

Roots in Granite

Finding Your New Hampshire Ancestors

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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.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Almanac of American History* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993)

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

<https://www.nh.gov/osi/resource-library/municipalities.htm>

<https://www.nhhistory.org>

New Hampshire State Papers

(esp. vols. 9-13)

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 (including Association Test in Vol. 30), and transcriptions of the New Hampshire Pension Rolls of 1835 and 1840. *Click [here](#) to download free of charge from the State Archives.*

To determine if original documents are available, explore the online “Guide to the New Hampshire State Archives” at <https://sos.nh.gov/archives-vital-records-records-management/archives/archival-holdings/>.

Vital Records

FamilySearch has digitized New Hampshire births to 1915, marriages to 1959, and deaths to 1959 at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/location/41>. These are state records copied from original town records about 1905. More vital records, including divorce, will be available in the near future. Check the website regularly for updates.

- “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>

Always try to access the original records. Many town records have been microfilmed; indexed to circa 1830. *Sixteen towns were not included in the microfilmed Index to Vital Records.*

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

Many town reports are available at www.archive.org.

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 for archival records. Also, try Ebay (<https://www.ebay.com/>) and Cyndi’s List (<https://cyndislist.com/>).

To search for published vital records in New Hampshire libraries, go to New Hampshire State Library (<https://www.nh.gov/nhsl/resources/index.html>), New Hampshire Historical Society (<https://www.nh.history.org/Research/Collections-Catalog#/>), the Portsmouth Athenaeum (<https://portsmouthathenaeum.org/collections/library/>), and the American Canadian Genealogical Society (<https://acgs.org/>).

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/>)
- WorldCat (<https://www.worldcat.org/>)
- Published church histories. Many are available at Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>), Hathi Trust (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>; see "options to log in as guest"), and Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>).

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>. Microfilm is also available at the NH State Library and the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

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

Sixteen towns are not included in the microfilmed index.

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|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| • Brookline | • Lyndeborough | • New Boston |
| • Dublin | • Manchester | • Pembroke |
| • Fitzwilliam | • Marlborough | • Swanzey |
| • Goffstown | • Merrimack | • Tamworth |
| • Keene | • Milan | |
| • Litchfield | • Nashua | |

Also, see Josiah Benton's *Warning Out in New England*, first published in 1911 with subsequent reprints.

Military Records

Most pre-1800 military records are maintained at the state level and transcribed in the *New Hampshire State Papers*. Original documents may be 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/militaryhistory_o00lcpott/page/n5). Later records are available at the state archives (see online guide at <https://sos.nh.gov/archives-vital-records-records-management/archives/archival-holdings/>). See 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>). Additional records are available online at Fold3.com.

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.org, recently changed from www.nhdeeds.com) offers the researcher the ability to search many land records from home. This list changes frequently. In some cases, the early deeds may be available on the county site but are not included in the index. Use the index at [FamilySearch](#); then, enter the book/page number on county site to see if the deed has been digitized.

- 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/details/masontitleitsrel01hamm>.

Maps of White Mountain towns from the Town Plans of 1805 have been digitized and may be viewed at http://whitemountainhistory.org/1805_Town_Survey_Maps.html.

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/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. Michael LeClerc's *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research* is also helpful.

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. Explore these histories at <https://archive.org/> and https://www.hathitrust.org/digital_library (see options to log in as a guest).

New Hampshire Society of Genealogists

Membership includes the digital newsletter and journal, discounted registration for two conferences, and discounted prices on society publications (except the newly reprinted *Vital Records 1790-1829 from Dover, New Hampshire's First Newspaper*, currently sold in paperback on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [Barnes & Noble](https://www.barnesandnoble.com)).

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.

Dimond Library, UNH, Durham (<https://library.unh.edu/find/archives/collections>)

The library maintains approximately 18,000 linear feet of rare books, manuscripts, University records, photographs, sound recordings, and other materials. Holdings include an extensive collection of genealogical and family papers, including records of the NH Old Graveyard Association and Piscataqua Pioneers. The digital collection includes Photographs, Maps & Atlases, NH State Publications, Annual Town Reports, Civil War records, and Local History & Genealogy.

Historical Society of Cheshire County (<https://hscenh.org/>)

The Society's holdings include an extensive business record collection; church and local nonprofit records; personal and family papers; approximately 20,000 historic photographs; town histories and reports; town and business directories; local newspapers; more than 300 maps; and vital and cemetery records.

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
 - N.H. and local government
 - Genealogies of significant N.H. families
- Government documents
 - Federal Depository Library since 1884
 - Census data from 1790-present
 - United States Reports (since 1884)
 - Public and Private Laws
 - Congressional Record
- Databases
 - Ancestry.com
 - Heritage Quest Genealogy Online
 - 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 (<https://sos.nh.gov/archives-vital-records-records-management/archives/archives-vital-records-records-management-divisions/>)

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

New Hampshire State Library (<https://www.nh.gov/nhsl/services/public/genealogy.html>)

The library collection includes approximately 2400 published family histories, as well as an excellent early newspaper collection on microfilm. The library also offers an array of other genealogical sources.

- Town and county histories
- Annual town reports
- Federal census for NH (1790-1930)
- City and county directories
- Genealogical columns of the "Boston Transcript"
- Legislative biographies (1890 +)
- Military indexes to 1900

Portsmouth Athenaeum (<https://portsmouthathenaeum.org/>)

The library houses over 40,000 volumes and an archive of manuscripts, photographs, objects, and ephemera relating to local history. It also sponsors exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and other educational and cultural programs. Below is a select list of its holdings.

- Name/family files
- City directories
- Church/cemetery records
- Maps
- Electronic card catalog
- Manuscript index
- Photo index
- Dictionaries/Genealogies
- Customs records
- Newspapers
- Town, state, regional histories
- Micromedia and multimedia

Rauner Special Collections Library (<https://www.dartmouth.edu/library/rauner/>)

The manuscript collections contain over 6.5 million unique and original items. Holdings include political, social, and economic history, the White Mountains, the "Cornish Colony," papers of presses and fine printers in New England, the history of computation, papers of Alumni who have made significant contributions to society, and British and American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Extensive holdings of the papers of Robert Frost and Daniel Webster and the papers of Erskine Caldwell, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Maxfield Parrish, Grenville Clark, Cornelia Meigs, and Richard Eberhart are part of the collection.