

Exploring AmericanAncestors.org

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Use at any branch library, on library computer or own laptop, with library wifi.

Search - - Researchers may search various ways by using an all-database search; single-database search; single-record type search or single-record category search. The subject guides in the Learn section will help researchers search successfully. Click on “Browse Databases, A to Z” to see all databases. The left side of the all-database page shows the databases sorted by location, date and categories. You can limit the database list to free databases, or databases with images. Several external special interest databases restrict access to NEHGS members.

All-database search - - Use the search tips and tutorials links shown on right-side of the search page. Enter search terms, and click on “Search.” Your list of hits will appear, with a “view image” button if an image is available. Click on an entry to open. Note database name, volume and page number(s) shown at top. Use direction arrows to access subsequent pages in a multi-page document. See record description and record citation under each record. Zoom in to enlarge. Download or print transcripts and images. Note the list of names of people “also on this page” on right side of entry. Use refine button to edit search terms, and use search sliders to narrow the hit list. If you have a question about the record, you can e-mail NEHGS using the “Comment or Question” link in the upper right-hand corner. Use “Back to Results” button to return to the hit list.

Single-database search - - Useful for conducting focused research. Click on “Browse Databases, A to Z,” and select desired database. The search box for any database will only contain spaces for information relevant to that particular database. In the event of more than one entry for a person in a single database, look at all entries, as the information provided can vary from record to record.

Single-record type or single-record category search - - Useful for limiting hit list to records from a particular category. A single-record type search will search by a single record type (e.g., census, marriage, burial record); whereas a single-category search will search by a category of records which may include several record types within a single category (e.g., census, tax and voter records comprise a single category).

Journal search - - American Ancestors has digitized many periodicals, including all the various NEHGS publications, among them, its flagship publication, the NEHGS Journal, which has been in continuous publication since 1847. Browse the periodicals collection using the button at the top of the “Browse Databases, A to Z” page.

Services - - Get advice from an expert; hire an expert to conduct research; receive help in preparing an application to join a lineage society; learn about the NEHGS experts. Most services are available to NEHGS members and non-members alike; members receive a discount. A few services, such as lineage packages, are available only to NEHGS members.

Learn - - Expert subject guides - - Include these topics: getting started; getting organized; genealogical software (see excellent comparison chart); using AmericanAncestors.org (the logical guide to read first); using the NEHGS library; using the collections of the Jewish Heritage Center; genealogy for the next generation (geared to young people, with a helpful glossary); writing & publishing your family history.

Learn - - Research and resources - - Research resources cover these topics: African-American Genealogy; 17th century New England research; Catholic records in New England; Chinese-American genealogy; English genealogy; French-Canadian genealogy; German genealogy; heraldry in America; Irish genealogy; Japanese-American genealogy; Massachusetts research; naturalization records; New York research; Newfoundland genealogy; Nova Scotia genealogy; Pennsylvania genealogy; Pennsylvania German; Polish genealogy; Prince Edward Island genealogy; Quaker genealogy; Rhode Island research; Scottish genealogy; and World War veteran research.

Learn - - The Learn tab also leads to information about online events; in-person programs; and research tours. In addition, researchers can access downloadable templates and charts, including pedigree charts, family group records; research logs, early census comparison charts, and examples of Register style and Ahnentafel style family history profiles and style sheets.

Library - - Use the Library tab to browse the NEHGS digital collections. You can browse by genre. Also use the Library tab to browse the digital collections of the American Jewish Historical Society - New England Archives. The Library tab includes links to the NEHGS library catalog; digital book and manuscript collections (useful to long-distance researchers); information about databases available to in-person researchers at the NEHGS library in Boston (including some expensive pay-per-view databases such as the Programme de Recherche en Démographique Historique for 17th and 18th century Quebec research, and Scotland's People, a major resource for Scottish research); various special collections; the Jewish Heritage Center; and a floor plan of the NEHGS library.

Events - - Information about online webinars (free, and open to everyone) and online courses (limited to NEHGS members); in-person programs and events (mostly at the NEHGS Library in Boston, occasionally elsewhere in New England); events and

conferences (including both NEHGS-sponsored events as well as some major regional genealogical conferences around the country); research tours (various research tours, both within the U.S. and abroad, including the annual “Come Home to New England” special research event at NEHGS); and heritage tours (many with emphasis on foreign locations from whence colonists came to America).

News - - Specifically, news about, and access to, NEHGS publications, including the quarterly NEHGS Register; the monthly American Ancestors magazine; the semi-annual Mayflowers Descendant journal; and other items. The News link also takes researchers to archived database news updates; the excellent NEHGS blog; Vita Brevis; the Mayflower 2020 page; and a page entitled “Artifacts of Faith,” which details the significance of the Catholic parish records of the Boston Archdiocese. The Boston Catholic records are among recently added materials available for research on American Ancestors.

Bookstore - - At the bookstore tab, find information about the Mayflower collection, top-selling NEHGS volumes, the experts’ choices of books for New England research, and charts and gifts. Click on “Browse All Books” to see various categories of materials from The Great Migration to DNA to e-books. The Bookstore also offers a wide selection of used volumes for sale, including some hard-to-find items.

Bottom of American Ancestors home page - - Links at the bottom of the home page offer easy access to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ); the NEHGS blog, Vita Brevis; and Antiquarto. Researchers can view archived blog posts and comments at the Vita Brevis link back to the blog’s inception in 2014.

Although AmericanAncestors.org emphasizes genealogy research in the New England States from earliest colonial days to the 20th century, there are many databases and learning tools of value for genealogists of all experience levels and geographic interest. The key to getting the most out of the site is to explore, explore, explore!