

Mayor James Bramall (1825-1910)

Using the US Census for details on his life

One of the wonderful tools used by genealogists is the United States Census records. Many details of an individual's life can be traced using all census records during their lifetime. James Bramall was mayor of Delran in 1881. He is buried in Bridgeboro Methodist Cemetery having died in 1910 at the age of 85. Based on the census records for the years 1860 to 1910, we know the following about his life.

Starting with the 1860 census, James was born in Sheffield, England in 1825. He married his wife Sarah in England in 1849 and they immigrated to the United States the following year. James and Sarah initially settled somewhere in Pennsylvania as their son, Albert was born there in 1852. A few years later they moved to New Jersey. There is conflicting information where and when son James was born c 1855, some listings are New Jersey & others are Pennsylvania. Younger children - William, Matilda and Henry were born in New Jersey. The 1860 census showed James was a carpenter & owned his home in Cinnaminson Township with a value of \$1500 and a personal worth of \$200.

The 1870 census highlights one of the biggest frustrations for tracing individuals - misspelled names! James and his family are called Broomall but as the rest of the information matches the family, it is safe to assume an errant census taker. Like the previous 1860 census, there are no addresses noted, just Cinnaminson Township residents. While James is still listed as a carpenter, his real estate is now considered to be worth \$2000 and personal estate \$500. Children mentioned are Albert, William and Matilda.

By the 1880 census, the family is living in Bridgeboro, Delran Township. Of course, they could be in the same house as the 1860 and 1870 census records are not clear on addresses. Prior to the 1880 census, Delran was part of Cinnaminson Township. James continues to be listed as a carpenter but monetary values weren't included for that year. The members of the household are James, wife Sarah, son William and daughter Matilda.

In 1885, the state of New Jersey conducted its own census. The town location is now listed as Delran. Besides James and Sarah in the house, Howard, Matilda and Clarence Rapp were also in residence. Howard Rapp was their daughter Matilda's husband and Clarence was their son.

The next available records were in 1900. By this time James and Sarah are 75 yrs old and living by themselves. A new question asked how many children were born into the family and how many were living in 1900. According to the census records, Sarah had given birth to 8 children but only 3 were still surviving. In 1905, NJ again did a census, there is no change in previous information except age.

The 1910 census was taken in April as James is listed as 85 yrs old. He died in October 1910. They had lost another child as only 2 were recorded as alive in 1910. James listed his occupation as "own income." He must have saved enough retirement income - no social security at that time!

More research needs to be done on the life of this early Delran carpenter, but the census records give a great start.