

# Basics of Early New England Research

## Class 2: 17th-Century Published Resources

Lindsay Fulton, [Lindsay.fulton@nehgs.org](mailto:Lindsay.fulton@nehgs.org)

As a group, 17<sup>th</sup> century (1601-1700) New Englanders are arguably the most studied group on the planet and thus many resources can be used to learn more about their lives- from compiled genealogies to scholarly projects to essential finding aids to original and transcribed records.

To find print-only resources at a library near you, visit: <https://www.worldcat.org/> and enter your zip code and the title of interest.

## Resources

### Seventeenth-Century Families and Great Migration

Anderson, Robert Charles, **Great Migration Study Project**; titles include: *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633* (3 vols., Boston: NEHGS, 1995); *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635* (7 vols.; Boston, NEHGS, 1999-2011); *The Pilgrim Migration: Immigrants to Plymouth Colony, 1620-1633* (2007) *The Winthrop Fleet: Massachusetts Bay Company Immigrants to New England, 1629-1630* (2012); *The Great Migration Directory* (2015); *The Mayflower Migration: Immigrants to Plymouth, 1620* (2020) These volumes include sketches of all known immigrants to New England from 1620-1640. Anderson not only utilizes the scholarship of the last hundred years, but also looks again at original records to provide a fresh, detailed, documented and insightful look at the Great Migration figures and their families.

For historical context of this period: *The Great Migration Newsletter, Volumes 1-25* (2017) and *Puritan Pedigrees: The Deep Roots of the Great Migration to New England* (2018).

| Title                                                                   | Online                                                                                                                        | Print                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633</i> | <a href="https://www.americanancestors.org/great-migration">Searchable Database on AmericanAncestors.org</a>                  | <a href="#">Paperback</a> ; <a href="#">Hardcover</a>                  |
| <i>The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635</i>         | <a href="https://www.americanancestors.org/great-migration">Searchable Databases on AmericanAncestors.org by volume (A-Y)</a> | Published by volume, <a href="#">Paperback and Hardcover available</a> |
| <i>The Pilgrim Migration: Immigrants to Plymouth Colony, 1620-1633</i>  | N/A                                                                                                                           | <a href="#">Paperback</a>                                              |



| Title                                                                                     | Online                                                       | Print                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The Winthrop Fleet: Massachusetts Bay Company Immigrants to New England, 1629-1630</i> | N/A                                                          | <a href="#">Hardcover</a>                          |
| <i>The Great Migration Directory</i>                                                      | N/A                                                          | <a href="#">Hardcover</a> ; <a href="#">e-book</a> |
| <i>The Mayflower Migration: Immigrants to Plymouth, 1620</i>                              | N/A                                                          | <a href="#">Hardcover</a>                          |
| <i>The Great Migration Newsletter, Volumes 1-25</i>                                       | <a href="#">Searchable Database on AmericanAncestors.org</a> | <a href="#">Paperback</a>                          |

More about the Great Migration Series:

<https://www.americanancestors.org/publications/great-migration-study-project>

Archived Webinar: Searching Great Migration Databases on AmericanAncestors.org

<https://www.americanancestors.org/video-library/searching-great-migration-databases-americanancestorsorg>

Hollick, Martin E., *New Englanders in the 1600s: A Guide to Genealogical Research Published Between 1980 and 2010* (expanded edition; Boston: NEHGS, 2012) An extension of the work done by Clarence Almon Torrey that covers the most recent scholarship published from 1980 to 2010. [Print only.](#)

Colket, Meredith B., *Founders of Early American Families: Emigrants from Europe, 1607-1657* (revised edition; Cleveland, Ohio: General Court of the Order of Founders and Patriots, 1985) - This book is an alphabetical, annotated list of all known immigrants to what is now the east coast of the United States within the first fifty years of English settlement, beginning with the establishment of Jamestown in 1607. While it includes many early New York (New Netherlands), Maryland and Virginia settlers, the vast majority of the entries are for New Englanders. For each entry the reader is given sufficient information to determine whether this is a person or family of interest, including exact or approximate date of arrival, place of origin, place(s) of residence, date of death if known, occupation/offices held, and then a very brief citation to the best or most recent genealogical treatment of the individual or family in question. Print only.

Savage, James, *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register* (4 vols., Boston: Little, Brown, 1860-62) Despite its age and lack of documentation, this is still one of the most popular books in the library, and continues to be one of the principal sources of information on some of the more obscure seventeenth-century New England families, and those not yet treated in Anderson's *Great Migration* series. [Digitized copy available online.](#)

Noyes, Sybil, Charles T. Libby, and Walter Goodwin Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire* (NEHGS: Boston, 2012 reprint) One of the most authoritative and exhaustive works of any type. Provides many clues to further research into the pre-American ancestry of early New England settlers. [Digitized copy available online.](#)

Torrey, Clarence Almon, *New England Marriages Prior to 1700* (12 vol. manuscript; 1962) Torrey spent years combing the NEHGS library's book and manuscript collection, to compile this annotated list of approximately 38,000 marriages of New Englanders that occurred prior to 1700. [Available as a searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org](#)

Farmer, John, *A Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of New England* (1829; reprint ed., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1964) One of the first American genealogical books to be published, and a milestone in the field because it was the first attempt at compiling an all-inclusive dictionary of the earliest settlers of New England. [Digitized copy available online.](#)

Pope, Charles Henry, *Pioneers of Massachusetts* (Boston: NEHGS, 2013 reprint) presents biographical information for nearly 6,000 pioneers who settled Massachusetts between 1620 and 1650. This reprint includes Pope's full, annotated text (published 1900) and his sixteen page supplement of additions and corrections (published 1902). This book also contains a list of abbreviations, sources, former town names, aggregate data for occupations and social position and an all-name index. [Digitized copy available online.](#)

Williams, Alicia Crane, *Early New England Families* (2 vols. to date; Boston, NEHGS, 2016) The Early New England Families Study Project provides accurate and concise published summaries of seventeenth-century New England families. Using Clarence Almon Torrey's bibliographic index of early New England marriages and its recent successors as a guide, the project focuses on individuals who immigrated from 1641 through 1700, grouped by year of marriage. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org.](#)

## Genealogical and Historical Periodicals

*The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 1- (1847- ) From its beginning the *Register* has been the most scholarly and important genealogical journal on both the New England and the national level, thanks to many decades of consistently high-quality editorship. Its hallmarks are compiled genealogies (for up to five generations) of colonial New England families, English origins articles, transcriptions of original records, and methodological articles. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org.](#)

***The American Genealogist***, vol. 1- (1922- ) Begun by Donald Lines Jacobus as the *New Haven Genealogical Magazine* (changing to the present title in 1932), TAG, as it is known, devotes the majority of its space to high-quality, problem-solving articles that focus primarily on New England families. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org.](#)

***The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record***, vol. 1- (1869- ) Although the *Record* concentrates on the early families of Long Island, New York City and the lower Hudson River valley, a goodly number of these families had New England origins or connections, so the *Record* should always be checked. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org \(vols. 1-54\).](#)

***The New England Quarterly***, vol. 1- (1928- ) is primarily an historical and literary magazine. It is useful for background and context, and may contain articles of interest in certain instances.

***The Connecticut Nutmegger*** has been the “journal of record” of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc. for 40 years. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org.](#)

***The Great Migration Newsletter***, vol. 1-25 (1990-2016) Published quarterly through 2016, the *Newsletter* addressed -broad issues key to understanding the lives and times of New England's first immigrants. [Searchable Database on AmericanAncestors.org](#)

## **Town Guides and Gazetteers**

***Genealogist Handbook for New England Research***, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Edited by Rhonda R. McClure (Boston: NEHGS, 2021) this handbook is an indispensable resource for anyone doing research in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. More than just a how-to book, it is a location guide to public records, repositories, libraries, and genealogical societies throughout New England. This edition includes introductory essays explaining basics of research and resources unique to each state, nearly 80 state and county maps, a listing of each town's parent and daughter towns, a checklist of published and manuscript vital and church records, and a user-friendly two-color design. Print only.

***New England Town Guides at American Ancestors***, (also includes New York) research strategies for towns throughout New England and New York. It includes information on name changes for towns, settlement and incorporation dates, parent towns or counties and much more. Villages, smaller sections of towns, are not included in these guides. Additionally, links to relevant databases on AmericanAncestors.org are included: <https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/town-guides>

***Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities, and Towns in Massachusetts***, by William Francis Galvin (Boston: NEHGS, 1997) this is a new edition of the 1966 publication. Town by town, it gives complete detail on their formation and border changes. Part 3 of the earlier edition, “Extinct Places,” has been incorporated into the main text, and a new index refers the reader to a new category under each town

called “Section/Village Names.” There is statewide map at the beginning; small maps of each county are given at the end. [Searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org](https://www.americanancestors.org/).

## Passenger Lists

Hotten, John Camden, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality*. (New York: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1880, reprint, 1962, 1968). this is the first work to assemble lists of passengers from 1600 to 1700 and time has not diminished its worth. Divided into sections with titles such as “Licenses to go Beyond the Seas from the Port of London 1634-5” and “Lists of Passengers 1631-4; mostly from West of England parts,” it includes a full index of names. [Digitized copy available online](https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=1).

Banks, Charles Edward, *The Planters of the Commonwealth* (Boston, 1930, reprinted Genealogical Publishing Co., 1991). Covers the period from 1620 to 1640 and is arranged chronologically with indexes to surnames and ships’ names at the back. Robert Charles Anderson cautions in his introduction to *Great Migration Begins* that this work should be used only after “...a careful correlation of Hotten and Coldham, with a cautious dash of Banks.” [Digitized copy available online](https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-3?i=100&cc=1).

Coldham, Peter Wilson, *The Complete Book of Emigrants 1607-1660* (Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987). Listed chronologically and indexed by name, this work mainly covers arrivals at Virginia and Barbados and includes some New England emigrants. Many entries only show the number of passengers on the ship. Print only.

## Digital Resources

<https://www.hathitrust.org/>

<https://openlibrary.org/>

<https://books.google.com>

<https://books.familysearch.org>

<https://archive.org/index.php>

<http://library.si.edu/digital-library>

## When did your ancestor arrive in the colonies?

| Year      | Geographic Area                | Resource                                                   | Call Number                    | NEHGS Database |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 1620      | Plymouth Colony                | Mayflower Families through Five Generations (silver books) | <a href="#">F63 .M39</a>       | Yes            |
| 1607-1657 | 13 Original Colonies           | Founders of Early American Families                        | <a href="#">CS61 .C64 1985</a> | No             |
| 1620-1633 | Plymouth and Mass Bay Colonies | Great Migration Begins                                     | <a href="#">F7 .G74 1995</a>   | Yes            |
| 1634-1635 | Plymouth and Mass Bay Colonies | Great Migration                                            | <a href="#">F7 .G742 1999</a>  | Yes            |
| 1620-1640 | New England                    | Great Migration Directory                                  | <a href="#">F7 .G745 2015</a>  | No             |



|                                       |                         |                                                             |                                |     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1620-1650                             | Massachusetts           | Pioneers of Massachusetts                                   | <a href="#">F63 .P822 2013</a> | No  |
| 1641-1700                             | New England             | Early New England Families                                  | <a href="#">F3 .W65 2016</a>   | Yes |
| By 1699                               | Maine and New Hampshire | Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire          | <a href="#">F18 .N68 2012</a>  | No  |
| To 1700<br>(marriage,<br>not arrival) | New England             | Torrey's New England Marriages; New Englanders in the 1600s | <a href="#">F3 .T6 1992</a>    | Yes |

