store. This ties this article together with the father/son as stakeholders in the store as well the alternate spelling of Christopher as Christ.⁵



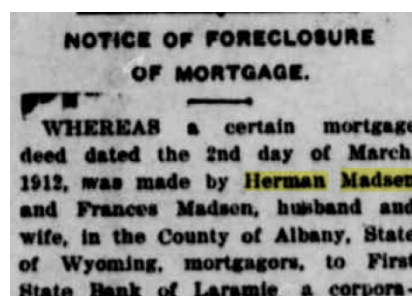
LAND RECORDS

In 1909 Herman Madsen bought a pool hall. In 1912, he traded his pool hall for a ranch in the country outside of Laramie. He was chasing his dream of becoming a rancher.

Sadly, by 1916, Herman and Frances could not make a go of it and the ranch went into foreclosure.⁶

What happens next is interesting and starts to tie the FAN Club together for Herman.

Also keep in mind that throughout the entire research process, we need to question everything. For example, are these records I am reviewing my ancestor? How do I know? I will answer that shortly.



⁵ "Gem City Grocery... Stocks To Be Consolidated," *Weekly Boomerang (Laramie, Wyoming)*, 24 July 1902, p. 1, col.

⁶ "Notice of Foreclosure of Mortgage," *Laramie (Wyoming) Semi-Weekly Boomerang*, 11 February 1916, p. 4, col.

On 18 March 1916, the bank sold the ranch under foreclosure to the highest bidder to Chris M. Tegner.⁷

A year later, on 9 March 1917, a Sheriff's Deed showed Chris Tegner paid \$1775 to purchase the ranch.⁸ I am assuming it took that long for the transaction to go through or there was some sort of waiting period. The documents do not give that information.

On the same day (9 March 1917), Chris Tegner sold the ranch to Chris Madsen (Herman's father) for \$3500.⁹ Thus, Chris Tegner doubled his money in the same afternoon and the family ended up with the ranch again.

Now the notice in the paper said that Chris Tegner sold ranch to Chris Madsen for \$1.00. It was required to make notification in the newspaper, but the exact details could read (as it did in this case as "for \$1.00 and other valuable considerations."¹⁰ It was required to post the notice in the paper, but it was common to say "\$1.00 and other valuable considerations," to avoid publishing the details.¹¹

Now I was intrigued. Who was this Chris Tegner guy and how did he fit into the circle of influence with my ancestors Herman and Christopher Madsen? I remember seeing his name pop up in several places. More importantly, could I prove these documents about the ranch are my ancestors (Chris and Herman Madsen)? I strongly suspected so, but what other evidence could help me prove my case?

I started digging into Chris Tegner's life. I did this by researching his name and location, but I also added him to my Ancestry.com tree by creating a "floating tree." If you are not familiar with a floating tree, it is someone or clan who is in your family tree but detached from anyone in your tree. That is another lesson for another day.

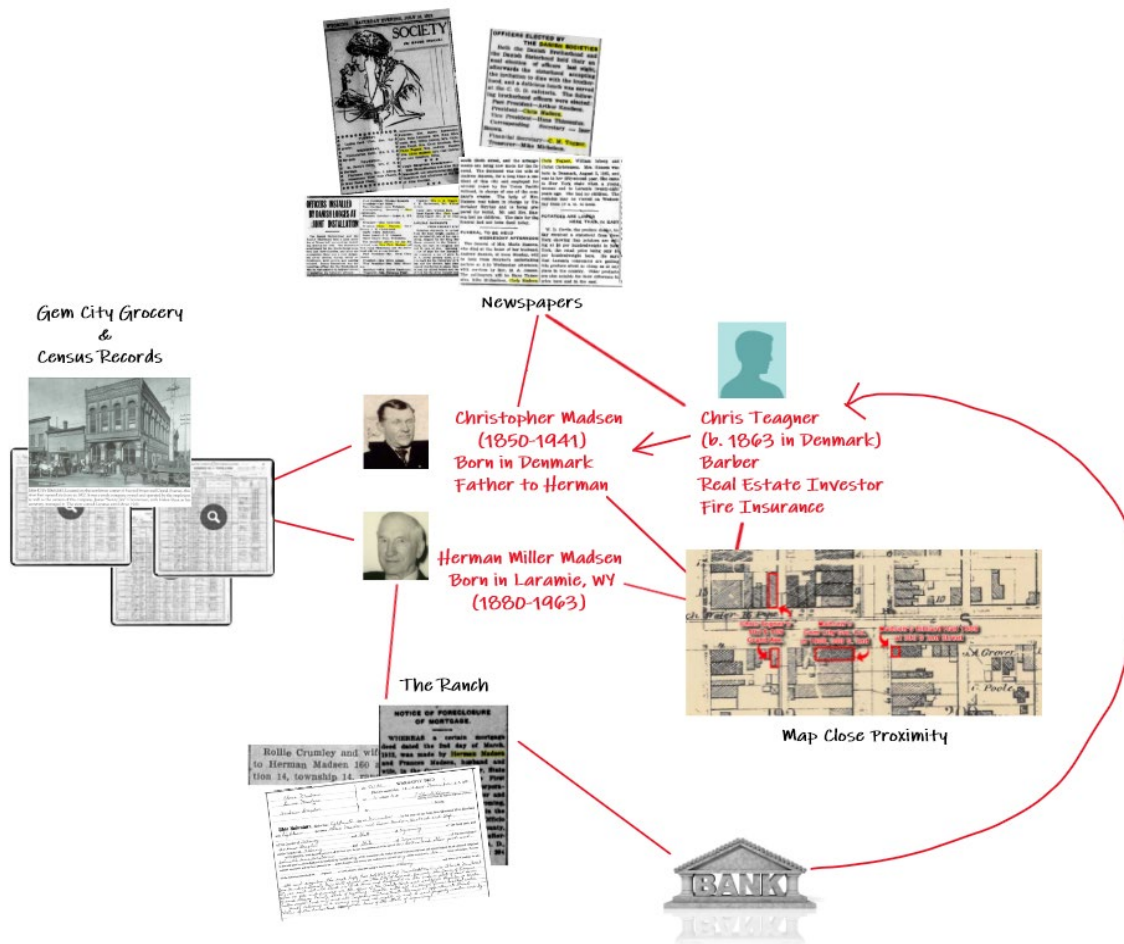
⁷ Albany County, Wyoming, Misc. Book I, p. 74, Herman and Frances Madsen sold to Chris M. Tegner, 18 March 1916; Register of Deeds, Laramie.

⁸ Albany County, Wyoming, Deed Book 111, p. 437–438, Herman and Frances Madsen, husband, and wife, 7 March 1917; Register of Deeds, Laramie.

⁹ Albany County, Wyoming, Deed Book 108, p. 630, Chris Tegner to Chris Madsen, 9 March 1917, record no. 64722; Register of Deeds, Laramie.

¹⁰ "Notes from the Courthouse," *Daily Laramie (Wyoming) Republican*, 10 March 1917, p. 4, col. 4; image copy, *Wyoming Newspapers*, *Wyoming State Library* (newspapers.wyo.gov : accessed 27 June 2024).

¹¹ Ibid.



Here is my process for creating a proof statement. I am trying to prove these people and documents tie together.

Hypothesis: [Write out what you are trying to prove.] Chris Tegner is a friend or well-known associate to the Madsen family. The land referred to as “the ranch” is in fact my great grandfather Herman Madsen and his father Christopher Madsen property.

Correlation of Evidence: [The next step in proving anything, is to gather all the evidence and see if it proves or disproves the hypothesis (without confirmation bias). Confirmation Bias is when you want something to be true to the point that you make the evidence prove your case. For proof without Confirmation Bias, you want to weigh the evidence equally and fairly to prove or disprove the hypothesis.]

Gathering all key evidence found demonstrates proof of this hypothesis as follows: (Evidence is truncated for simplicity).

- **Multiple Laramie, Wyoming Newspaper** articles containing Chris Madsen & Chris Tegner in articles about the “Danish Brotherhood.”¹² So Chris Madsen and Chris Tegner belonged to the same society (as did their wives).
- **Multiple census records, newspaper** articles, tied Herman Madsen as the son of Christopher Madsen.^{13 14}
- **Newspaper article** where Chris Madsen and Chris Tegner are both pallbearers at a funeral.
- **C M Tegner** listed his business in many city directories as a Real Estate and Fire Insurance as well as a barber, located at **102, 108 & 109 Grand Ave. and at 305 2nd Ave.**
- The **Gem City Grocery Store** that the Madsen family owned was located at **2nd and Grand Avenue.**¹⁵
- **Herman Madsen** owned a billiard hall at **303 Second Street**¹⁶
- **Christopher Madsen** was born in 1850 in Denmark¹⁷
- **Christopher Tegner** was born in 1863 in Denmark¹⁸
- **Herman Madsen** was born in 1880 in Laramie, Wyoming.¹⁹

Conclusion:

- Without a doubt, Chris Madsen is the father of Herman Madsen by evidence of many census records and my personal knowledge.

¹² Laramie Republican (Daily) no. 102 December 09, 1916, p.2. In personal archives.

¹³ 1910 U.S. census, Albany County, Wyoming, population schedule, Laramie City, Enumeration District (ED) 11, sheet 12-A, p. 97 (stamped), dwelling 220, family 253, Christ Madsen; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 27 June 2024), citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T624, roll 1745.

¹⁴ 1880 U.S. census, Laramie City, Albany County, Wyoming, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 20, p. 28-C (stamped), dwelling 467, family 496, Christopher and Laura Matson; National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T9, roll 1454.

¹⁵ Gem City Grocery... Stocks To Be Consolidated," *Weekly Boomerang (Laramie, Wyoming)*, 24 July 1902, p. 1, col. 3; image copy, *Wyoming Newspapers, Wyoming State Library* (newspapers.wyo.gov : accessed 27 June 2024).

¹⁶ “Former Grocery Man Buys Billiard Hall”, *Laramie (Wyoming) Republican*, 6 February 1909, p. 8, col. 5; image copy, *Wyoming Newspapers, Wyoming State Library* (newspapers.wyo.gov : accessed 27 June 2024).

¹⁷ Madsen Family Bible, 1850–1975, loose pages, "Information [sic] from the family Bible," abstract page typed from unknown Bible, family page only, handed down from Alma Madsen to Glenn Henley to Constance Henley Knox; privately held by Constance Henley Knox, Henley-Knox Family Archives, 4720 Crosswinds Drive, Wilmington, North Carolina, 28409.

¹⁸ 1910 U.S. census, Election District no. 5, Wyoming, population schedule, Laramie, enumeration district (ED) 12, sheet 3-B, household 700, Christ M. Segner; accessed via "United State Census, 1910," images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : 28 September 2020): citing FHL microfilm 1375758.

¹⁹ Ibid.

- Clearly Christopher Madsen and Christain Tegner knew each other and lived in the same community.
- They were both from Denmark, they both belonged to the same Danish Brotherhood (as well as their wives). They both had businesses within a few doors of each other. Most of their business was surrounded around the intersection of 2nd and Grand Avenue in Laramie, Wyoming.
- Chris Tegner was a barber at one time, he “likely” cut Christopher and Herman Madsen’s hair since they were across the street.
- Tegner became a Real Estate investor about the time that Herman Madsen lost his ranch to foreclosure. Seeing an opportunity, Chris Tegner bought it at auction. It took a year to close the deal and Chris Tegner paid \$1775 to finalize the purchase of the ranch. Chris Madsen bought it from Tegner on the same day for \$3500, doubling Tegner’s investment in the same afternoon.
- Chris Tegner was a friend or close associate, but not a family member.

This is how investigating the F.A.N. Club (Friends, Associates, and Neighbors) can help tie the records and relationships together and help prove that the records you are reviewing are in fact your relatives.

If I had not noticed Chris Tegner popping up in several newspapers with the Madsen’s and if I had not started tracking him down as well as the family, I would not have been able to tell this story.