

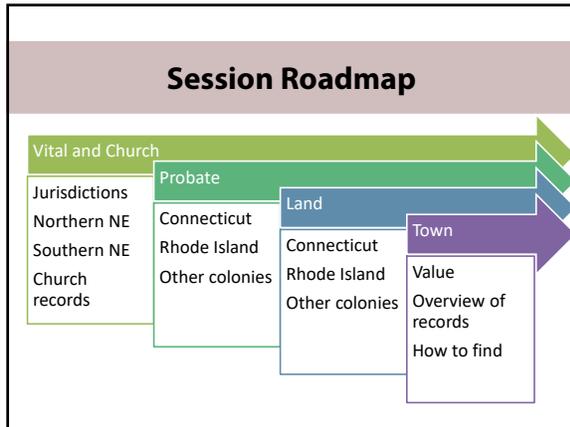
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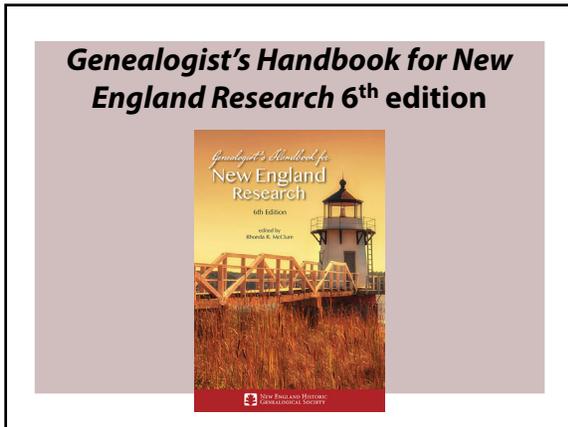


5

Jurisdictions for Colonial Records

	Vital Records	Land	Probate
Connecticut	Town	Town	Probate Districts
Maine	Town	County	County
Massachusetts	Town	County	County
New Hampshire	Town	County	County
Rhode Island	Town	Town	Town
Vermont	Town	It's complicated	It's complicated

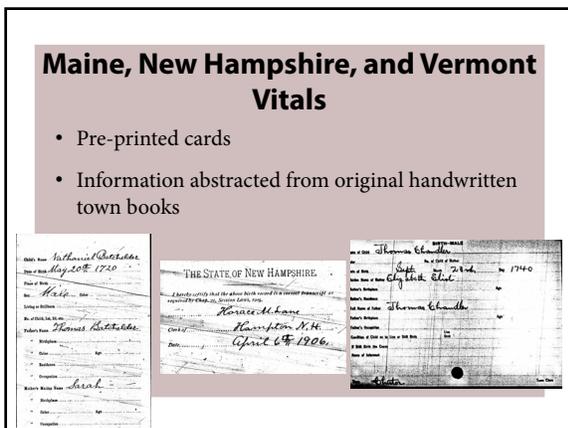
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7



8



9

Massachusetts Vital Records

- Massachusetts has the most complete set in the nation
- Kept by towns beginning in 1620s
- Generally well-kept, but not always complete
- Vital Records up to 1850 published for over 200 towns, the majority in eastern Massachusetts
- For the western part of the state, will need to consult special collections such as the Corbin or Shepard Collections



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Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850

CORBISER SHEET 300

ABBREVIATIONS.

a.—age; aged
 alt.—albeit
 B.—born
 Bp.—baptized
 bur.—buried
 ch.—child
 c.a.1.—church record, First Congregational, Unitarian
 c.a.2.—church record, Christ Church, Episcopal
 c.a.3.—church record, First Baptist Society, Cambridgeport
 c.a.4.—church record, First Church in Cambridge, or Shepard Congregational Society
 c.a.5.—church record, Harvard Street Methodist
 c.a.6.—church record, Old Cambridge Baptist Society
 c.a.7.—church record, St. Peter's Episcopal Church
 c.a.8.—church record, Trinity Methodist Church, East Cambridge
 c.a.9.—church record, Cambridgeport Parish, now united with Third Congregational
 c.a.10.—church record, Third Congregational, Unitarian
 c.a.11.—church record, Evangelical Congregational Church, East Cambridge, now entry; records in possession of Congregational Library, Boston
 c.a.12.—church record, Second Baptist Church, East Cambridge, now entry; records in possession of City of Cambridge
 d.—daughter; died; day
 Dec.—deceased
 dec.—deceased
 dup.—duplicate entry
 G.A.—grave record, cemetery at Harvard Square

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Vital Records – Rhode Island

- Rhode Island – James Arnold
- Vital Records of Rhode Island, 1636-1850, First Series: Births, Marriages and Deaths (see handout)

Vol 1: Kent County	Vol 8: Episcopal and Congregational	Vol 17: Providence Gazette, marriages
Vol 2: Providence County (Providence, Cranston, Johnston, North-Providence, Glocester, Southfield)	Vol 9: Seekonk, Pawtucket and Neumun Congregational Church	Vol 18: United States Census, deaths
Vol 3: Providence County (Glocester, Burdette, Scituate, Foster, Cumberland, Smithfield)	Vol 10: Town and Church Records	Vol 19: American Journal, Imperial Gazetteer, Providence Journal, marriages and deaths, Providence Semi-weekly Journal, marriage
Vol 4: Newport County	Vol 11: Church Records	Vol 20: Providence Phoenix, Providence Patriot, Colabaian Phoenix, marriages A-B
Vol 5: Washington County	Vol 12: Revolutionary rolls and newspapers, including Providence Journal, deaths A-B	Vol 21: Providence Phoenix, Providence Patriot, Colabaian Phoenix, marriages S-Z, deaths A-M
Vol 6: Bristol County	Vol 13: Deaths, Providence Journal and Providence Gazette	Vol 22: Providence Phoenix, Providence Patriot, Colabaian Phoenix, deaths B-E
Vol 7: Friends and ministers	Vol 14: Providence Gazette, deaths and marriages	Vol 23: Rhode Island American, marriages H-Z, deaths A-B
		Vol 24: Rhode Island American, deaths, C-E

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Vital Records - Connecticut

- Barbour Collection to 1850
 - Lucius Barnes Barbour, State Examiner of Public Records from 1911-1934
- Charles R. Hale Collection, Vital Records, 1640-1955

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Barbour Collection

Slip Index (FS)

Town Page Windsor (AA)

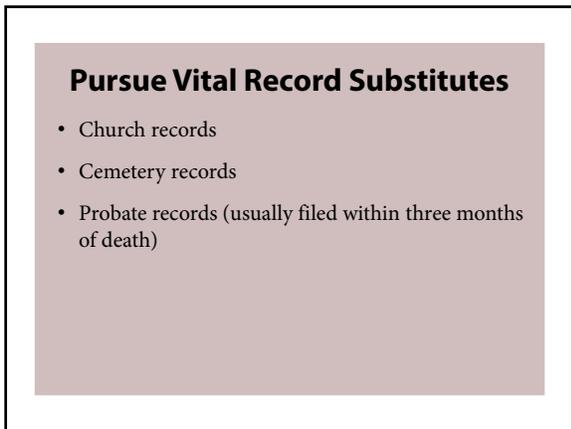
14

Suffield Records – FamilySearch.org

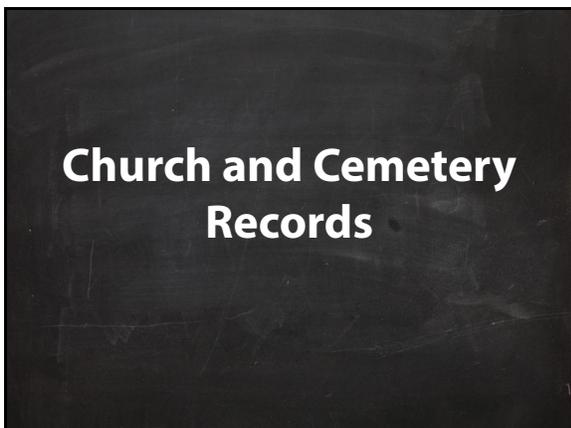
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19



20



21

Where to Find Church Records

- Many New Englanders were Congregationalists
 - Check County Histories for clues about denominations in your ancestor's town
- Indexed databases
 - *American Ancestors*
 - *Family Search*
 - *Ancestry*
- Unindexed images
 - *Family Search*
- Congregational Church Archives

22

Indexed at AmericanAncestors.org

Database

Database	Location	Dates
American Ancestors Church Records of Old Town Church, Middlesex First Church, 1740-1800	MA	1740-1800
Boston, MA Church Records, 1630-1800	MA	1630-1800
American Ancestors Church Records of the Second Congregational Church, 1740-1851	MA	1740-1851
Arling, CT Church Records, 1711-1770	CT	1711-1770
Holland, CT First Congregational Church Records, 1660-1800	CT	1660-1800
Germany Baden Church Book Digitals, 1800-1840	Germany	1800-1840
Italy Waldensian Evangelical Church Records, 1600-1941	Italy	1600-1941
South Africa Dutch Reformed Church Registers, 1660-1970	South Africa	1660-1970
Holland, CT Historical Catalogue of the First Church, 1615-1800	CT	1615-1800
Holland, CT Records of the First Church, 1660-1800	CT	1660-1800
Holland, CT Records of the Second Church, 1710-1800	CT	1710-1800
Germany, Prussia, Brandenburg and Pomer. Church Book Digitals, 1761-1871	Germany	1761-1871

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Indexed at FamilySearch.org

Search Historical Records

Records create a paper trail for your ancestors and can lead you to important details about their life. Enter a name, and we'll look for it in birth certificates, marriage registrations, census records, and other official documents.

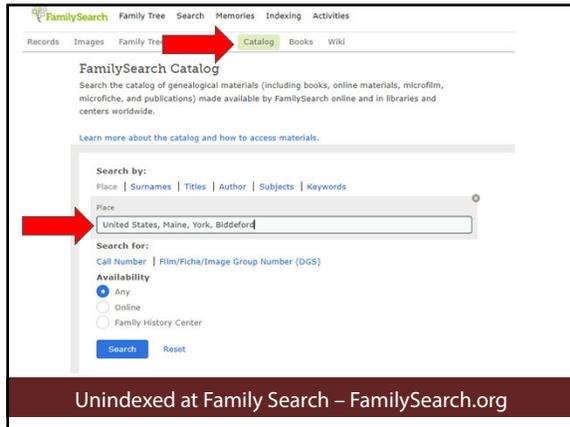
Find a Collection

Your ancestor's record belongs to a collection of similar records. Searching a specific collection is one way to narrow your search. If you don't know the collection's exact title, start typing to help you.

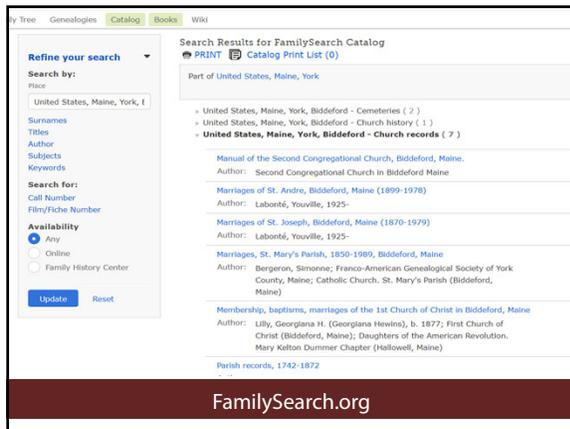
Connecticut, Church Records, 1660-1955

This collection contains Church records from several counties located in Connecticut. The records contained listed date from the years 1660-1955.

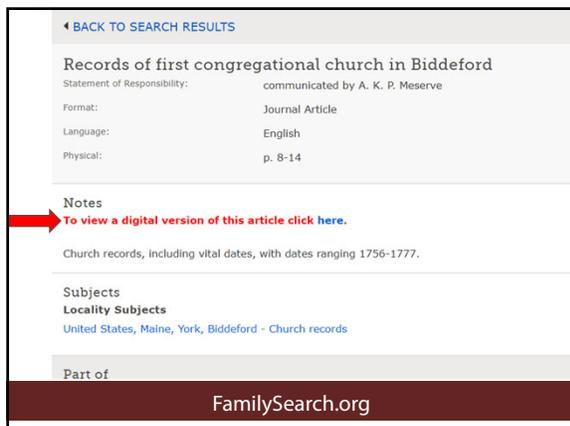
24



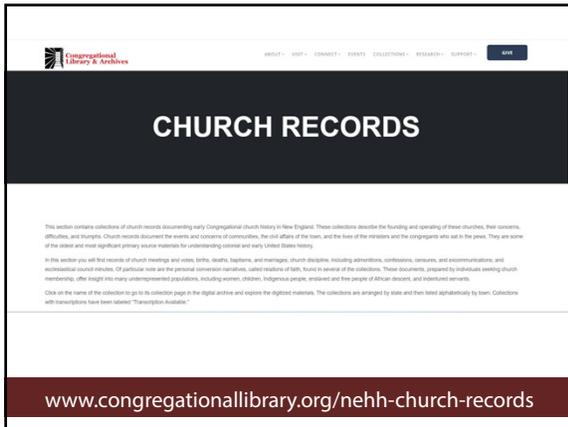
25



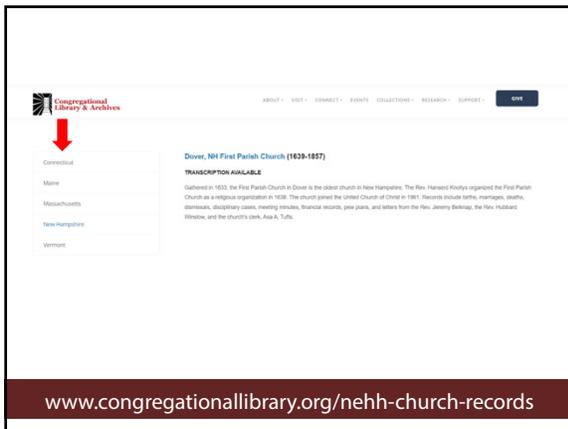
26



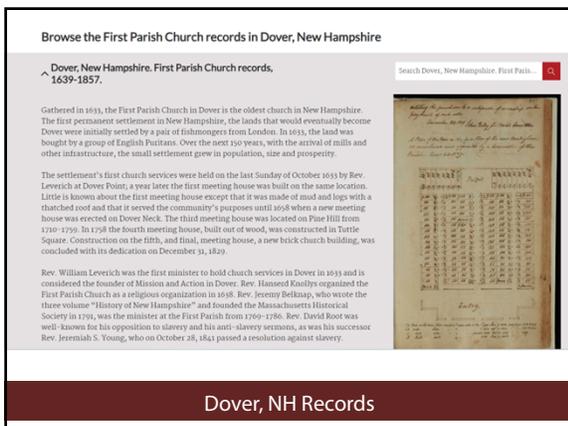
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29



30

Browse the First Parish Church records in Dover, New Hampshire

^ Dover, New Hampshire. First Parish Church records, 1639-1857.

Gathered in 1633, the First Parish Church in Dover is the oldest church in New Hampshire. The first permanent settlement in New Hampshire, the lands that would eventually become Dover were initially settled by a pair of fishermen from London. In 1693, the land was bought by a group of English Puritans. Over the next 150 years, with the arrival of mills and other infrastructure, the small settlement grew in population, size and prosperity.

The settlement's first church services were held on the last Sunday of October 1633 by Rev. Leverich at Dover Point; a year later the first meeting house was built on the same location. Little is known about the first meeting house except that it was made of mud and logs with a thatched roof and that it served the community's purposes until 1694 when a new meeting house was erected on Dover Neck. The third meeting house was located on Pine Hill from 1710-1759. In 1758 the fourth meeting house, built out of wood, was constructed in Turtle Square. Construction on the fifth, and final, meeting house, a new brick church building, was concluded with its dedication on December 31, 1829.

Rev. William Leverich was the first minister to hold church services in Dover in 1633 and is considered the founder of Mission and Action in Dover. Rev. Hanserd Knollys organized the First Parish Church as a religious organization in 1698. Rev. Jeremy Belknap, who wrote the three-volume "History of New Hampshire" and founded the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791, was the minister at the First Parish from 1769-1786. Rev. David Root was well-known for his opposition to slavery and his anti-slavery sermons, as was his successor Rev. Jeremiah S. Young, who on October 28, 1841 passed a resolution against slavery.



Dover, NH Records

31



Benjamin Parsons ministerial call acceptance addendum, 1852 December 29
Parsons, Benjamin Franklin, 1810-1896

Charles Ricker disciplinary summons, 1842 July 6
Young, J. S.

Church records, 1762-1862, First Parish Church in Dover, N.H.
First Parish Church (Dover, N.H.)

Church records, 1766-1829, First Parish Church in Dover, N.H.
First Parish Church (Dover, N.H.)

Church records, 1831-1857, First Parish Church in Dover, N.H.
First Parish Church (Dover, N.H.)

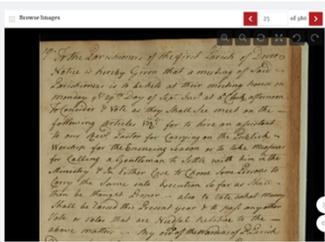
Daniel Gale disciplinary summons, undated
First Parish Church (Dover, N.H.)

Dover, NH Records

32

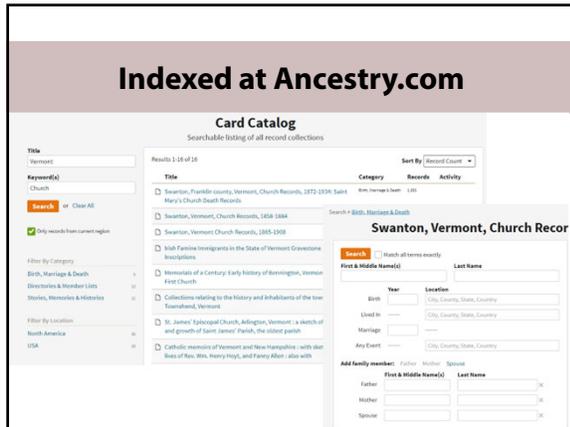
Church records, 1762-1862, First Parish Church in Dover, N.H.

Dover, New Hampshire. First Parish Church records, 1762-1862

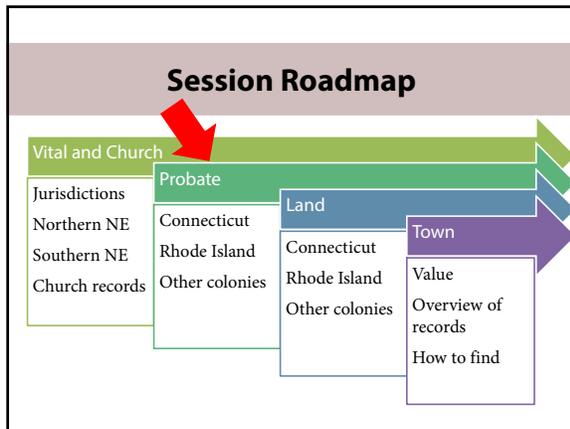


Dover, NH First Parish Church Records, 1762-1862

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Probate Records

- Probate is the process of settling an estate after death
 - Many steps
 - Generates documents
- Use to:
 - Verify family relationships
 - Substitute when vital records are lacking
 - Approximate death dates
 - Determine when a daughter was married by
 - Determine when a wife was deceased by
 - Trace the origin of family items or property
 - Provide context of ancestor's life

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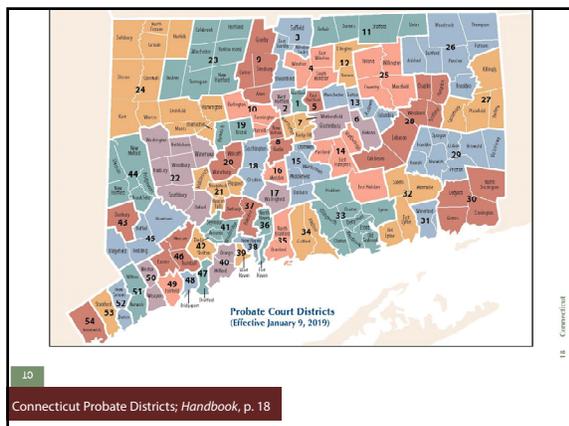
Jurisdictions for Colonial Records			
	Vital Records	Land	Probate
Connecticut	Town	Town	Probate Districts
Maine	Town	County	County
Massachusetts	Town	County	County
New Hampshire	Town	County	County
Rhode Island	Town	Town	Town
Vermont	Town	It's complicated	It's complicated

37

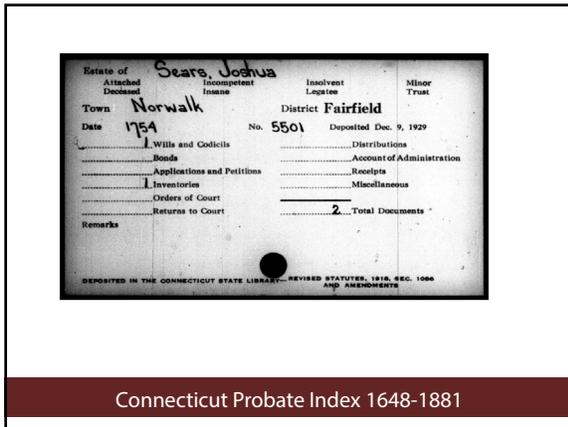
Colonial Connecticut Probate

- New Haven Colony (to 1655) – Probate kept at town or colony
- Connecticut Colony
 - Particular Court (1639 - 1665) - Records transcribed and published
 - Court of Assistants (1665- 1711) – An appeals court, records transcribed and published
 - County Courts (1666 - 1855) - Handled probate for four original counties, Hartford, New London, New Haven, and Fairfield until 1698
 - 1698 Probate District system established
 - Original 4 county courts
 - 1719 new districts began to be established.

38



39



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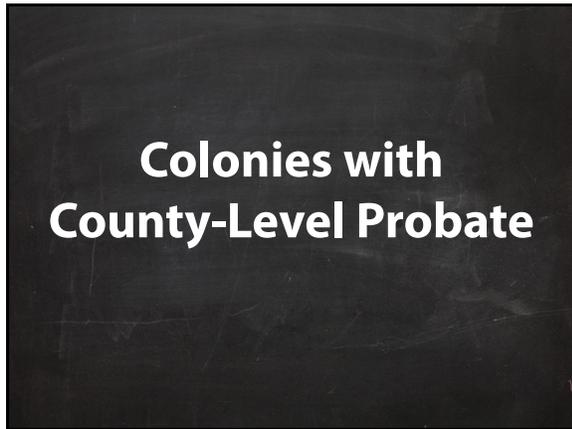
Colonial Rhode Island Probate

- *AmericanAncestors.org*: microfilms of town probates for about half of Rhode Island towns
- *AmericanAncestors.org*: Index to Providence probate, 1646-1899
- *FamilySearch.org*: Search BY TOWN for probate records – will need to access through a Family History Center or Affiliate
- *Ancestry.com*: Varied material, years 17th-20th centuries.

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Smith			Snow, cont.		
1830	William G.	guardianship A5276	1872	Edward S.	administration A10412
1811	William Henry	guardianship A4067	1822	Elisha	administration A4686
1812	William Henry	administration A4119	1896	Eliza	will 2993
1891	William J.	depend't child A17711	1890	Elizabeth	guardianship A16834
1899	William J.	administration 5131	1869	Florence E.	will A9653
1893	William J. B.	administration 1000	1890	Florence P.	guardianship A16746
1896	William M.	will A3431	1822	George	will A4703
1853	William R.	alien A18329	1805	George W.	will 2564
1873	William T.	will A10778	1890	Helen P.	guardianship A16746
1889	William T.	guardianship A16288	1812	James	administration A4147
	Smithers		1879	Jeanette M.	real estate A18705
1895	Ann	administration 2476	1891	J. Lippitt	administration 18
1895	Mary E.	guardianship 2477	1851	John	administration A6992
	Smyth, see Smith		1848	John B.	administration A6556
	Snell		1842	John C.	guardianship A6178
1877	William B.	administration A11780	1879	John C.	will A12401
	Snelling		1852	John E.	guardianship A18245
1847	Samuel	administration A6562	1872	John L.	guardianship A10456
	Snively		1873	John L.	administration A10555
			1773	Joseph	will A596
			1884	Joseph G.	administration A13980
			1830	Joseph Potang	will A5298
			1801	Josiah	administration A3598
			1813	Josiah	administration A4168
			1888	Julia E.	will A15922

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Colonial Maine Probate

- Probate kept at COUNTY level
 - Cumberland Co. Probates destroyed by fire in 1907.
- FamilySearch.org has created an indexed collection of probate for 1760-1979
- Ancestry.com: All counties varied years 17th-20th Century
- Published Compilations
 - Sargent's *Maine Wills 1640-1760*, on www.AmericanAncestors.org
 - John E. Frost's, *Maine Probate Abstracts 1687-1800* published in 1991 by Picton Press in two volumes

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340 MAINE PROBATE ABSTRACTS

Clerk of York, deceased, their gifts to and in their behalf from the first descent of the site of one A. & G. during their minority, all, 27 Apr 1750. Will: Mark Blanding, York, 1749.

8/60. ROBERTY & SARAH LOVET, of Scarborough. Gloddy (8.38). F12349. Ct appx York, 27 Apr 1750. Thomas Curtis of York, executor, gifts to Dorothy & Sarah Lovet, widow & the said Dorothy Lovet, both, who was one of James Tyng, late of Scarborough, decd., to act in their behalf [wp] in their estate of the site of one A. & G. during their minority.

8/61. JOSEPH MITCHELL, of Kennebec. Quoniam (8.39). F12376. Whereas John Mitchell of York, executor of the estate of Joseph Mitchell, late of Kennebec, deceased, has with an act & made up his account, or acquits & discharges him, York, 4 May 1750.

8/62. JOSEPH HARMON, of York. Accts (8.39). F12366. Merry Harmon [unclear] a list of costs & disbs in behalf of the estate of her former husband Joseph Harmon, late of York, deceased, shall: do not appx £207/16/3 N.Y. costs & disbs £258/10/0. Act by Merry Harmon. Exec, widow, & srs. £257/1/6 L.M., being £358/10/0 N.Y.

8/63. JOHN JOHNSON, of Palmetto. Accts (8.39). F12368. Deliverance Pollack, widow, has with an act & disbs in behalf of the estate of her former husband John Johnson, late of Palmetto, decd., settling £572/0/0, with srs. to wit: £121/12/0.

8/64. NATHANIEL DRESSER, of Scarborough. LA (8.40). F4699. LA gr York, 15 May 1750, to Elizabeth Dresser of Scarborough, wid, of the est of her husband Nathaniel Dresser, late of Scarborough, decd int, with t&p inv exh at or bef 15 Aug next, & a p&t acct at or bef 15 Dec 1750.

8/65. WILLIAM VAUGHAN, of Damariscotta. Accts (8.41). F19360. Elliot Vaughan's acct of costs & disbs as exor of the will of his br William Vaughan with said assets of £174/10/0. Inv est appx £24 O.T., costs & disbs £533/5/2, unpaid claims against est £2767/10/5. Acct ment the mill earnings, proving the will in Boston, a suit of mourning for Mrs. Elizabeth Vaughan, & mourning gloves to bes & srs.

8/67. THOMAS DEARON, of Biddeford. Inv (8.43). F4214. Inv of the est of Thomas Dearon, late of Biddeford, appx 14 May 1750, by Daniel Smith, John Smith & Joseph Park, all £420/0/0, est at York, 13 May 1750 by Daniel Smith, John Smith.

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Colonial Massachusetts Probate

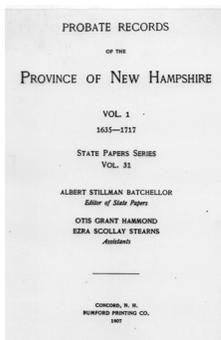
- Probate at COUNTY level
- AmericanAncestors.org
 - Barnstable Abstracts 1685-1789;
 - File papers: Essex 1638-1881;
 - Hampshire 1660-1858;
 - Middlesex 1648-1871;
 - Plymouth 1686-1881;
 - Worcester 1731-1881.
 - And indexes for Norfolk, Suffolk and Worcester counties.
- Ancestry.com: All counties varied years 17th-20th centuries.
- FamilySearch.org: Use the catalog to search for probate records from your ancestor's county of death.

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Colonial New Hampshire Probate

- Probate at COUNTY level
- Probates to 1771 are abstracted in the NH State Papers (vols. 31-39) including wills transcribed. <http://sos.nh.gov/Papers.aspx>
- AmericanAncestors.org has microfilm at it's Boston Research Center for several counties
- FamilySearch.org has created an indexed collection of New Hampshire probate records – 1660-1973
- Ancestry.com's collection covers 1643-1982

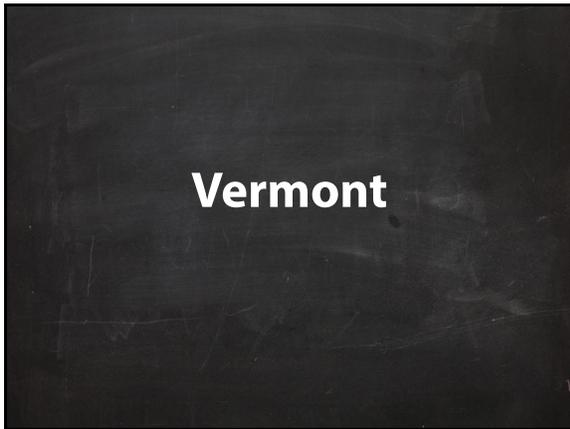
47



NEW HAMPSHIRE WILLS 143
GODFREY DEARBORN 1686 HAMPTON
I Godfrey Dearborne of Hampton in the Province of New Hampshire in New England being aged and Intestate of Body
I Give and Bequeath Unto my Trusty Dearborne my loving wife for the term of her life my Dwelling House & Barn & outyard and the Use and Improvement of all my land both Arable land pasture & marsh land for her Comfortable subsistence During the term of Her life, and the use and Improvement of all my moveables within them and without During the term of her life
In I Doe Give and bequeath Unto my Grand Child Ann Sharrod that now liveth with one one year old Heifer which she is to Receive at the End of Her time y^e she is to live with me
In I Doe Give Unto my son Thomas Dearborne my Dark Brown horse which I Use to Rid on
In I Doe Give Unto my son Thomas and Henry Dearborne all the Rest of my Cattle that shall Remaine at the Decease of the longest liver of me or my wife Excepting Sheep and swine which are other ways Disposed of
In my will and pleasure is that all the Sheep and swine that shall Remaine at my wives Decease shall be Equally Divided between all my Grand Children y^e shall be then living; and the Division to be made by my Executors & over seers
In I Doe Give and Bequeath Unto my Son John Dearborne my House barn and house sett and all my land both Arable land pastures meadows & marshes and all Towns Rights and privileges thereunto belonging and all my tools and Carts & other Implements of Husbandry; and I Doe appoint my son John Dearborne to be my Executor in this my will and the Estate the which he is to Enter Upon and possess at my wives Decease and to be and Remaine to him and his Heires for Ever
In I Doe ordaine and Appoint my two Eldest sons Thomas Dearborne & Henry Dearborne to be my over seers in this my last will and testament whom I appoint to see to the management

New Hampshire State Papers - Probate

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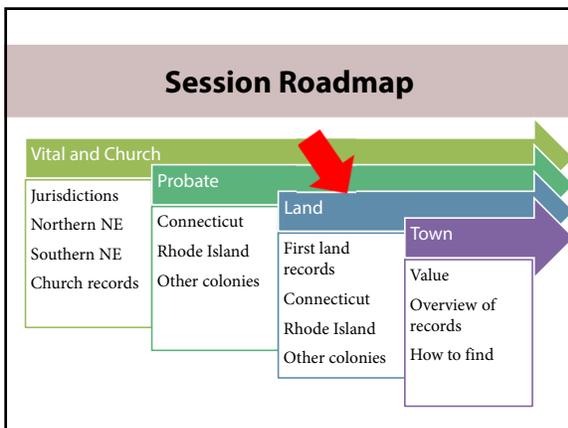


49

Colonial Period Vermont

- No known probate records for Vermont prior to 1777
- May find probate in New York or New Hampshire records
 - From 1749, New Hampshire claimed Vermont
 - From 1764, New York claimed Vermont as part of Albany County
 - Cumberland County from Albany in 1766
 - Gloucester County from Albany in 1770
 - Charlotte County from Albany in 1772

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Why Use Land Records

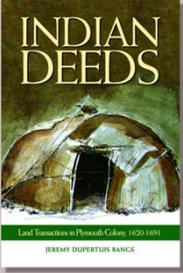
- Grantor can mention how he acquired the land
- Can sign his name with his wife
- Narrows down the chronology
- Land description can be compared to other deeds



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First New England Land Records

- Transfer from Crown to Colony via:
 - Council (e.g. Council of New England)
 - Proprietors (e.g. Mason and Gorges)
 - “After the fact” Charter (e.g. Connecticut, Rhode Island)
- Purchase from indigenous tribes



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First Charters/Grants/Patents

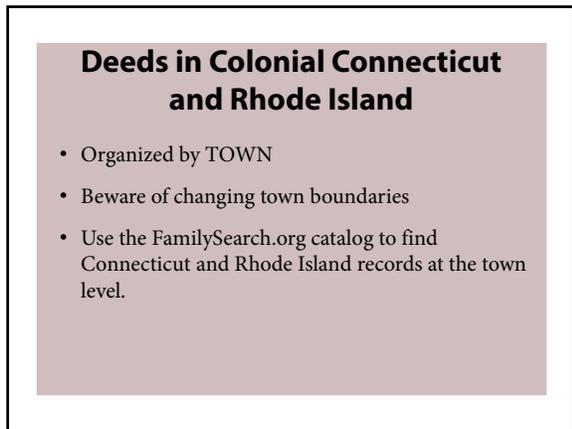
Colony	Year	Grant / Charter / Patent / Other	From
Connecticut	1639	Other: Fundamental Orders Other: Government of New Haven Colony	Towns of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield Towns of New Haven and Milford
	1662	Charter: Connecticut Colony	King Charles II
	1622	Grant: Mason and Gorges	King James and Council of New England
Massachusetts	1629	Charter: Massachusetts Bay	King Charles I and Council of New England
	1619	Other: Mayflower Compact	Pilgrims
	1691	Charter: Massachusetts Colony	King and Queen William and Mary
New Hampshire	1622	Grant: Mason and Gorges	King James and Council of New England
	1629	Grant: Mason	King Charles I
	1636	Sale: Providence lands	Narragansett Tribes
Rhode Island	1643	Patent: Providence Plantations	King Charles I and Robert Warwick

Yale Law School, "Colonial Charters, Grants and Related Documents," https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/statech.asp

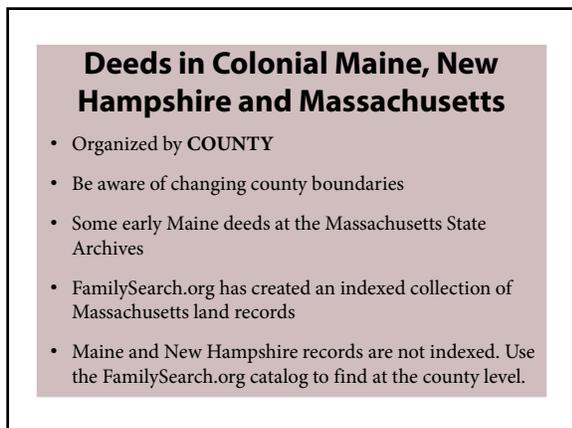
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57

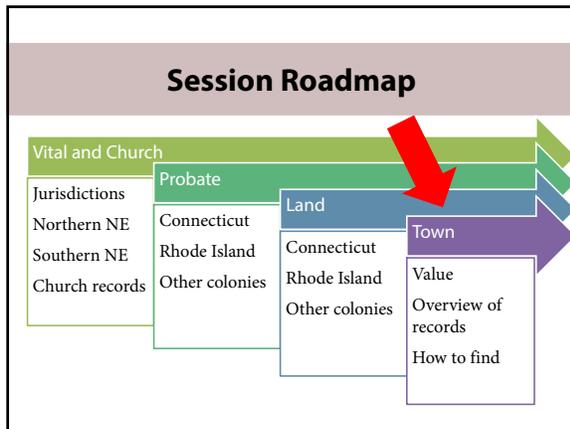
**Pre-Republic Transfers
in Vermont**

- New Hampshire Land Grants 1749-1764 - New Hampshire Provincial & State Papers, Volume 26
- New York Land Patents 1688-1786 - State Papers of Vermont, v. 7
- Post colonial records are at the town level



Vermont Historical Society, Map of New Hampshire Land Grants, 1774

61

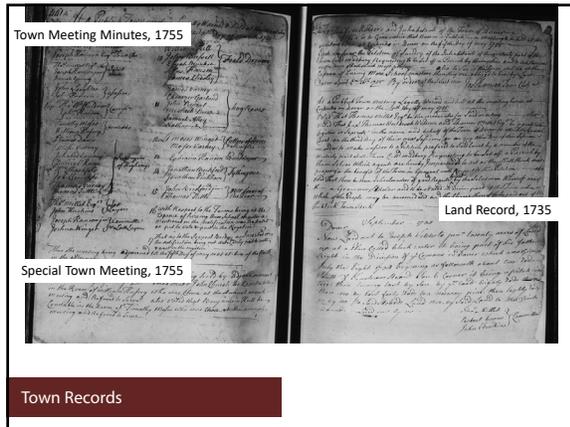


62

**New England's Unique Resource:
Town Records**

- Kept by Town Clerks
- Catalog of town activities
 - Births, marriages and deaths
 - Land transfers
 - Cattle ownership
 - Taxes
 - Other
- Even if your ancestor does not appear in the Town Vital Records, their presence in the community may be elsewhere in the books

63

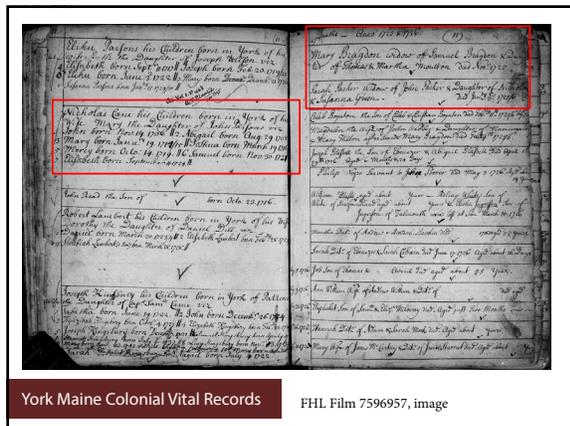


64

Examples of Town Records

- Lists of Officers
- Meetings
- Vitals – birth, marriage, and death
- Land Transactions
- Ear marks
- Military
- Treasurer's records
- Tax records
- Warnings out
- Pew deeds
- Licenses

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Selectmen

- Generally elected to a one-year term
- Managed the affairs of the town
- Performed many tasks
 - Created slate of jurors
 - Divided town lands
 - Judged offenses against town laws and orders

70

Constable

- Posted notice for town meetings
- “Policeman” of the town
 - Conduct
 - Illegal activity
- Acted as tax collector if specific position did not exist
- Warned out strangers

71

Treasurer

- Managed town’s finances
- Presided over reimbursements
 - Military service
 - Care of poor
 - Services by townspeople (constructing and repairing roads, building schoolhouse, etc.)

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Other Town Offices

- Town Clerk
- Selectmen
- Constable
- Treasurer
- Fence Viewers
- Hog Reeves
- Listers and Collectors
- Surveyor of Highways
- Jurors

73

At a meeting held by the inhabitants of Sandown on Thursday the twenty second of this instant March 1756.

1. Ball Vethers Sandown was chosen moderator for the meeting.
2. Ball Vethers Sandown was chosen Constable for the present year.
3. James Clough Northwood Leeds Samuel Neff was chosen Selectman for the year beginning
4. Ball Vethers Joseph Grealy was chosen jurors.
5. David Neff and Joel were chosen jurors.

Town Meeting Record, Sandown, NH, 1756

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Falmouth Feb 27, 20th 1753.

By the desire of the Selectmen of Falmouth, the Subscribers have measured and laid out Roads in Falmouth & crossed as follows -

begin at Henry Kennedy's westerly corner at Cape Elizabeth thence

North 35 Degrees West 19 Rods on the top of the Sea
 fall to Lightstone Point thence

North 57 Degrees East 9 Rods thence

North 31 Degrees West 34 Rods on the top of the sea
 fall to Capt. Wentworth's Land thence

South 82 Degrees West 78 Rods the sea

North 7 Degrees West 11 Rods thence

North 7 Degrees East 12 Rods thence

North 21 Degrees West 19 Rods thence

North 12 Degrees East 30 Rods thence

North 31 Degrees West 16 Rods thence

Falmouth, Maine 1753 Road Survey

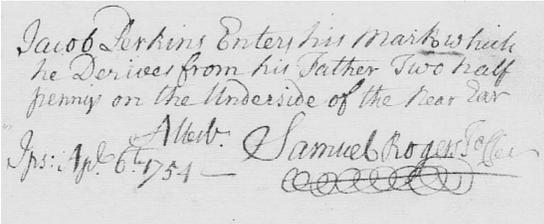
75

Ear Marks

- Cattle and sheep were grazed on common lands
- Important that each animal had identifying mark
- Marks recorded by town clerk
 - Transfer of ear marks from person to person can prove parentage or relationships

76

Ear Marks



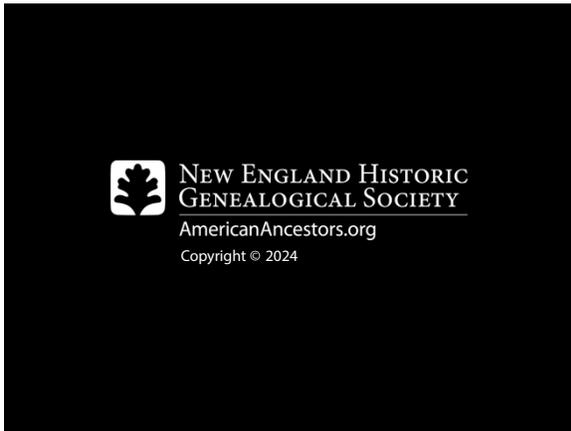
Ips: Apr. 6. 1754 — *Samuel Rogers*

Ear Mark - Ipswich, Mass.

77

**Finding Colonial
Town Records**

78



82