

Researching & Verifying Mayflower Ancestry

Class 1: Getting Started: Mayflower Resources and Records

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Step #1- Get organized

Use a five-generation chart or genealogical software program to map out your ancestors-paying close attention to dates and geography. Templates at: <https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/research-templates>

Standards of recording data:

- Names
 - Write surnames in all CAPITAL LETTERS
 - Record a woman using her maiden name
- Dates
 - Record dates as DAY-MONTH-YEAR (example: 16 Jan 2016)
 - **DO NOT use** slash marks or two-digit years (example: 1/16/2016 or 1/16/2016)
- Places
 - Note smallest to largest geographic division (example: Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts)
 - For outside the U.S.: townland/parish, county, country
 - Be sure to identify counties

Step #2- Look for the best candidate

Review the family tree that you created using a five-generation chart or genealogical software program. Who are the best candidates? Generally speaking, here are some geographical hot and cold spots for *Mayflower* ancestry.

Generation	Years (approx.)	Hot Spots	Cold Spots
1-5	1600s-1740s	• Plymouth County, MA • Barnstable County, MA • New London, CT • Rhode Island (Little Compton area) • Coastal Maine	• Essex County, MA • Quebec and Pacific Canada • Hartford, New Haven, and Fairfield, CT • Providence, RI
6-10	1750s-1880s	• Western Massachusetts • Midwest States (Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana) • New York State (not NYC) • Vermont and Maine • Nova Scotia and New Brunswick	
11-15	1880's-present	• Less dependent on geography	• Less dependent on geography

Step #3- Find at least one document to connect the generations until you reach a *Mayflower* passenger

Verified	Documented
- You will have <i>verified</i> the line when you locate at least one document (preferably an original) that connects each generation back to the Mayflower passenger - Creates the skeleton of your Mayflower line	- You will have <i>documented</i> the line when you locate documents for each individual in a generation (both blood line and spouse) using originals for every vital event - Includes the creation of a qualification outline

List of some records that will provide proof of parentage:

- Census (Federal and State)
- Vital Records (Birth, Marriage, Death)
- Church Records
- Land Records (Federal, State, County)
- Local Histories/Compiled Genealogies
- Scholarly Journals
- Court Records (Probate, Civil, Criminal)
- Newspapers (obits, wedding notices)
- Naturalization records or Passenger Lists
- City Directories

***Mayflower* Databases on AmericanAncestors.org:**

Mayflower Families Fifth Generation Descendants, 1700–1880 - Index of the fifth and sixth generation descendants from *Mayflower Families Through Five Generations: Descendants of the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth, Mass., December 1620* (the “Silver Books”). It provides fully searchable access to the names, dates, locations, record types, and names of parents and spouses (where available) recorded in these documented genealogies. A critical resource for Mayflower Society applications.

General Society of Mayflower Descendants Membership Applications - This database includes all applications and supplemental applications to the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, from its founding in 1897, for applicants born before January 1, 1920. The database index includes applicants, their ancestral Mayflower passenger(s), and birth, marriage, and death information for each generation of descendants. In addition, the General Society membership number is provided.

Generations 11-16- Focus on Vital Records

While there is no one-stop-shop for vital records, here are a few resources that will direct you to record collections, by state, county, or town-

- Genealogist’s Handbook for New England Research*, 6th ed. (NEHGS, 2021)
- Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*, 3rd ed. (Ancestry Pub., 2004)
- The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy*, 3rd ed. (Ancestry Pub., 2006)
- Family Search Wiki: [FamilySearch.org/wiki](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki)

Generations 6-10-Geography Plays a Big Role in the Hot Spot Regions

New England

Vital Records

To locate available vital records in New England, consult *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*, 6th ed. (NEHGS, 2021).

State	Year Civil Records began
Connecticut	1897
Maine	1892
Massachusetts	1841
New Hampshire	1866
Rhode Island	1853
Vermont	1857

Connecticut-

- Barbour collection- contains information on 136 Connecticut towns (1640-1850, some towns include records up to 1870) Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- Ricker compilation- based on Barbour, but also contains information from private diaries, family Bibles, church records, personal letters, and such. Available at NEHGS library.

Massachusetts-

- *Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850* series contains information on 158 towns (Tan books) - Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- *Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Vital and Town Records (known as Holbrook Collection)* - Available at the NEHGS library and Ancestry.com
- *Massachusetts Vital Records, 1841-1914; 1915-1920* - Available at AmericanAncestors.org and FamilySearch.org

Maine-

- Individual town vital records, published by Picton Press- Available at NEHGS library
- *Maine Vital Records to 1892* contains information on 80 of the 488 incorporated municipalities- - Available at NEHGS library and FamilySearch.org
- *Maine Vital Records, 1892-1907; 1908-1922; 1923-1936; 1937-1955* - Available at NEHGS library

New Hampshire-

- *New Hampshire Vital Records Early to 1900* - Available at NEHGS library
- *New Hampshire: Births, Deaths, and Marriages, 1654-1969* - Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- *New Hampshire Vital Records, 1901-1915 (births); 1654-1947, 1938-1959 (deaths); 1637-1947, 1948-1959 (marriages)* - Available at FamilySearch.org

Rhode Island-

- Arnold Collection- contains 21 volumes of Rhode Island towns (Transcribed by James N. Arnold) Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- Rhode Island Vital Records, 1846-1898, 1901-1903 (births) 1901-1903 (marriages), 1901-1953 (deaths) Available at FamilySearch.org and most collections available at NEHGS library

Vermont-

- *Vermont Vital Records to 2008* Available at FamilySearch.org

Church Records

Once you identify your ancestor's religion, search in church records for their baptism, marriage, confirmation, or burial. Dismissals and Membership may also be included in the records of the church.

Types of church records that may contain vital information:

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| • Baptisms | • Reconciliation | • Anointing of the Sick |
| • Marriages | • Holy Orders | • Burial Records |
| • Communion/Eucharist | • Confirmation | • Circumcision Records (Bris) |

Some helpful resources for New England church records:

- *Connecticut Church Records Abstracts* (Congregational Church- 1630-1920) Available at Ancestry.com or CT State Library
- *Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1920* Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- Arnold Collection (RI), Tan Books (MA), Barbour Collection (CT), Picton Press books from Maine all culled some information from church records
- Catholic Church Repertoires in Vermont and Maine Available at NEHGS Library

Study Projects

Scholarly study projects are helpful because they often contain cited and peer reviewed material.

Therefore, researchers can trust the information included in the following:

- Great Migration Study Project- Robert Charles Anderson- *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633* (3 vols., Boston: NEHGS, 1995) Available at AmericanAncestors.org; *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635* (7 vols. to date; Boston, NEHGS, 1999-2011) Available at AmericanAncestors.org; *The Pilgrim Migration: Immigrants to Plymouth Colony, 1620-1633* (Boston: NEHGS, 2007) *The Winthrop Fleet: Massachusetts Bay Company Immigrants to New England, 1629-1630* (Boston: NEHGS, 2012); *The Great Migration Directory* (Boston: NEHGS, 2015) *The Great Migration Newsletter, vol. 1-25* (1990-2016) Available at AmericanAncestors.org
- Early New England Families Study Project- Alicia Crane Williams- *Early New England Families* (Boston, NEHGS, 2015-present) Available at AmericanAncestors.org as an updated database

- Maine Families in 1790- Ruth Gray- *Maine Families in 1790* (12 vols. to date, Camden, ME, Picton Press, 1988)
- Early Vermont Settlers to 1784 Study Project- Scott Andrew Bartley- *Early Vermont Settlers to 1784* (Boston, NEHGS, 2017- present) Available at AmericanAncestors.org as an updated database
- Western Massachusetts Families in 1790 Study Project- Helen Schatvet Ullmann, *Western Families in 1790* (Boston, NEHGS, 2017-present) Available at AmericanAncestors.org as an updated database
- New Hampshire Families in 1790- Diane Florence Gravel and David Watson Kruger, *New Hampshire Families in 1790* (1 vol.; Concord, New Hampshire, New Hampshire Society of Genealogists, 2007)

Scholarly Journals

Like study projects, scholarly journals are helpful because they often contain cited and peer reviewed material. Therefore, researchers can trust the information included in the following:

- *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. Available at AmericanAncestor.org
- *Mayflower Descendant*, vol. 1- (1899-) First published by George Ernest Bowman, *MD* is a highly regarded scholarly journal on *Mayflower* and related families, their English origins, and their lives and places of residence in America, from the earliest settlements to their migrations north and westward. Past volumes of *MD* can be searched on AmericanAncestors.org, while new issues published by NEHGS are available by subscription or at the NEHGS library.
- *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. Past volumes of *TAG* can be searched on AmericanAncestors.org
- *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*, vol. 1- (1968-) has been the “journal of record” of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc. for 40 years. Past volumes available at AmericanAncestors.org
- *Rhode Island Roots*, vol. 1 (1975-) When Rhode Island Roots began publication in 1975, the publication served both as a newsletter for the newly formed Rhode Island Genealogical Society (RIGS) and as an aid to careful genealogical research. While it was short and unsophisticated in design, *Roots* was a serious publication assembled by people with considerable genealogical experience. Past volumes available at AmericanAncestors.org

- *The Maine Genealogist*- vol. 1 (1977-) Published since 1977, *The Maine Genealogist* is the quarterly journal of Maine Genealogical Society, founded in 1976. Beginning as a newsletter for the society, the publication evolved into *The Maine Seine*, published until 1990. The title was changed to *The Maine Genealogist* in 1991, and each issue, now 48 pages, contains scholarly articles on Maine families, emphasizing the solving of long-standing problems and primary source documentation. Past volumes available at AmericanAncestors.org

New York

Vital Records

To locate available vital records in New York examine *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2014)

- *Directory to Collections of New York Vital Records, 1726–1989*, with *Rare Gazetteer* by Fred Q. Bowman and Thomas J. Lynch, (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1995)
- Fred Q. Bowman:
 - *10,000 Vital Records of Western New York, 1809–1850*
 - *10,000 Vital Records of Central New York, 1813–1850*
 - *10,000 Vital Records of Eastern New York, 1777–1834*
 - *8,000 More Vital Records of Eastern New York State, 1804–1850*
 - *7,000 Hudson-Mohawk Valley (NY) Vital Records, 1808–1850*
- "1,100 Vital Records of Northeastern New York, 1835–1850," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 118 (1987): 135–42, 203–09; 119 (1988):35–43, 91–98, 166–70
- *New York Marriages Previous to 1784* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1968)

Church Records

Because most interpreted early vital record laws as the responsibility of the church, records prior to 1880 may be located on the church level. Use the *Guide to Vital Statistics Records of Churches in New York State* or other inventories to identify possible churches where your ancestors may have been baptized, married, or buried (along with other religious events). Some early NY religious denominations were:

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| • Baptists | • Episcopal | • Presbyterian |
| • Catholic | • Jewish | • Quaker (Society of Friends) |
| • Congregational | • Lutheran | • Reformer (Dutch, German, and French or Huguenot) |
| • Eastern Rite Catholic and Eastern Orthodox | • Methodist | |
| | • Mormon (LDS) | |

Some helpful resources for New York church records:

- Vosburgh Collection- New York State Protestant Church records (101 vols. NEHGS microfilm)
- *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, vols. 1–7 by William Wade Hinshaw (NEHGS library)
- *New York: Early Records of the Lutheran Church, 1697-1771* (AmericanAncestors.org)

Study Projects

- *Beekman Patent*- Frank Doherty (14 vols.- AmericanAncestors.org) Alphabetical genealogies of early inhabitants of Dutchess County's Beekman Patent, including many that migrated from Massachusetts and Connecticut. *Hint* End of each surname sketch lists "other and unplaced" individuals who appear throughout the state.

Scholarly Journals

- *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 good number of these families had New England origins or connections, so the Record should always be checked. Past volumes of the NYG&B are available at AmericanAncestors.org
- *The National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. 1-(1912-) Since 1912, the National Genealogical Society Quarterly has published material concerning all regions of the nation and all ethnic groups including compiled genealogies, case studies, essays on new methodology and little-known resources, critical reviews of current books, and previously unpublished source materials.
- *The Genealogist*, vol. 1-(1980-) In 1980 *The Genealogist* was founded by Dr. Neil D. Thompson. In 1997 ownership of *The Genealogist* was transferred to The American Society of Genealogists, who have maintained a publication schedule of two issues per year. It publishes high-quality genealogical articles including single-family studies, compiled genealogies, and articles that solve specific problems.
- *Tree Talks*, vol. 1-(1961-) Unlike the NYG&B, *Tree Talks* focuses on the regions outside of New York City, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley. Published by the Central New York Genealogical Society, for the purpose of preserving, publishing and sharing genealogical information and resources (49 upstate counties)

Nova Scotia/New Brunswick

Vital Records

- Individual town vital records-Available at NEHGS library, Familysearch.org and provincial archives
- Online access to births (1864-1877, 1908-1912, delayed registrations 1830-1912); Marriages (1864-1937) and marriage bonds (1763-1864); Deaths (1864-1877, 1908-1962); and City of Halifax deaths (1890-1908) novascotiagenealogy.com
- Online access to births (1800-1918, 1869-1901 (index), 1898-1918 (index); marriages (1789-1950 (index), 1887-1919, 1920-1950); 1815-1938, 1815-1919, 1885-1921 (index), 1920-1964 (index), 1815-1919 (index), 1941-1947 (index) <http://archives.gnb.ca/>

Church Records

- For more complete list see Terrence Punch's *Genealogist's Handbook for Atlantic Canada Research*

Study Projects

- *Planters and Pioneers*- Esther Clark Wright- A go-to resource, *Planters and Pioneers*, contains biographical information on over 4000 heads of households that moved to Atlantic Canada between 1749 and 1775, including birth and death information, as well as spouses, parents, and children's names, if available.
- *American Loyalist Claims*- Peter Wilson Coldham- a resource that is sometimes looked over when searching for *Mayflower* families. Though the claims largely describe property that was lost by loyalists during the American Revolution, some of the claims also contain information about wives, children, and extended family members, as well as a place of origin.
- *New Englanders in Nova Scotia*- Fred E. Crowell- *New Englanders in Nova Scotia* is a collection of genealogical articles and research material concerning 48,165 names in more than 650 families of New England Planters and Loyalists who settled in Nova Scotia beginning in 1759. It includes a series of articles written by Fred E. Crowell in the 1920s and 30s for the *Yarmouth Herald* as well as his extensive research notes. The complete database is available at AmericanAncestors.org
- *Loyalists of New Brunswick*- Esther Clark Wright- this resource primarily focuses on historical context, but it does provide names of individuals moved to land grants.

Scholarly Journals

- *Generations: the Journal of the New Brunswick Genealogical Society*, vol. 1 (1979-) - a quarterly newsletter published by the New Brunswick Genealogical Society.
- *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, vol. 1 (1971-)- Formerly known as *The Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly* (1971-1980), this journal offers historical and genealogical articles with a high standard of editing, as well as scholarly citations.
- *The Nova Scotia Genealogist*, vol. 1 (1971-)- Known prior as the *Genealogical Newsletter*, this journal offers research articles, primary sources, book reviews, readers' queries, family bible information, etc.

Generations 1-5- Well Documented Families

- *Mayflower Families through Five Generations* (aka silver books) and *Mayflower Families in Progress* (pink books) - a multivolume series that systemically traces the Mayflower passengers with known descendants through five generations (Fletcher, Mullins, and Tilley excluded). Full list: <https://themayflowersociety.org/genealogy/explore-your-roots/silver-books-project/guide-to-the-silver-books/> This research relies on original material, and has been vetted by expert genealogists. The fifth generation of these volumes is available as a searchable database on AmericanAncestors.org

Step #5- Document the Line (covered later in the course)