

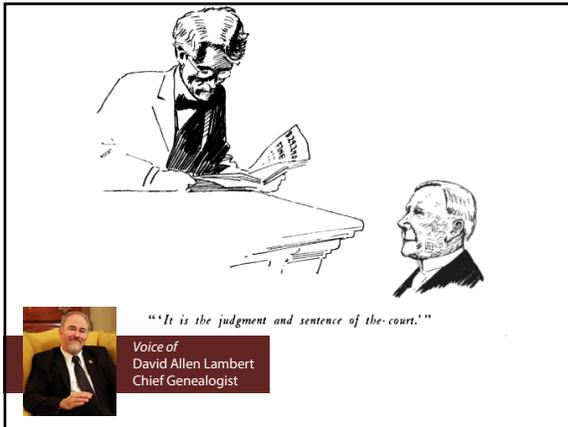
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2



3



4

State and Local Courts

- Within each state are:
 - local county courts
 - district courts
 - state supreme court
- Jurisdiction over a set geographical boundary is determined for each court; boundary may have changed historically based on the county location or splits that may have occurred
- Historic names of various courts and their roles have changed over the centuries in each state

5

State and Local Courts

- **Trial Court** – disputes among litigants are resolved; each party will present their own evidence, which will be evaluated by a judge and/or jury to reach a decision and resolution
- **Appellate Court** – when a party decides to seek a review of their case by a different court after a trial court's ruling; appeals made to this court do not involve a new trial, and typically do not introduce new evidence

6

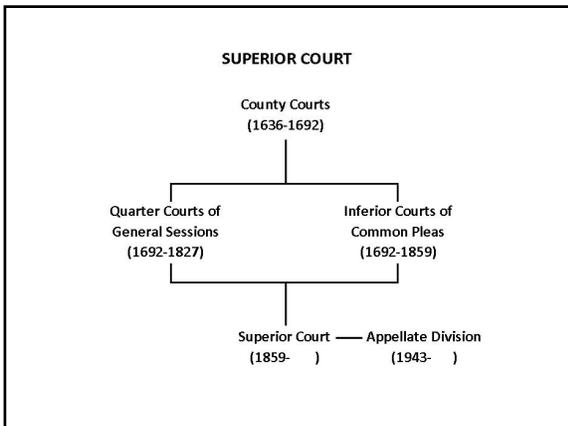
U.S. Federal Courts

- United States Federal District Courts were setup in each existing state starting in 1789. Depending on the state some established more than one district.
- Currently there are nearly 90 districts in the United States. These courts originally dealt with civil and equity cases until 1866. Later Federal District courts would also handle trade, bankruptcy, admiralty, naturalization, and land seizure cases.

7

**Example:
Brief History of
Massachusetts
Courts**

8



9

Quarterly Courts

- Inferior court to handle criminal misdemeanors and civil matters dealing with small sums
- Existed in the 17th century and were replaced by the county courts
- Some records have been published such as the Quarterly Courts of Essex County; these courts also recorded vital records such as births and marriages

10

Court of Assistants 1630-1692

- Dealt with matters that were tried with a jury present at the time
- Also heard appeals from lower county courts

11

14 RECORDS OF THE COURT OF ASSISTANTS

In Answer to the petition of Nathaniel Shapleigh humbly desiring this Court to allow him a^o y^e Abatement of a considerable part of his fine & Allowance of the residue: his assets not being able to bear it: The Court doth order that an^o the petitioners payment of three hundred pounds to the Treasurer of the Country he shall be discharged =

In Answer to y^e petition of Benja Gould y^e Court Grants his request thereby to Come to meeting on y^e 14th day at Hextory y^e m^oshall Gentl or his deputy taking effectual care for his return to prison y^e same day.

This Court was Adjourned to the 14th Instant at eight of the clock to y^e next meeting

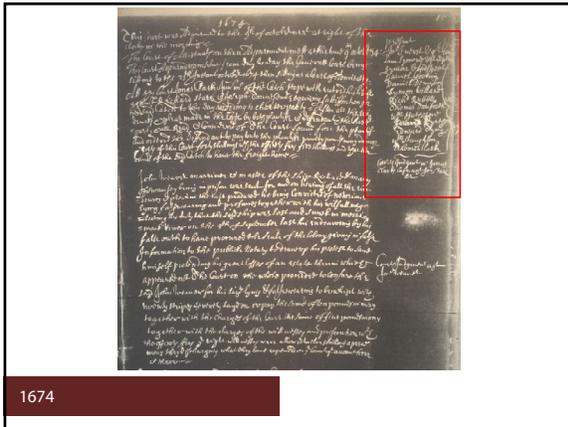
24 of month 1673

The Court being met, The Court declared that It was Agreed that the prisoner Condemned Benjamin Gould should be executed on the next day forthwith being the second day of April next presently after the Judges and that the Secretary Issue out his warrant respectively to the sheriffs Gentl to see & order the same as in other cases = with our best Assentingly =

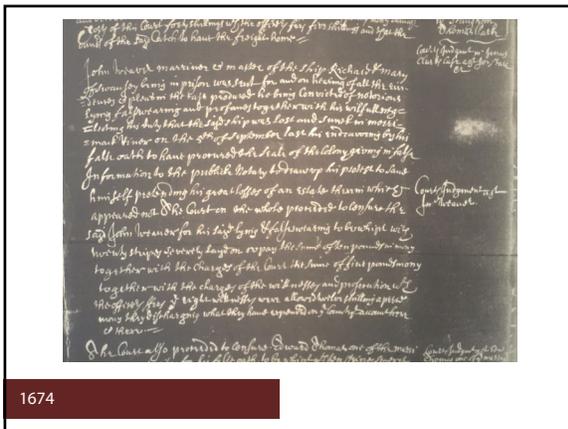
The Court adjourned themselves to the 27th of March 1673.

As well then the Court met and In Answer to the petition of m^o Durrall and m^o Isaac Mallors ordered that they Come to be heard on Friday forthwith being the 10th of April at nine of the clock and that the Secretary give notice to all the magis^o and parties Concerned to Attend at y^e time =

12



13



14

Court of Common Pleas 1685-1870's

- 1821 - this court became a mid-level court for criminal and civil cases
- CCP Misc. records often include Depositions, Revolutionary War Pensions and Proprietor Records
- After 1821 - smaller police courts, justices of the peace held trials, and municipal courts were created for small matters; lasted until 1870s when replaced by District Courts

15

Court of General Sessions of the Peace (1685)

- Worcester General Sessions of the Peace

1733-4 Worcester County, Massachusetts. 71

Peter Goby of Leicester in y^e County of Worcester husbandman being bound over To this Court by way of Recognizance To answer To his government by y^e Grandjur^e for profane Swearing del^t came into Court & pleaded Guilty. Its therefore ordered by the Court that he pay as a fine To our Lord the King five Shillings & Costs, & shall Comitted till Sentence is performed which he paid in Court and was Dismissed.

William McMillan & Margaret his wife of Woodstock in y^e County of Worcester came into Court and Complaind of themselves for being Guilty of y^e Crime of fornication before marriage, were find Each Thirty Shillings To our Lord y^e King & Costs which they paid & were Dismissed.

Alexander Turner of Worcester & Mary his wife came into Court and complaind of themselves for being Guilty of y^e Crime of fornication before marriage, were find To our Lord y^e King the Sum of Thirty Shillings, Each & Costs, which they paid & were dismissed.

Schuman Johnson of Leicester in y^e County of Worcester Gent being presented by the Grandjur^e for being drunk^e Ale, & raise into Court & put himself on Tryall and was acquitted paying Cost which he paid & was Dismissed.

Philip Chase of Worcester In y^e County of Worcester husbandman being presented by the Grandjur^e for Working unlawfully on the Lords day del^t came into Court & put himself upon Tryall by the Court & was acquitted paying Cost.

16

Superior Court of Judicature 1692-1780

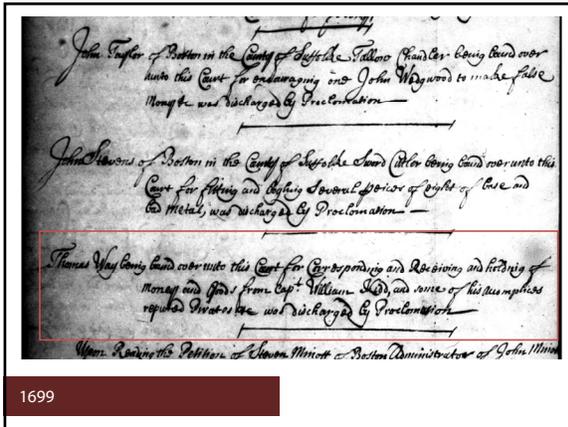
- Highest Trial and Appeals Court
- Capital Criminal Trials (Salem Witchcraft Trials)
- Matters regarding Equity
- Larger Civil Cases
- After the Revolutionary War this became the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts

17

Superior Court

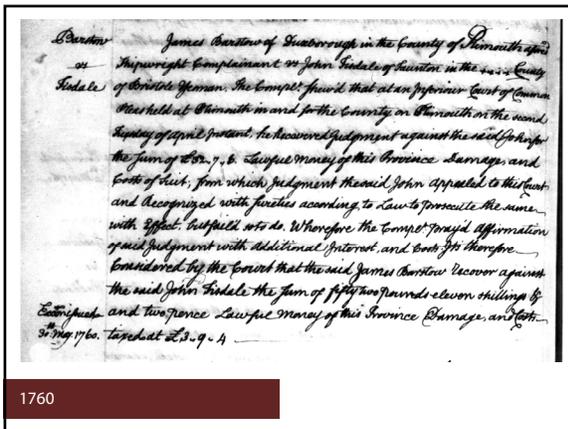
- Civil and Criminal Cases
- Juvenile
- Law and Equity
- Divorces
- Jury Lists
- Prison Records
- Murder Indictments
- Bastardy Bonds

18



1699

19



1760

20

Supreme Judicial Court (1780-)

- Court records on file at the Massachusetts State Archives
- These records and those of the earlier courts are under the jurisdiction of the SJC Archivist
- Decisions of the SJC since 1804 are published in a series called *Massachusetts Reports*

21



22

Civil Court Cases

- Civil Court cases are heard relating to matters that harm a person's individual rights, including slander, damage to personal property, or trespassing
- **Torts:** Court cases that handle negligence, slander, libel and nuisance
- **Family:** Court cases dealing with adoption, custody, name changes, paternity, guardianships, conservatorships, and divorce
- **Property:** matters dealing with disputes over ownership of land and tenant / landlord disputes
- **Commercial:** disputes with contracts, goods and services, or debt collection

23

Equity Cases

- Heard when there is a dispute or argument between two individuals which does not involve violations of the law
- Generally limited to probate, land, and estates

24

Published Civil Cases – Land

1785 – Guilford Co., N.C.

A deed of Sale from John Lowry to John Cummins for 141 Acres of Land was acknowledged in open Court & on motion to be registered

A deed of Sale from Thomas Sparkes & wife to Jeremiah Sparks for 402 acres of land was in open Court proved by oath of William Bethel & on motion ordered to be registered.

Source: Jane Smith Hill, Guilford Court, North Carolina Court Minutes – August Term of Court 1781 to May Term 1788 (Greensboro, NC: 1999), 83

25

Published Civil Cases – Work Related

Warwick Co., VA - 1844

Blunt vs. Seburn – Trial 2 May 1844 – Bowry – worked on house with Blunt that work was commenced Seburn objected to brickwork the kiln. Complained at first but afterwards made no objection. When completed said he would not pay for it. 2 hearths laid. Suppose there was between 18 & 19000 bricks in work never measured it... & on motion ordered to be registered.

Source: Richard Dunn, Warwick County, Virginia. Court Records in Transcription 1782-1843 (Baltimore, MD: 2018), 178

26

Published Civil Cases– Debt Repayment

Elbert Co., GA - 1796

Eliza Williams vs. William Elliott. I do confess Judgement to the plaintiff for the Sum of one Hundred and ninty three Dollars and two cents, with cost of suit, and three Stay of Execution, this judgement may be discharged during the said three months by Barr Iron at Six pence per pound, Cows and Calves at three pounds, provided they are prime, and likely horses, to be valued by two men..

Source: Michael A. Ports, Elbert County, Georgia Inferior Court Minutes, February 4, 1791 – July 14, 1801 (Baltimore, MD: 2015), 129

27

**Published Civil Cases–
Indentures & Guardianships**

1785 – Guilford Co., N.C.

Ordered that Pegga Medlen age Six years last September be bound [to] Patrick Dimond until she arrived to the Age of Eighteen years

Ordered that Sarah Medlin aged three years last July be bound to Patrick Dimond until she arrives to the age of Eighteen years.

Source: Jane Smith Hill, *Guilford County, North Carolina Court Minutes – August Term of Court 1781 to May Term 1788* (Greensboro, NC: 1999), 75

28

**Published Civil Cases –
Sales of Enslaved**

1787 – Guilford Co., N.C.

*Know all men by these presents that I Watson Wharton of the State of North Carolina and County of Guilford have bargained and sold delivered to Reece Porter one Negro boy of the age of seventeen years named **Sam** for the sum of one hundred pounds in Gold & silver at the rate in law in North Carolina and also one Mulatto girl named **Frank** of the age of Fourteen years for the sum of one hundred pounds...*

Source: Jane Smith Hill, *Guilford County, North Carolina Court Minutes – August Term of Court 1781 to May Term 1788* (Greensboro, NC: 1999), 75

29

Published Civil Cases – Jury lists

1787 – Guilford Co., N.C.

The State vs. Susannah Amburn. The Following jury (to wit[ness])

Joseph Perkins, Joel Sanders, William Lane, Francis Cummons, Joshua Dix, William Dillon, William Willy, Francis Bell, Isaac Weatherly, Thomas Archer, John Rankin being sworn find the Defendant not Guilty in manner and form as charged in the Bill of Indictment.

Source: Jane Smith Hill, *Guilford County, North Carolina Court Minutes – August Term of Court 1781 to May Term 1788* (Greensboro, NC: 1999), 149

30

**Court of Common Pleas –
Theft and Search Warrant**

1795

Complaint hath been made on oath by James Graham, Planter, that he hath reason to suspect that Andrew Taylor did on or about 30 April last part steal, take & carry away a piece of tow rope...

Complaint made by Jas. Graham on path that the following articles, to wit: one knige, one pan of pinebrew, one horse comb have been feloniously stolen from out of the house of James Graham & Graham hath great & probable cause to suspect that the good or part of them are concealed in the dwelling house of William Briant, Planter, these are to authorize & require you with proper assistance to enter in the day time into the house of William Briant and search for said goods...

Source: Anne Williams McAllister, *Civil Action Papers 1771-1806 of the Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions Lincoln County, North Carolina (Lenoir, N.C.:1989)*, 105

31

Criminal Court Cases

32

Criminal Court

- Deal with more serious matters
 - On occasion you will find criminal cases in civil court records; varies on the colony or state and when the records were kept
- Federal courts will try criminal cases involving violations of the U.S. Constitution or federal statutory law
- State courts will try both criminal and civil cases involving a state's constitution, laws, and statutes

33

Criminal Court Charges

- **Felonies:** Most serious of all crimes (ex. Burglary, arson, rape or murder); punishment is generally more than a year in prison or death
- **Misdemeanors:** Less serious crimes, often issued a fine or a short term of prison
- **Admiralty:** cases in which smuggling, piracy, whaling, and salvage at sea are brought to criminal court; Federal Courts replaced the state cases of Admiralty since 1789

34

Tip

Jail records often refer to when and where sentencing occurred

35

COMMITMENTS FOR CRIME.						
NO.	NAME	BIRTHPLACE	RESIDENCE	COLOR	AGE	SEX
6601	Frank Brown	Boston	August Hill, Boston	Black	47	Male
6602	Michael Brown	Boston	Lowell	Black	38	Male
6603	George Brown	Boston	Boston	Black	35	Male
6604	John B. Brown	Boston	Boston	Black	32	Male
6605	William B. Brown	Boston	Boston	Black	29	Male

SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL.				
OFFENSE	AUTHORITY	SENTENCE OR OTHERWISE	WHEN DISCHARGED	LENGTH OF SENTENCE
Drunkennes	Municipal	Discharge	May 25	30 days
Robbing	County	Imprisoned	May 25	1 year
Drunkennes	County	Imprisoned	May 25	30 days
Robbing	County	Imprisoned	May 25	1 year
Robbing	County	Imprisoned	May 25	1 year
Robbing	County	Imprisoned	May 25	1 year

Suffolk County (Mass.) Jail Register

36

List of Debtors in Boston and County of Suffolk

Name	at what Street	where committed	place of abode	by what Exchange
Francis C. Goodale	John Lewis	August 14	Boston	Swore out September 13 - 1799
Samuel Anderson	Programa Callender	17	Boston	by Creditors August 20 - 1799
Samuel Anderson	Programa Anderson	17	Boston	by Creditors August 20 - 1799
Samuel Anderson	Thomas	17	Boston	out on Bail August 20 - 1799
John Platt	John O. Carter	20	Woburn	by Creditors August 22 - 1799
John Platt	John Wilson	26	Lowbury	out on Bail August 26 - 1799
John Platt	John Wilson	26	Lowbury	out on Bail August 26 - 1799
John Platt	John Wilson	26	Boston	Swore out October 8 - 1799

Boston Debtors Jail Record (FamilySearch)

40

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Home Indexing Activities

Records Images Genealogical Catalog Books Wiki

BACK TO SEARCH RESULTS PRINT Catalog Print List (0)

Index [1860-1915] to city of Sacramento police mug books

Statement of Responsibility: extracted by Root Cellar - Sacramento Genealogical Society

Author: Hudgens, Sammie (Main Author)
Root Cellar (Sacramento Genealogical Society)
Sacramento, California (Added Author)

Format: Books/Monographs

Language: English

Publication: Citrus Heights, California : Root Cellar-Sacramento Genealogical Society, [199-?]

Physical: [6], 47 leaves : ports.

Subject Class: 979.454 .B62

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Title from cover:

Statement of responsibility: This index was extracted by Sammie Hudgens, Billie Helms and Bob Helms with assistance from Kevin Hudgens, Lisa Booth and Sarah Helms.

Consists mostly of the index with a few mug shots as examples.

familysearch.org

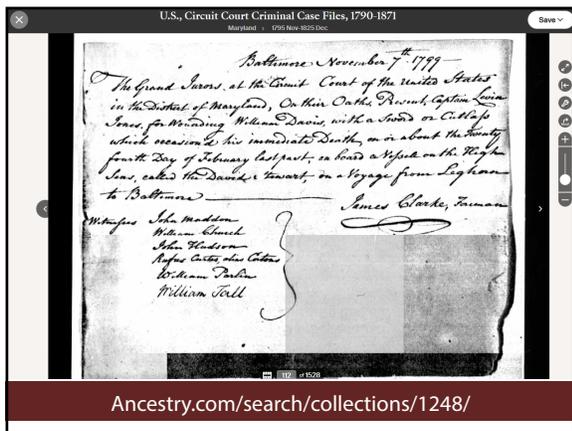
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**Case Study:
Levin Jones
"Pirate or Victim?"**

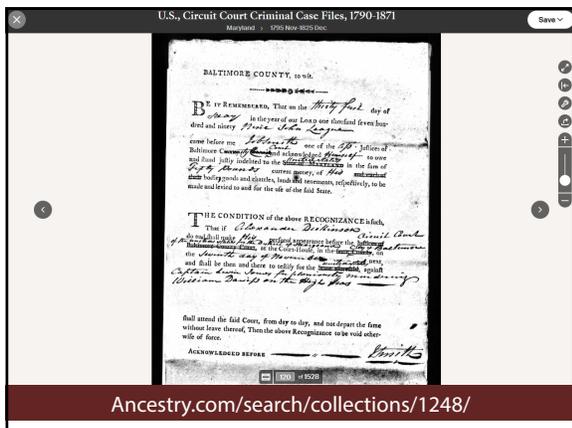
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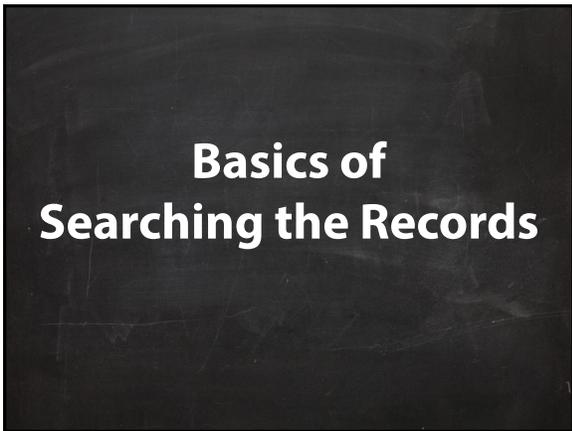
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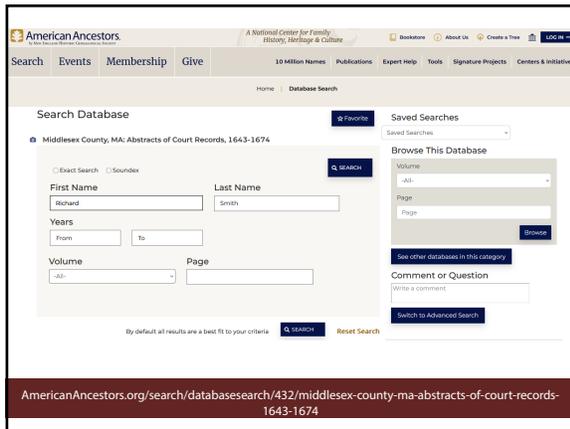
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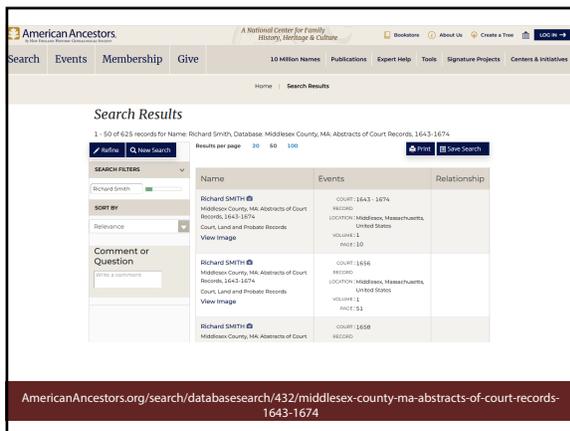
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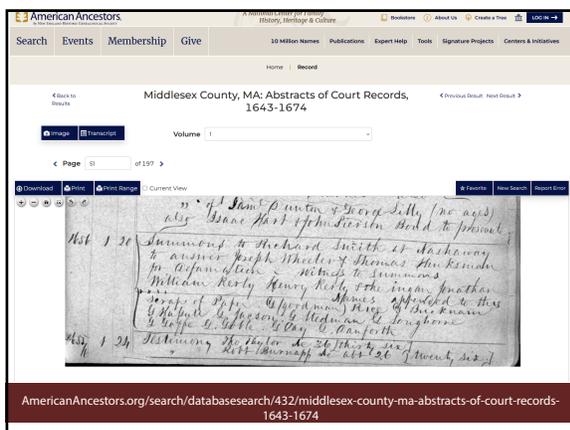
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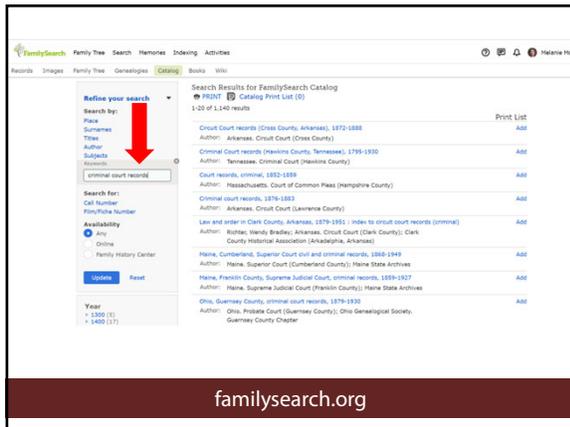
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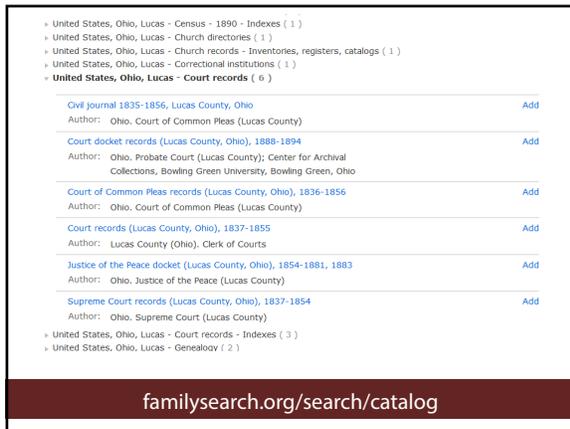
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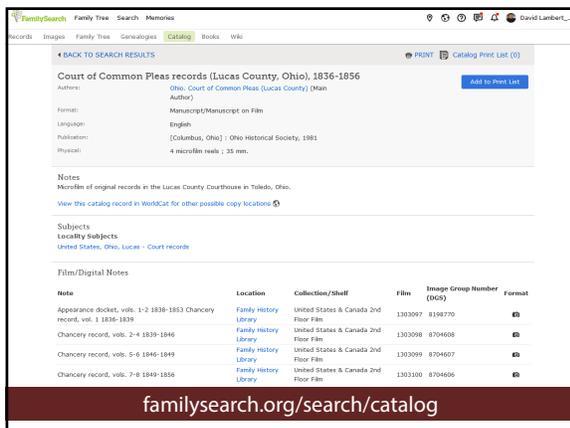
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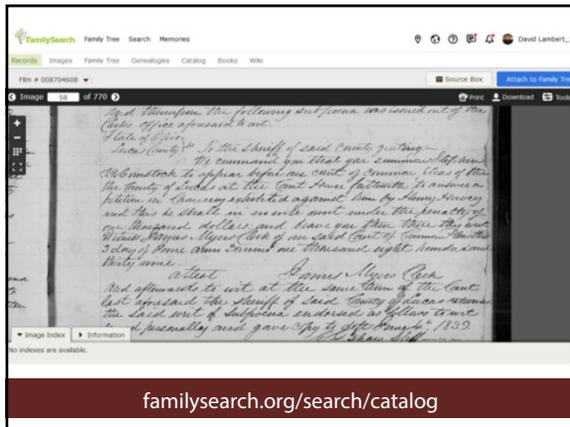


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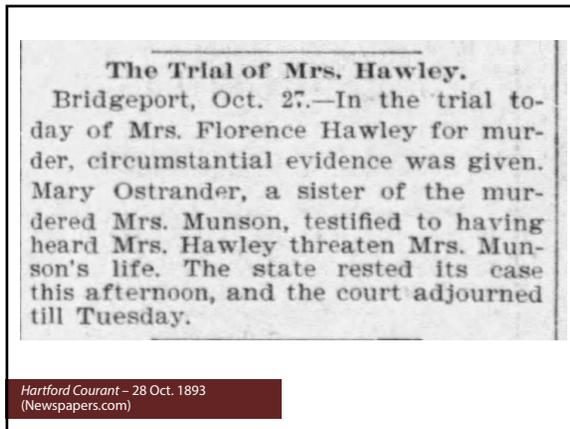
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familysearch.org/search/catalog

76



Hartford Courant – 28 Oct. 1893 (Newspapers.com)

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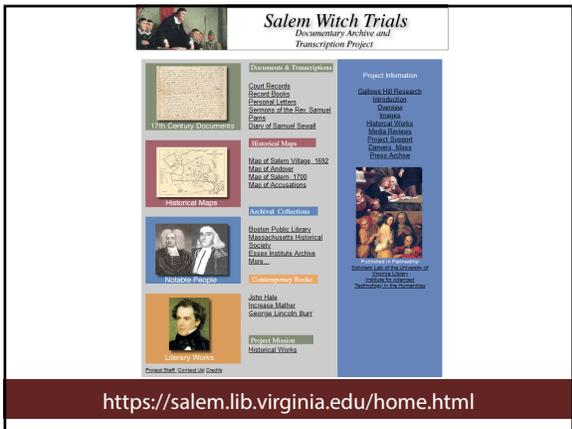


uscourts.gov/federal-court-finder/search

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84

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with links for Home, Archives, Books & Letters, Documents, Maps, and People. The main content area is titled "17th Century Documents" and features two primary sections: "Transcription of the Court Records" and "Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County". The first section describes an alphabetical organization of Salem court records from 1691 to 1725. The second section describes nine volumes of quarterly court records from 1616 to 1695. A URL <https://salem.lib.virginia.edu> is displayed at the bottom.

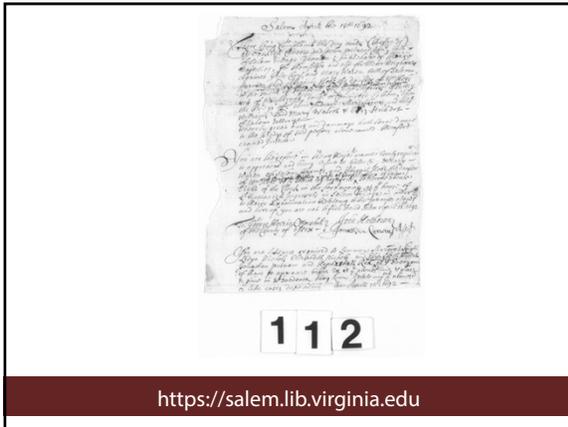
85

The screenshot displays the "Salem Witchcraft Papers" page, featuring a search bar and a list of papers on the left. The main content area is titled "The Salem Witchcraft Papers" and provides details about the "Verbatim Transcriptions of the Court Records in three volumes" edited by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, published by Da Capo Press in 1977. It also mentions the digital edition with permission from Da Capo Press, revised by Benjamin C. Ray and Tara S. Wood. A URL <https://salem.lib.virginia.edu> is at the bottom.

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This screenshot shows a specific document entry for "SWP No. 037: Giles Corey Pressed to Death, September 16, 1692". The page includes a search bar, a list of papers on the left, and the main document text. The document is a "Warrant for apprehension of Giles Corey, Mary Warren, Abigail Hobbs, and Bridget Bishop, with Summons v. Giles Corey and others, and Officer's Return". A small thumbnail of the document is shown on the right. A URL <https://salem.lib.virginia.edu> is at the bottom.

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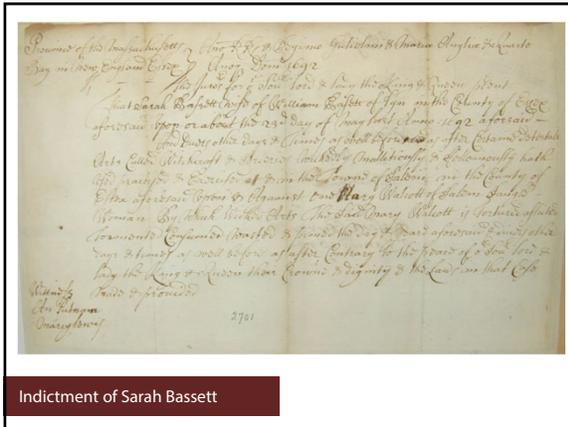
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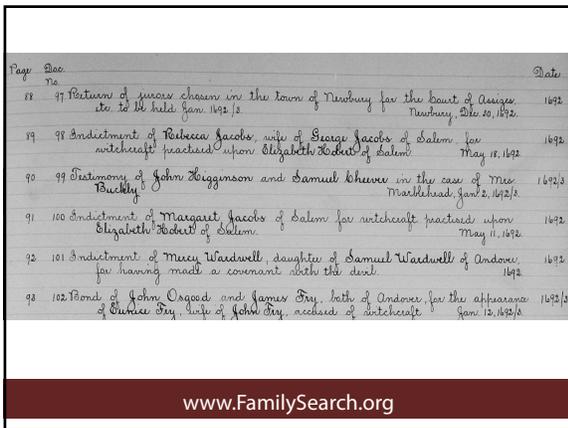
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92



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Sentenced Criminals

97

1850 United States Federal Census for Avery C Fay

Head of Family No.	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Real Estate	Birthplace	Married in Past 12 Months	Number of Children Under 16	Condition
	Thomas Roberts	50	h	White	Shore of England	U.C.			
	Oliver B. Cummings	20	h	White		U.C.			
	Alfred B. Williams	23	h	White		U.C.			
	Charles A. Williams	22	h	White		U.C.			
	Melvin C. Williams	23	h	White		U.C.			
	Henry Brown	30	h	White		U.C.			Answer
	Joseph Lucas	16	h	White		U.C.			Answer
	Henry Williams	16	h	White		U.C.			U.C.
	John P. Williams	16	h	White		U.C.			U.C.
	Henry Williams	16	h	White		U.C.			U.C.

1850 U.S. Census (Ancestry.com)

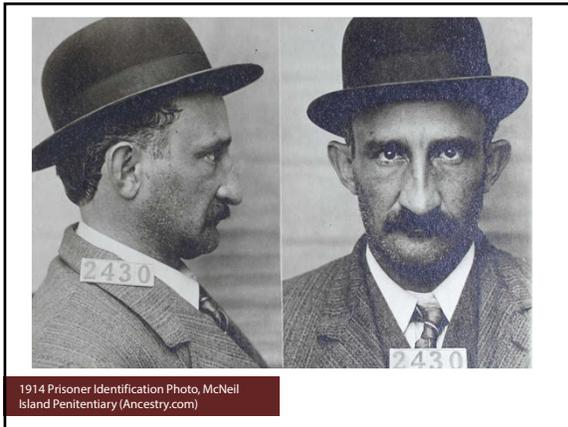
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1850 Census - Cumberland, Providence, Rhode Island (Ancestry.com)

Family No.	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Real Estate	Birthplace	Married in Past 12 Months	Number of Children Under 16	Condition
	Wm. H. White	44	h	White		U.C.			
	P. H. White	37	h	White		U.C.			
	Harriet A. White	4	f	White		U.C.			
	Harriet A. White	10	f	White		U.C.			
	William J. Southwick	50	h	White	4000	Mass.			
	Elizabeth Southwick	39	f	White		U.C.			
	Henry A. Southwick	1	h	White		U.C.			
	Henry A. Southwick	16	h	White		U.C.			
	John A. Southwick	16	h	White		U.C.			
	Charles Southwick	11	h	White		U.C.			
	William Southwick	10	h	White		U.C.			
	Elizabeth Southwick	10	f	White		U.C.			
	William Southwick	10	h	White		U.C.			

1850 Census - Cumberland, Providence, Rhode Island (Ancestry.com)

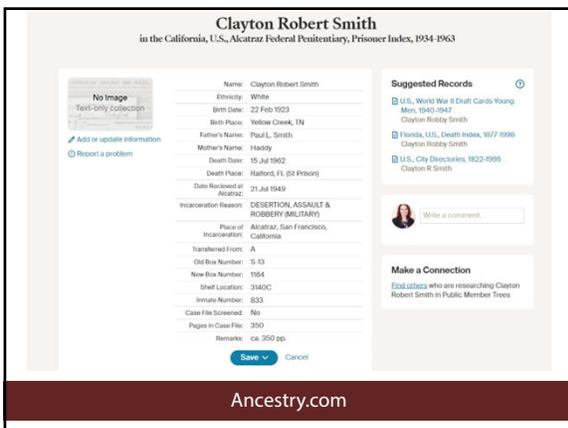
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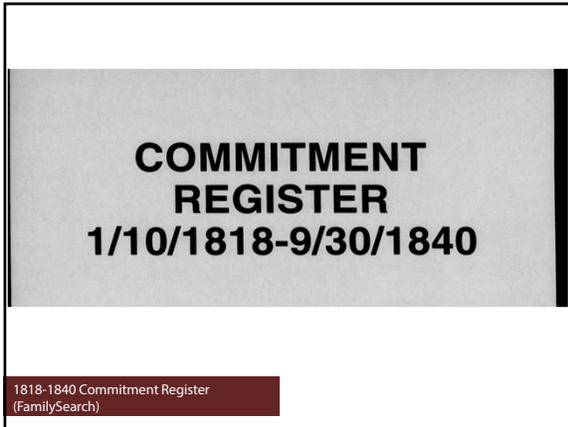
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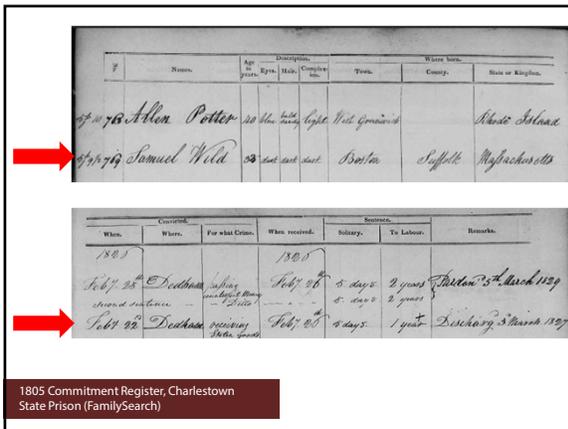
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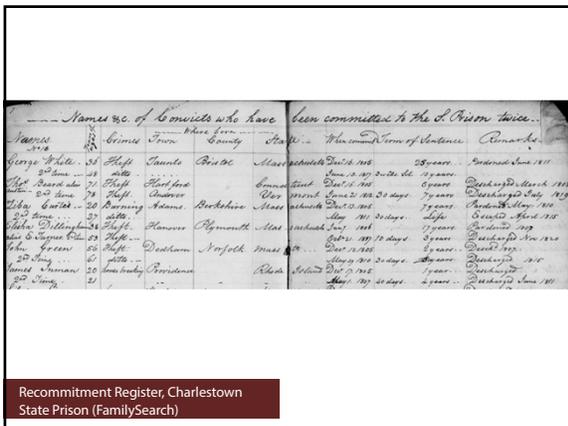
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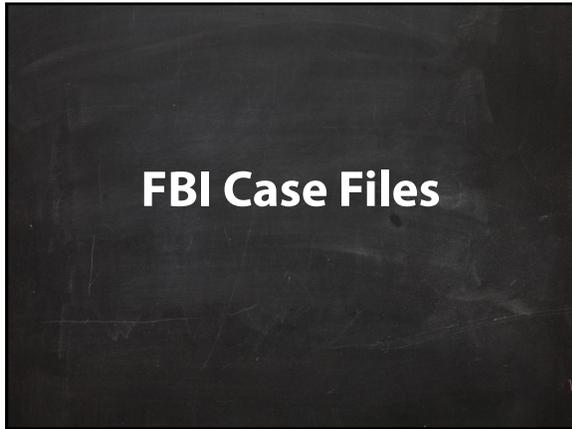
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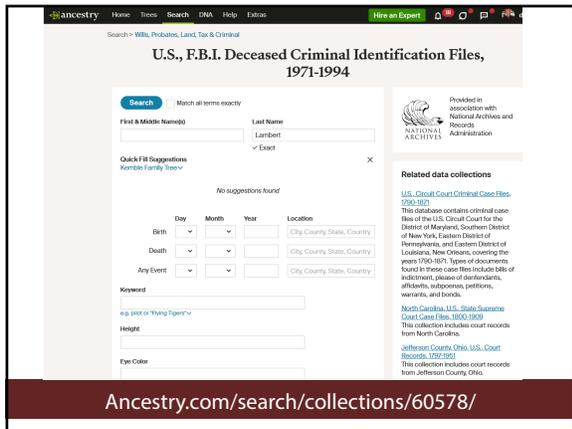
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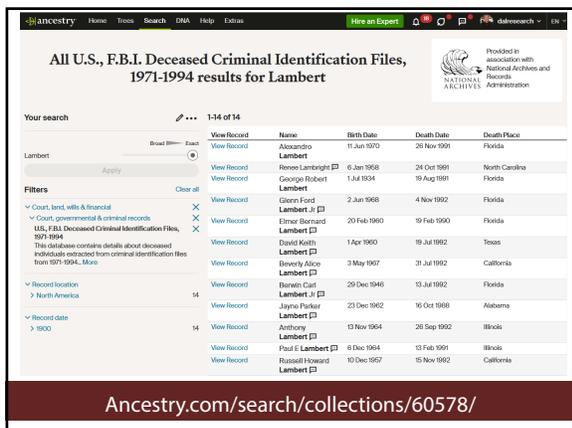
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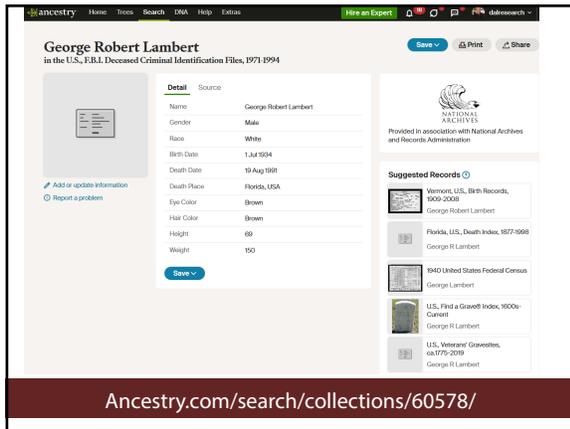
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122



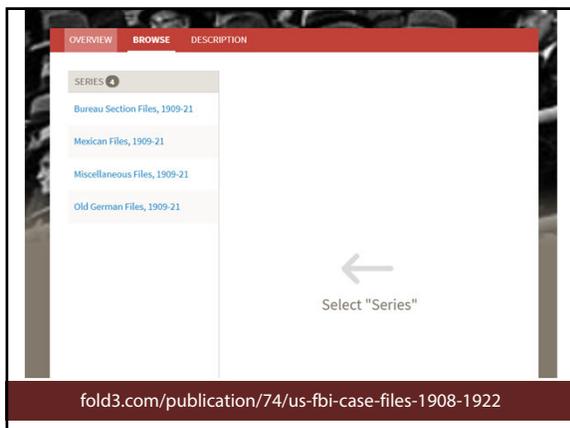
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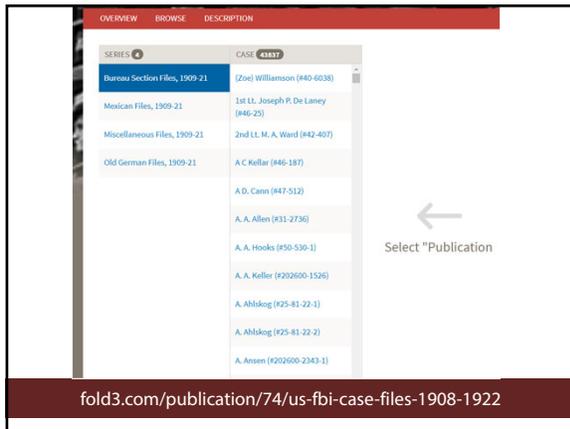
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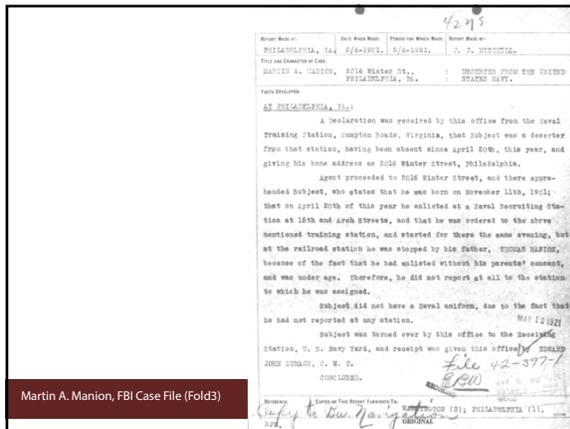


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fold3.com/publication/74/us-fbi-case-files-1908-1922

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Martin A. Manion, FBI Case File (Fold3)

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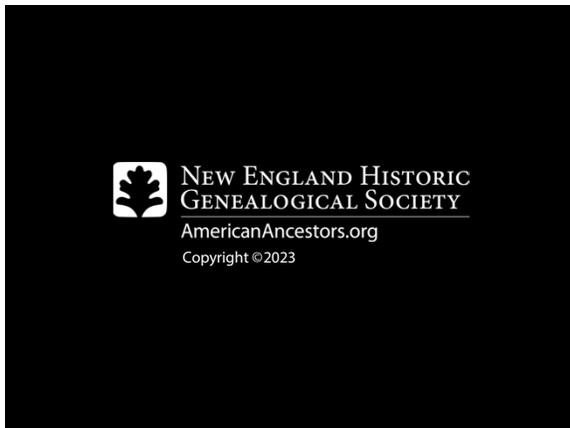
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