



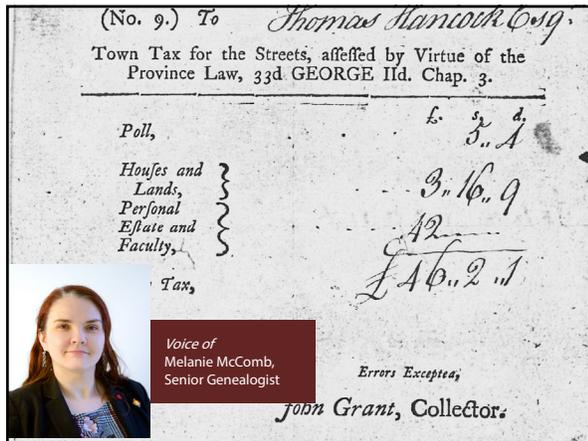
1



2



3



4

"Follow the Money" Approach

- When vital records do not exist or have significant gaps, we turn to financial records to learn more about our ancestors
- This approach can be used to track an individual's movements through a country or overseas
- It can help clarify relationships between families

5



6

Why use Land Records?

- In some cases, a land record may be the only documented source you can locate.
- Land records can often trace generations of ownership of a single parcel of land.
- Using land records, you may determine the site of your ancestor's house or farm today.

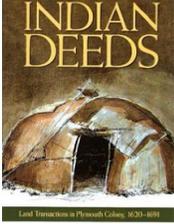
7

Tip:
Remember not all deeds were recorded at the date of the sale.

8

Native American Settlement in SE New England

9

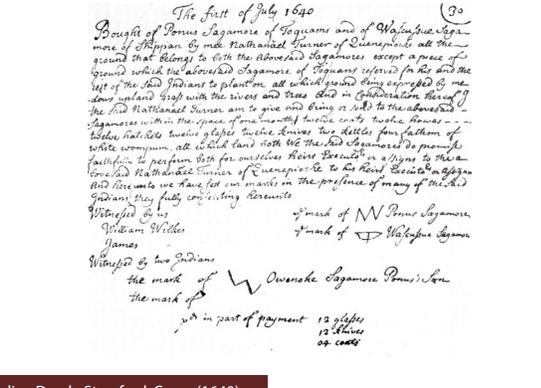


INDIAN DEEDS

Bangs, Jeremy Dupertuis, *Indian Deeds: Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony, 1620-1691*, (Boston: NEHGS, 2002).

Indian Deeds by Jeremy Bangs

10



The first of July 1640 (30)

Bought of Ponus Sagamore of Squams and of Wabunus Sagamore of Nippon by me Nathaniel Turner of Quensicut all the ground that belongs to both the abovesaid Sagamores except a piece of the left of the said Indians to plant on all which said things appoynted by me above written with the river and trees about in Goddards lotts being of the said Nathaniel Turner are to give and bring or sell to the abovesaid Sagamores within the space of one month twelue cents twelue shanes - - - twelue shanes twelue cents twelue shanes the shanes four shanes of white wampum all to hold their lotts till the said abovesaid purchase fullfill to the purpose both for ourselves their heires or assigns to the said Nathaniel Turner of Quensicut to his heire heires assigns and assigns and hereunto we have set our marks in the presence of many of the said Indians they fully consenting therunto

Witnessed by us
 William Weller
 James
 Witnessed by two Indians
 the mark of
 the mark of

of mark of NV Ponus Sagamore
 of mark of Wabunus Sagamore

Ovenshoke Sagamore Ponus's heire

yd in part of payment 12 shanes
 12 shanes
 or cents

11

Tip:

Indian Deeds were not always recorded before legal settlement occurred by colonists.

12



13



14

Land Distribution Process



- **17th – 18th century**
- General Court assigns grants of land to groups of settlers.
- These settlers form Proprietorship Committees to distribute land to settle towns.

15

Where to find Proprietor Records?

- Town Halls, Town Clerk, Tax Office or assessor
- County Registry of Deeds
- Libraries and local historical societies
- FamilySearch Library microfilm
- Published transcriptions of Proprietor records

16

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch Catalog search interface. The search field contains the word "Proprietor". Below the search field, there are buttons for "Search" and "Reset". To the right, there is a section titled "Other Catalogs to Consider" with links to OCLC WorldCat and ArchiveGrid.

<https://familysearch.org/catalog/search>

17

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch Catalog search interface. The search field contains "Cambridge". A dropdown menu is open, showing a list of location suggestions including "United States, Kentucky, Jefferson, Cambridge", "United States, Maine, Somerset, Cambridge", "United States, Maryland, Dorchester, Cambridge", "United States, Massachusetts, Middlesex, Cambridge", "United States, Minnesota, Isanti, Cambridge", "United States, Nebraska, Furnas, Cambridge", "United States, New York, Washington, Cambridge", "United States, Ohio, Guernsey, Cambridge", "United States, Vermont, Lamoille, Cambridge", and "United States, Wisconsin, Dane, Cambridge".

<https://familysearch.org/catalog/search>

18

Tip:
Tax records can indicate when your ancestor was paying real estate tax.

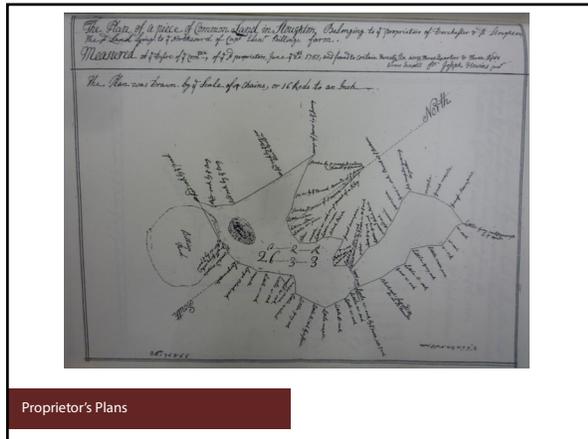
25

Names.	Poles to be d.	Proprietors				Total	Total to be d.
		Real of c.	Prop of c.	Part of of c.	Part of c.		
No. Ebenezer Newcomb, Proprietor	X	36		36	37	76	
R. Capt. William Pierce	X	28		29	20	51	
R. David Rowley, Proprietor	X	17		17	17	189	
S. James Swift	+	24	5	15	15	122	
W. John Webb	X	46		46	51	212	
Joseph Woodward	X	12		12	12	163	
Joseph Whiston	X	12		12	12	163	
Strongly over		3	5	9	9	75	
Total		6	6	8	10	210	26
Note, the acct. of Ebenezer and John Webb has		9	9	10	10	11	
		10	10	11	11	11	
		11	11	12	12	12	
		12	12	13	13	13	
		13	13	14	14	14	
		14	14	15	15	15	
		15	15	16	16	16	
		16	16	17	17	17	
		17	17	18	18	18	
		18	18	19	19	19	
		19	19	20	20	20	
		20	20	21	21	21	
		21	21	22	22	22	
		22	22	23	23	23	
		23	23	24	24	24	
		24	24	25	25	25	
		25	25	26	26	26	
		26	26	27	27	27	
		27	27	28	28	28	
		28	28	29	29	29	
		29	29	30	30	30	
		30	30	31	31	31	
		31	31	32	32	32	
		32	32	33	33	33	
		33	33	34	34	34	
		34	34	35	35	35	
		35	35	36	36	36	
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		37	37	38	38	38	
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		43	43	44	44	44	
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		46	46	47	47	47	
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		98	98	99	99	99	
		99	99	100	100	100	

26

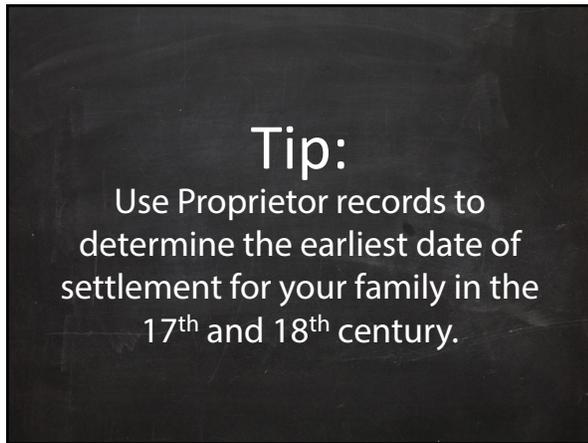
Tip:
Your ancestor did not need to reside in a community to own land there.

27

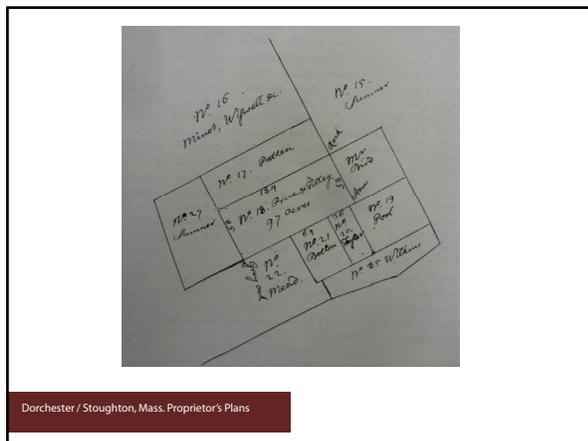


Proprietor's Plans

28

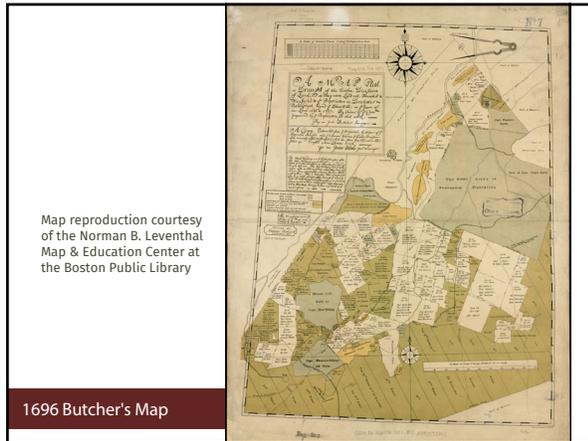


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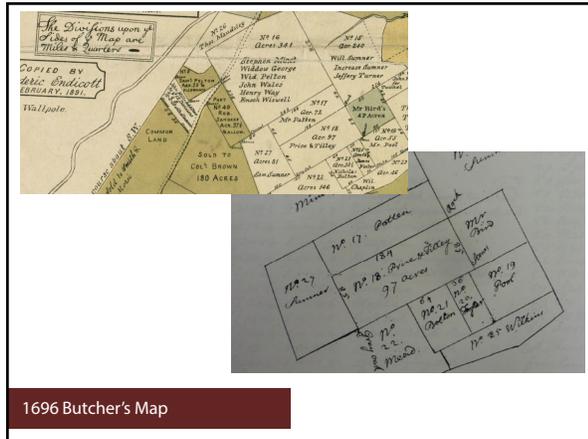


Dorchester / Stoughton, Mass. Proprietor's Plans

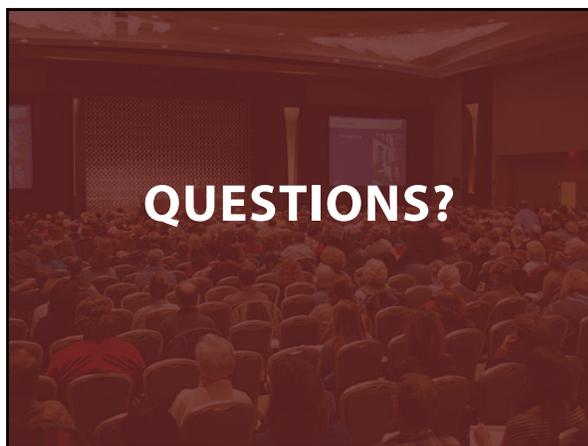
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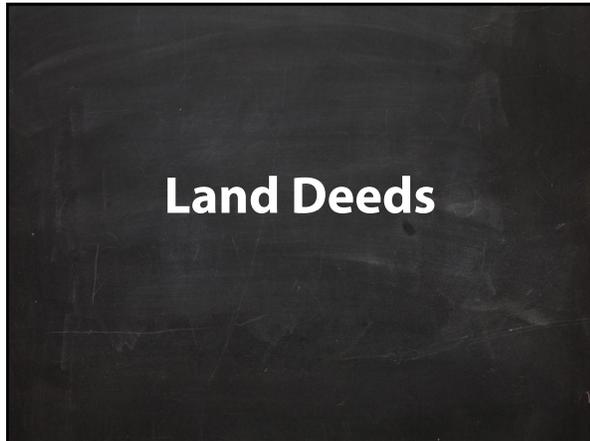
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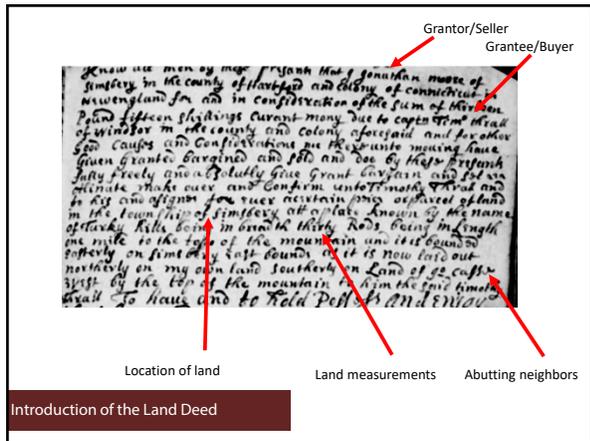


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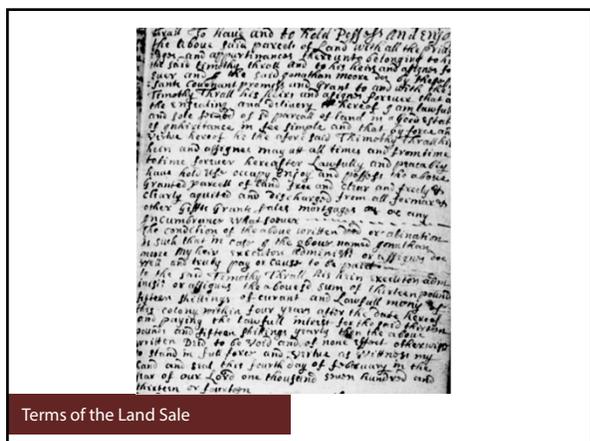


Land Deeds

34



35



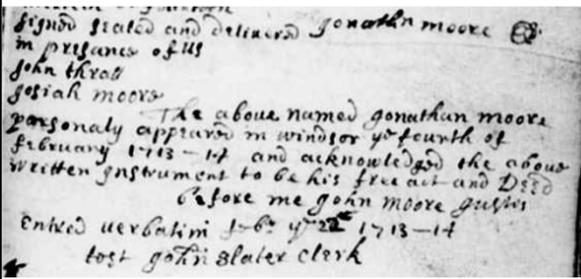
36

Land Measurements

- **1 mile:** 80 chains, 320 poles, rods or perches = 5,280 ft.
- **1 chain:** 4 poles, rods perches is 66 ft., or 100 links.
- **1 pole, rod or perch:** 25 links, 16 ½ ft.
- **1 link:** 7.92 inches



37



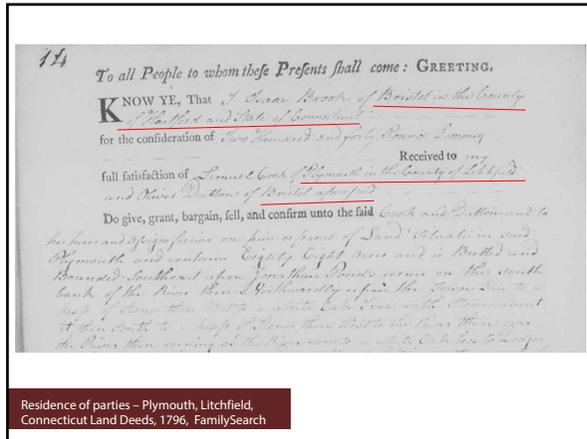
Signed, Sealed, Delivered, and Appearing
Before the Court

38

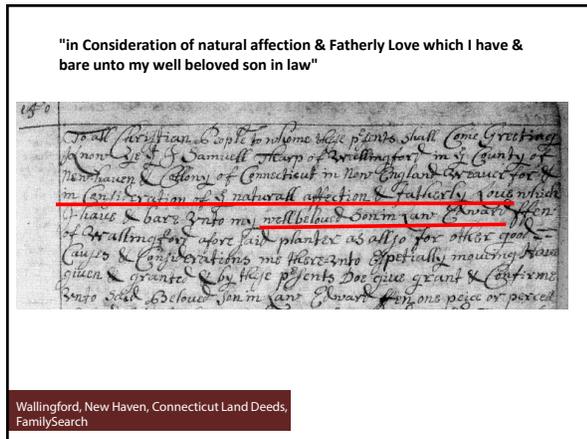
Tips for Analyzing Land Deeds

- Note where the buyer and seller's residence are at the time of the sale. This is a key clue for identifying migration.
- Look for deeds where a husband is selling property. If his wife is living, her first name will be referenced in the deed and/or the court inquiry to release her dower.
- Note the deed witnesses and abutting neighbors. They may be relatives of either party.
- Look for phrases like "in consideration of natural affection" to identify family members, including in-laws.
- Quit claim and power of attorney deeds are useful for documenting the children of a deceased parent.

39



40



41



42

Massachusetts Land Records

- The earliest land owners in Massachusetts were town Proprietors.
- County-level land registration started in 1640, managed by county court clerks
- In 1715, the legislature mandated a Register of Deeds per county to be elected

43

Connecticut Land Records

- The earliest land was granted by the Conn. General Court to town Proprietors.
- Proprietors distributed the land within the town.
- Records are held on the town level. The only exception are the border towns of Woodstock and Suffield which were once part of Massachusetts.
- The FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, Utah has microfilmed deeds on the town level through 1900 in most towns.
- There is no statewide or county index to deeds.

44

45

Land records, 1639-1901; general index, 1639-1865 ADD TO PRINT LIST

Authors [Hartford, Connecticut, Town Clerks](#) (Author)

Format Microfilm 35mm

Language English

Publication Date 1947-1949, 1983, 1986

Publisher Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah

Place of Publication Salt Lake City, Utah

Physical 117 microfilm reels; 35 mm.

Notes

Microfilm of originals in the Town Hall, Hartford, Connecticut.
 Additional indexes within most volumes.
 Proprietors records referred to as "Bills." in general index.
 Proprietors records and deed book 1 include births, marriages, deaths, and ear markings.
[View this Library record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations.](#)

FamilySearch.org

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Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	Image Group Number (DGS)	Format
Deeds v. 16-17 1783-1790	Granite Mountain Record Vault	United States & Canada Film	4518	8189167	
Deeds v. 18-19 1774-1795	Granite Mountain Record Vault	United States & Canada Film	4519	7833614	
Deeds v. 20-21 1795-1801	Granite Mountain Record Vault	United States & Canada Film	4520	7833615	
Deeds v. 22-23 1799-1811	Granite Mountain Record Vault	United States & Canada Film	4521	7833616	
Deeds v. 24-25 1802-1808	Granite Mountain Record Vault	United States & Canada Film	4522	8199978	

FamilySearch.org

50

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

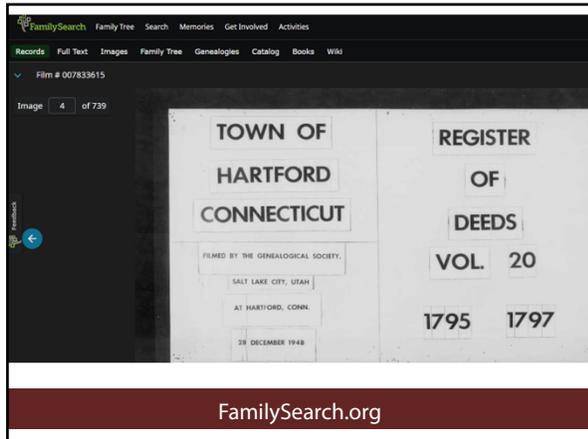
Records Full Text Images Family Tree Genealogies Catalog Books Wiki

Film # 007833615 SOURCE BOX ATTACH TO TREE

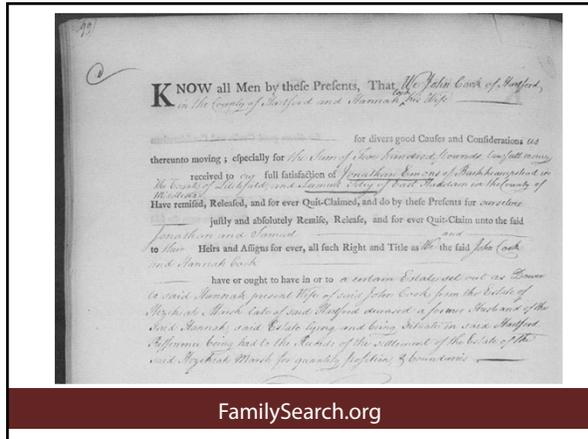
Image 1 of 739

FamilySearch.org

51



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53



54

New Hampshire Deeds

- **Masonian Proprietary Period 1629-1641** *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers* (Vols. 29).
- Original Town charters from the 17th and 18th century can be found in the *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers* (Vols. 27-28).
- *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers Online*
<http://sos.nh.gov/Papers.aspx>
- **Massachusetts Era 1641-1679**
- Post-1679, New Hampshire was a royal province. Deeds could be recorded at the town or county level
- 1769 - Rockingham County Registry of Deeds was created – deeds would continue to be registered at the county level as each county was created.

55

Rhode Island Land Records

- The earliest land grants were made by the colony. The records of these grants are known as "land evidences". They are located at the Rhode Island State Archives.
- The Rhode Island General Assembly granted land to groups who in turn became Proprietors of the towns.
- Some early grants and land transfers were recorded in *Proceedings of the General Assembly, 1646 to 1851*, located at the Rhode Island State Archives.
- Rhode Island Deeds are recorded on the town level.

56

Vermont Land Records

- The earliest landowners in Vermont were town Proprietors.
- Some early Vermont land recorded 1688-1786 appears in Secretary of State, *New York Land Patents 1688–1786: Covering Land Included in the State of Vermont* (Vol. 7).
- Land Grants 1778-1881 were published in Secretary of State, *Petitions for Grants of Land 1778–1881*. State Papers of Vermont, (Vol. 5). The petitions list the location, property, and the reason for the petition.
- Vermont land deeds are recorded at the town level.

57

Maine Land Records

- Maine deeds are recorded on the county level by the Registrar of Deeds
- Cumberland Co. Land records were not destroyed.
- First 18 vols. York County Deeds covering all of Maine to 1736 were published by the state from 1887-1910 on AmericanAncestors.org
- Some land was dealt with through the Land Office in Maine after 1820, when Maine was created as a state.

58



59



60

Why use tax records?

- Identifies your ancestor at a specific place and time
- Provides information about occupation and housing status not found in other records
- Overlooked source in early published genealogies
- Adds to the life story of your ancestor

61

Challenges of Tax Records

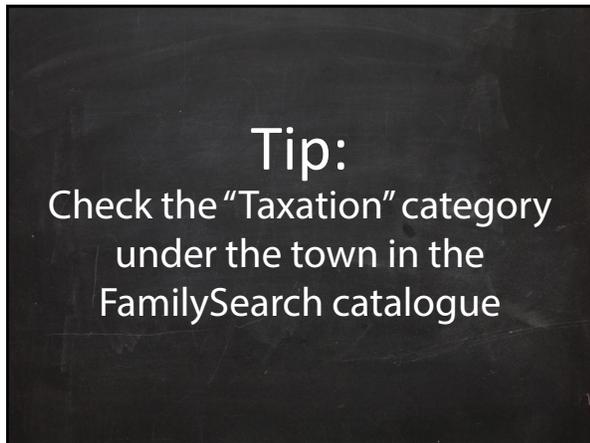
- Not all towns/counties/states' tax records survive
- Records are often not indexed
- Records are not always easy to understand and require some historical context
- Separate repositories for each level of taxation (federal, state, local)

62

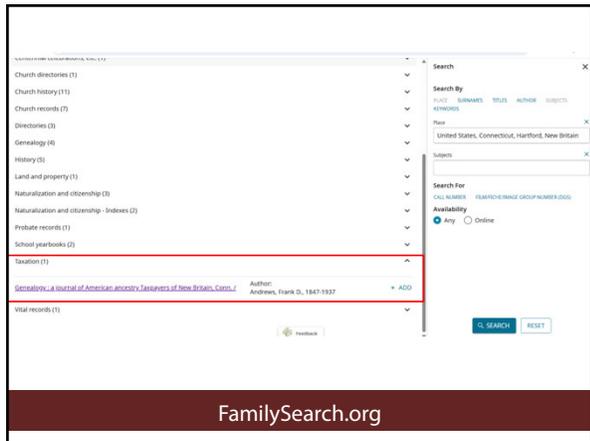
Locations for Tax Records

- Tax Assessor's Office
- Historical Societies
- City or State Archives
- Genealogy Web Sites
- Newspapers
- Published Records
- University/College Collections

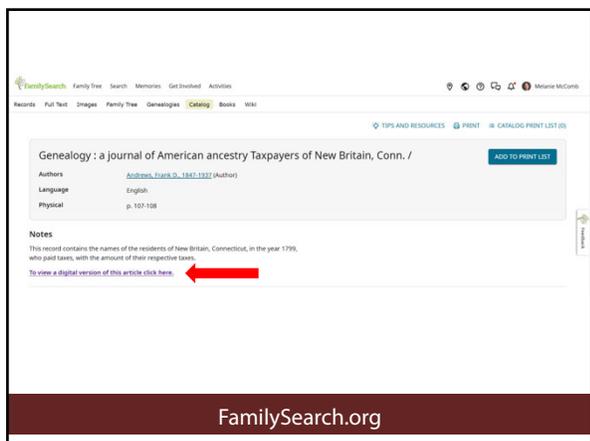
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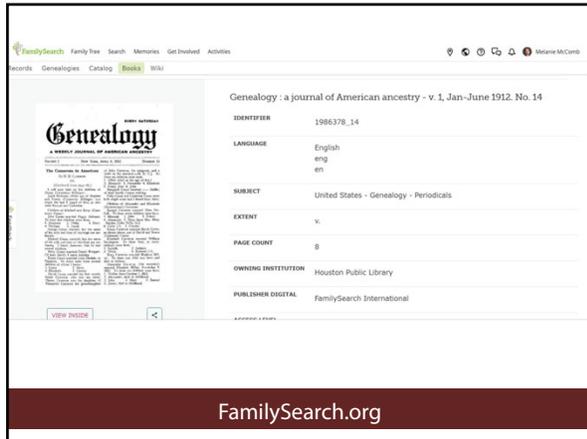
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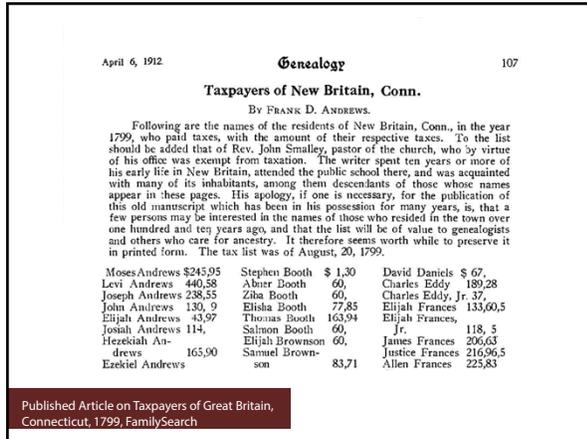
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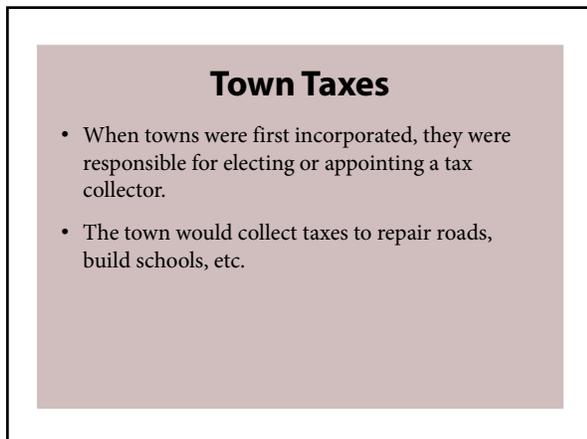
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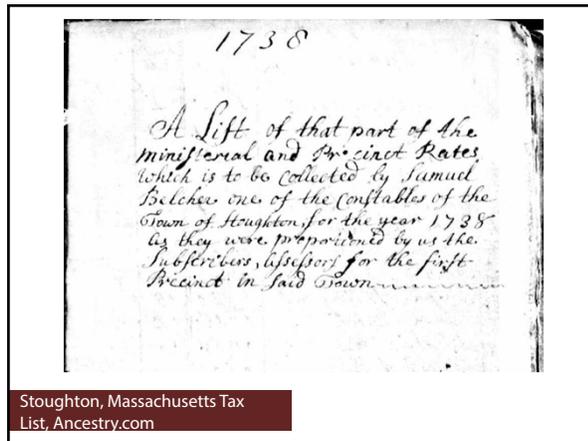


69

Ministerial Tax

- Also known as the religious tax or rate
- Mandatory tax to support the local congregational church
- Collected and enforced by colonial governments from settlement until the American Revolution

70



Stoughton, Massachusetts Tax List, Ancestry.com

71

Names	Precinct		Ministerial				
	Rate	Assess	Rate	Assess	Rate	Assess	Rate
Savage, Henry	1 00	0 8	0 86	0 0	0 0	0 6	0 9
Robak, Shepard	1 06	0 5	0 86	0 1	0 0	0 9	0 10
Thomas, Ephraim	2 13	1 2	0 70	0 2	1 0	2 6	1 1
William, Sumner	0 08	0 0	0 00	0 1	4 0	0 0	0 1
Henry, Sumner	0 09	0 0	0 00	0 0	8 0	0 0	0 8
Thomas, Sumner	1 13	0 7	0 86	0 2	1 0	1 1	0 11
John, Rogers	2 48	2 4	0 70	0 7	10 0	3 1	1 8
Michael, Butler	1 17	1 2	0 86	0 2	5 0	2 0	0 13
James, Smith	0 03	0 0	0 00	0 0	6 0	0 0	0 6
Colby, Smith	1 00	0 0	0 86	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 8
Robert, Swan	0 08	0 0	0 00	0 0	1 4	0 0	0 1

Stoughton, Massachusetts, 1738 Ministerial Tax, Ancestry.com

72

Poll Tax

- Tax levied as a prerequisite to voting
- Massachusetts was the first to enact the poll tax in 1646, followed by New Haven colony in 1649
- Typically assessed on white males 16 years and over
- The following groups were often exempt from paying poll tax:
 - Clergy
 - Public officials
 - Impoverished
 - Sick/Disabled/Elderly
 - Enslaved persons
 - Women

76

*Voted to raise Eighty pounds to be assessed on
supporting the Poor & all other necessary charges
that shall in said town be to be paid for*

*Voted to allow Francis Hallum his share of the
poll tax he being lame*

*Voted to allow Ezra Houghton fourteen shillings
& ten pence in being for money he paid towards
the support of the Poor & Brothels & did more
than there was any total for*

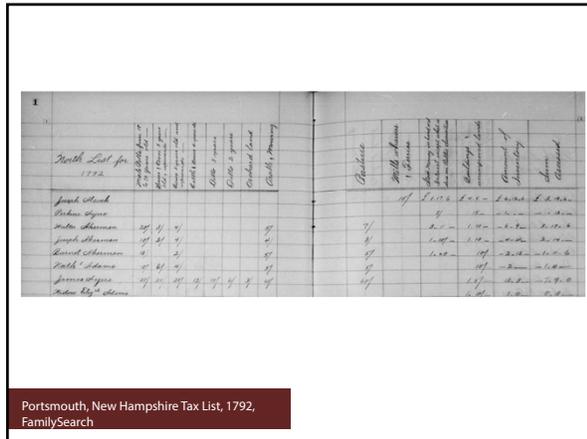
Poll Tax Exemption, Lancaster, Massachusetts
Town Records, 1765, Ancestry.com

77

Taxes on Real and Personal Estates

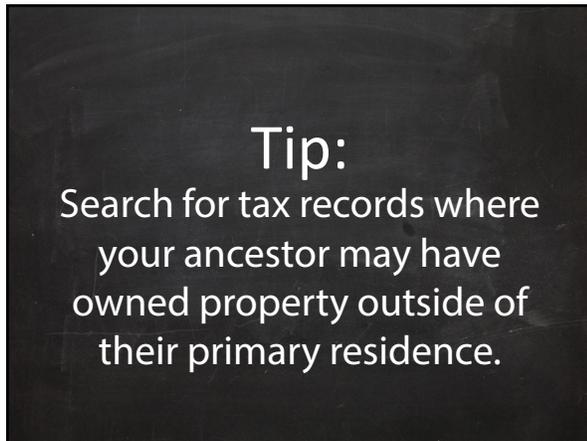
- Tax rolls may detail the type of structures they have on the estate (house, farm, mill, etc.)
- Tax rolls are a great census alternative. They can help you recreate the community they were living in.

78

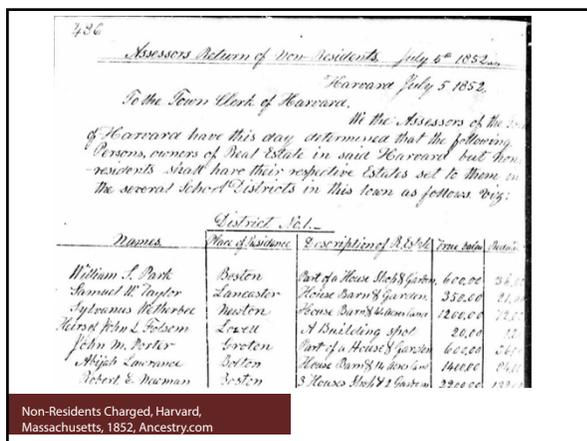


Portsmouth, New Hampshire Tax List, 1792, FamilySearch

79

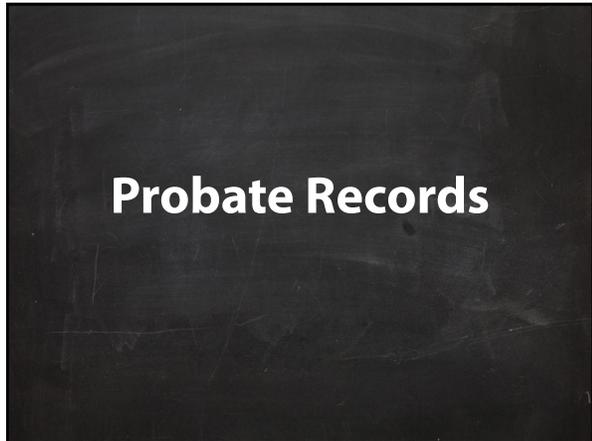


80



Non-Residents Charged, Harward, Massachusetts, 1852, Ancestry.com

81



82

What is a Probate Record?

- Court process that disposes of a deceased person's estate
- Describes how an estate will be distributed
- Names who will administer the estate
- Contains a list of property/possessions owned by the deceased

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Why Use Probate Records?

- Provide an approximate death date for the deceased
- Verify family relationships
 - Married daughters may be listed with their husband's surname
- Wills and inventories offer a glimpse into the personal belongings of an ancestor and how they were distributed
- Context of an ancestor's life

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Challenges of Probate Records

- Not everyone left a probate record (i.e. women)
- Deceased may have had multiple marriages
- Not all children are listed
- No uniformity
- Difficult to read

85

Common Probate Terms

- **Testate:** dies with a Last Will & Testament.
- **Intestate / Administration:** dies without a will.
- **File Papers:** the original documents associated with the probate file.
- **Record Books / Copy Books:** copies of certain probate files copied into bound record volumes.

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Documents Found in Probate Records

- Will
- Codicil
- Letters of Administration & Letters of Testamentary
- Inventory
- Accounts
- Distributions
- Guardianship Records
- Miscellaneous Probate Papers (examples below):
 - Dower Records
 - Bill of Sales
 - Receipts

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