

Roots in Granite

Finding Your New Hampshire Ancestors

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Session S-110



Sources and Strategies

Creating a Strong Foundation

Begin your search by exploring state and local histories. Learn about settlement patterns in the towns where your ancestors lived.

<https://www.nh.gov/almanac/>

<https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/markers/brief.html>

Name Changes

Your ancestor may be “lost” because of a name change! These name changes have been published for several states. Check <http://www.worldcat.org/>. Use Richard P. Roberts’ *New Hampshire Name Changes: 1768-1923* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1996) and *New Hampshire Name Changes: 1923-1947* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage books, 2005/6).

New Hampshire State Papers

The 40-volume *New Hampshire State Papers* include provincial papers, colonial grants, town papers (esp. relating to settlement) to about 1800, transcribed provincial court and probate records, Revolutionary War records, and transcriptions of the New Hampshire Pension Rolls of 1835 and 1840. **The volumes are available for download free of charge from the State Archives** at <http://sos.nh.gov/Papers.aspx>.

To access the online guide:

- Go to <https://archive.org/>.
- In Wayback Machine search field, type <http://sos.nh.gov/Collections.aspx>.
- Slide date-graph bar to the right; choose 15 November 2016.
- Select “Guide to Archives.”

Vital Records

FamilySearch has digitized New Hampshire births to 1915, marriages to 1959, and deaths to 1959 at <https://www.familysearch.org/>. These are state records copied from original town records about 1905. Divorce records, maintained at the state vital records office in Concord, have not been digitized.

“New Hampshire Births Early to 1900”

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1542861>

“New Hampshire Death Certificates, 1938-1959”
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1876925>

“New Hampshire Death Records, 1654-1947”
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1601211>

“New Hampshire Marriage Certificates, 1948-1959”
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1876926>

“New Hampshire Marriage Records, 1637-1947”
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1520640>

“New Hampshire Marriages, 1720-1920”
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1680841>

Sixteen town were not included in the Index to Vital Records.

Brookline	Marlborough
Dublin	Merrimack
Fitzwilliam	Milan
Goffstown	Nashua
Keene	New Boston
Litchfield	Pembroke
Lyndeborough	Swanzy
Manchester	Tamworth

Town reports are available at www.archive.org and at <https://www.library.unh.edu/find/digital>.

Vital records may also be found in local town records, town reports, county records, cemetery records, family Bibles, and published vital records. Use Archive Grid (<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>) and WorldCat (<https://www.worldcat.org/>) to locate them.

Church Records

Church records offer many genealogical treasures, but you may need these sources to locate them.

- Denominational archives
- Richard W. Dougherty, “Research in Church Records,” in *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*, 3rd ed., Loretta Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, editors. Provo, Utah: Ancestry, 2006. Chap. 6, pp. 149-170.
- Minister’s personal papers
- Historical Societies and other repositories, especially the New Hampshire Historical Society
- Church-affiliated university libraries
- Family History Library (www.familysearch.org)
- Archive Grid (<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>)
- Published church histories. Many are available at *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/>).

Town Records

Many early town records have been microfilmed and have been indexed through circa 1830. The films have been digitized by FamilySearch at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1987741>. The index is at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2366595>.

- Town Charters
- Land grants not recorded in deed books
- Vital records
- Warnings Out
- Tax records
- Selectmen's records

Military Records

Most pre-1800 military records are maintained at the state level and transcribed in the *New Hampshire State Papers*. Original documents are at the state archives. Some militia records are also at the state archives; others may be found among town records. Many records (1623-1861) were published in Potter's *Military History of the State of New-Hampshire* (online at <https://archive.org/details/militaryhistoryo00lpott/page/n5>). Later records are available at the state archives (see online guide at <http://sos.nh.gov/Guide.aspx>). Ayling's *Revised Register of NH Soldiers & Sailors of New Hampshire in the War of the Rebellion* (1861-1865 is also at <https://archive.org>).

Probate Records

Probate records include much more than wills! New Hampshire probate records are maintained at the county level. ***Provincial probate records are included with Rockingham County.*** Many records have been microfilmed and are available online at FamilySearch and Ancestry.com. Contact information for probate courts may be found at <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/courtlocations/index.htm#probate>. See Diane Rapaport's *New England Court Records*. Call before your visit to confirm the location of the records!

Land Records

New Hampshire Land Records Online (www.nhdeeds.com) offers the researcher the ability to search many land records from home.

- Belknap Co. – Old Index Books 1841-1955; deeds 1955-present
- Carroll Co. – Old Index Books 1840-1961; Deeds 1962-present
- Cheshire Co. – Old Index Books 1901-1974; Deeds 1970-present
- Coos Co. – Deeds 1978-present
- Grafton Co. – 1960-present
- Hillsborough Co. – Old Index Books 1951-1965; Deeds 1966-present
- Merrimack Co. – 1823-present
- **Rockingham Co. – 1643-present**
- Strafford Co. – 1921-present
- Sullivan Co. – Old Index Books 1827-1970; Deeds 1965-present

The state archives also holds the following records.

- Masonian Plans
- Town Plans of 1805
- Surveyors' records
- Road and highway layouts of state roads
- Perambulations of town boundaries
- Railroad establishment record

For additional information on the Masonian Plans, see Otis Hammond's *The Mason Title and Its Relations to New Hampshire and Massachusetts*, online at <https://archive.org>.

Court Records

For a very general timeline of the state's court system, see "New Hampshire Court Records" on the FamilySearch Research Wiki (https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/New_Hampshire_Court_Records). For a much more detailed timeline, see Diane Rapaport's *New England Court Records*, beginning at page 229. Related New Hampshire court documents are scattered throughout the region and are identified in Rapaport's book beginning at page 233.

Most early New Hampshire court records are held at the state archives in Concord, with the exception of the New Hampshire Supreme Court case files and briefs, which are held at the New Hampshire Law Library (indexed in card catalog). Many of these records are unprocessed but have been microfilmed. Early court record books (1640-1692) were transcribed and appear in the *New Hampshire State Papers*, Vol. 40.

Diaries and Manuscripts

Have you been stymied in your search for an ancestral diary or personal papers? The key to success lies in looking *beyond the surname*. Learn to search those online catalogs more effectively, focusing on the community rather than the immediate family. Most significant libraries have manuscript collections. Search for records of neighbors, local merchants, town officials, and justices of the peace. Use Archive Grid (<https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>) to locate these valuable records!

Published Local and Family Histories

Undocumented local and family histories still have a role to play in genealogical search. However, when a "fact" has no source, the information must be used as a clue to be verified with credible records.

Selected Repositories

American Canadian Genealogical Society (<https://acgs.org/>; <https://www.facebook.com/ACGS.Society/>)

Significant migration occurred between Canada and New England. Even if you have no known Canadian ancestors, this collection should not be overlooked. ACGS is also a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. Its holdings include:

- Acadian records
- Archives
- City Directories
- Dictionaries
- Genealogies
- Histories
- How-To publications
- Microform/CD collection
- Parish Repertoires (Canada/U.S.)
- Periodicals
- Town Reports
- Vital records

Databases/online libraries include Ancestry.com, The LAFRANCE, Drouin Collection, Parish records and documents, Obituaries, and FamilySearch.

Manchester Historic Association

(<https://www.manchesterhistoric.org/>; <https://www.facebook.com/MillyardMuseum>)

The Research Center's holdings include:

- Books
- Business/family papers
- Photographs
- Oral histories
- Amoskeag Mfg. Company
- Small businesses and industries
- City directories
- Dignam Music Collection
- Notable residents and events

Manchester City Library (<https://www.manchester.lib.nh.us/>)

- New Hampshire Room
 - City/town histories
 - Biographies of famous N.H. people
 - Books by N.H. authors
 - Journals
- Government documents
 - Federal Depository Library since 1884
 - Census data from 1790-present
- Databases
 - Ancestry.com
 - Heritage Quest Genealogy Online
 - N.H. and local government
 - Genealogies of significant N.H. families
 - United States Reports (since 1884)
 - Public and Private Laws
 - Congressional Record
 - New Hampshire Newspapers

New Hampshire Historical Society (<https://www.nhhistory.org/>)

The New Hampshire Historical Society has one of the best manuscript collections in the region. Among their many underutilized sources are:

- Church records
- Diaries
- Account books
- Family papers
- Photographs
- Gravestone inscriptions

New Hampshire Law Library (<https://www.courts.state.nh.us/lawlibrary/>)

The library houses Supreme Court case files and briefs from 1849-1970, with a card index. Computer sources include:

- Lexis/Westlaw (legal research databases)
- Hein Online (including English Reports, court cases from 1220-1867)
- Some Justice of the Peace records

New Hampshire State Archives (http://sos.nh.gov/Arch_Rec_Mgmt.aspx)

Before your visit, explore the online "Guide to Archives" and the outline "Researching Your Family at the New Hampshire State Archives." Underutilized sources include:

- Original documents transcribed in New Hampshire State Papers
- Court records (card index)
- Deeds (card index)
- Prison records
- Military records
- Maps
- Warnings Out

