

Massachusetts Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

Class 3: 19th Century Massachusetts Research

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Massachusetts in the 19th Century

The 19th century was a period of change in Massachusetts and the United States as a whole, marked by economic growth, industrialization, population growth, urbanization, and technological advances. Additionally, the stability of the relatively young nation was at risk during the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Throughout the course of the 19th century, particularly in the final decades, immigrants began to arrive in large numbers from new parts of the world. In particular, Massachusetts saw influxes of individuals from Ireland, French Canada and the Maritime Provinces, Italy, Portugal, China, and Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe.

The end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century brought standardization and expansion of several record-types that are key genealogical resources. The amount of information collected on passenger lists and naturalization records, vital records, and census records increased during this period.

The 19th century also saw an increased interest in genealogy and local history. The first genealogical societies were founded in the mid-1800s, and family and local history became popular subjects for publication. Careful study of these documents, alongside traditional genealogical sources, can provide valuable details about our ancestors.

General Massachusetts History and Genealogy Resources

David Allen Lambert, *Research in Massachusetts*, (Falls Church, Va.: National Genealogical Society, 2018).

Richard D. Brown and Jack Tager, *Massachusetts: A Concise History*, (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

Richard W. Wilkie and Jack Tager, *Historical Atlas of Massachusetts*, (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991).

Immigration and Naturalization Resources

Boston, 1821-1850 Passenger and Immigration Lists,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7482/>

Boston Passenger Manifest (1848-1891) Index,

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ArchivesSearch/Passengermanifest.aspx>

Massachusetts, Boston Passenger Lists, 1820-1891,

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1860873>

Massachusetts, passenger lists, 1806-1910 [incl. Gloucester, MA and Portuguese arrivals],

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2822167?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

Massachusetts, U.S., State and Federal Naturalization Records, 1798-1950,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2361/>

Massachusetts, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1963,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8745/>

Registers of passengers arriving in Massachusetts ports, 1848-1891,

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1359597?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

Subject Search – Massachusetts Naturalization and Citizenship,

https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&query=%2Bsubject_id%3A714348

U.S., Atlantic Ports Arriving and Departing Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1873 and 1893-1959,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8758/>

Ethnic Group Resources

“Artifacts of Faith: The remarkable significance of the parish records of the Boston Archdiocese,”

<https://catholicrecords.americanancestors.org/>

Boston Pilot: Irish Immigrant Advertisements (Search for Missing Friends), 1831-1920,

<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/510/boston-pilot-irish-immigrant-advertisements-search-for-missing-friends-1831-1920>

Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986).

James Warren Gould, “Genealogy of the Portuguese of Cape Cod,” *Cape Cod Genealogical Society Bulletin* 29 no. 3 (Fall 2003), 82-87.

Marc A. Mamigonian, ed., *The Armenians of New England: Celebrating a Culture and Preserving a Heritage*, (Belmont, Mass.: National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc., 2004).

Marsha McCabe and Joseph D. Thomas, eds., *Portuguese Spinner: An American Story*, (New Bedford, Mass.: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1998).

Massachusetts: Armenian Immigrant Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1880-1915,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/492/massachusetts-armenian-immigrant-births-deaths-and-marriages-1880-1915>

Armenian Immigration Project: <https://markarlan.org/ArmenianImmigrants/shiplists.html>

Massachusetts: Catholic Cemetery Association Records, 1833-1940,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/2782/massachusetts-catholic-cemetery-association-records-1833-1940>

Massachusetts: Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts, 1875-2012,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/422/massachusetts-jewish-cemetery-association-of-massachusetts-1875-2012>

Massachusetts: Jewish Cemeteries of Western Massachusetts, 1647-1999,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1647/massachusetts-jewish-cemeteries-of-western-massachusetts-1647-1999>

Massachusetts: Organized Jewish Group Activity in 19th Century Massachusetts, 1843-1900,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1566/massachusetts-organized-jewish-group-activity-in-19th-century-massachusetts-1843-1900>

JewishGen USA Databases [scroll down for Massachusetts list]:
<https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/USA/>

Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1920,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/2726/massachusetts-roman-catholic-archdiocese-of-boston-records-1789-1920>

Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Parish Cemetery Records, 1866-1940,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/2811/massachusetts-roman-catholic-parish-cemetery-records-1866-1940>

Michael J. Leclerc, "The Search for Missing Friends," *New England Ancestors* 3.4 (Fall 2002), 29-31,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/new-england-ancestors-magazine/image/?pageName=29&volumeld=11756>

Molly Rogers, “Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Records Project: We’re Expanding!” 20 Feb 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6gnjr13TQ>

Oscar Handlin, *Boston’s Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1969).

Rhonda R. McClure, “Getting Started in Portuguese Genealogy,” 18 June 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbijWLYgj6w>

U.S, Boston Arrivals of Jewish Immigrants from HIAS Records, 1882-1929
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1361/>

Wing-kai Tao and the Chinese Historical Society of New England, *Chinese in Boston, 1870-1965*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008).

Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at American Ancestors: Digital Library & Archives, <https://digital.americanancestors.org/digital/custom/jhc>

General Massachusetts Military Resources

Cyndi’s List: Massachusetts Military Records, <https://www.cyndislist.com/us/ma/military/>

Fold3.com, <https://www.fold3.com/?group=1>

Office of Public Safety Collection Guide, Massachusetts State Archives [see “PS – Public Safety”], <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/archives/collections/collections-guide.htm>

The Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, <https://mhsm.org/>

War of 1812 Resources

Adjutant General’s Office, *Records of the Massachusetts volunteer militia called out by the Governor of Massachusetts to suppress a threatened invasion during the war of 1812-14*, (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1913).

The War of 1812: Items from the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, <https://www.masshist.org/features/war-of-1812-selections>

Civil War Resources

William Schouler, *A History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, (Boston: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1868).

Adjutant General’s Office, *Massachusetts soldiers, sailors, and marines in the Civil War*, (Norwood, Mass.: Norwood Press, 1931-37).

Civil War Records: Basic Research Sources, <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/resources>

Claire Prechtel-Kuskens, “A Reasonable Degree of Promptitude: Civil War Pension Application Processing, 1861-1885), *Prologue* 42 no. 1 (Spring 2010),
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/spring/civilwarpension.html>.

Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War,
<https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/50883>

U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865,
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1555/>

Census and Vital Records

Blank Census Charts and Forms [NARA], <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/charts-forms>

“Clues in the Census Records,” *NARA*, <https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1790-1840.html>

Lindsay Fulton, “The Federal Census: Moving Beyond the Population Schedule,” January 2021,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx0bb0z08ns>

Massachusetts Census [Wiki Article],
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Massachusetts_Census

Massachusetts State Census, 1855, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1459985>

Massachusetts State Census, 1865, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1410399>

Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001,
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2061550>

Massachusetts, U.S. Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988,
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2495/>

Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1620-1850,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/190/massachusetts-vital-records-1620-1850>

Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1841-1910,
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/191/massachusetts-vital-records-1841-1910>

U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880,
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1276/>

Published Genealogy and Local History Resources

Alicia Crane Williams, "Perfect 10," Vita Brevis, 2 Jan 2018,

<https://vitabrevis.americanancestors.org/2018/01/perfect-10/#more-10021>

Alicia Crane Williams, "Using and Evaluating Published Genealogies," 21 March 2019,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnBx3V4PplA>

American Genealogical-Biographical Index (ABGI),

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3599/> and

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/152434>

Godfrey Memorial Library, <https://www.godfrey.org/scholar/godfrey-home.html>

Lindsay Fulton, "Using and Evaluating Mug Books for Family History Research," 19 January 2017,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEG_U0RM4Kg

Marian Hoffman, *Genealogical and Local History Books in Print*, 5th ed., (Baltimore: Clearfield, 1997).

Marion J. Kaminkow, *Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*, 2 vols., (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2012).

Marion J. Kaminkow and Jack Kaminkow, *Local Histories in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography*, 5 vols., (Baltimore: Magna Carta Book Co., 1976).

Susan Kreite, "Published Family Histories: An Under-Tapped Resource," New York Public Library Blog, 26 April 2018, <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/04/26/published-family-histories>

Thomas Allen Glenn, comp., *A list of some American genealogies which have been printed in book form*, (Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates & Co., 1897).

Full-Text Search at FamilySearch.org

Full-Text Search Page, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/full-text>

"Full-Text Search: A Powerful Tool for Making Genealogy Discoveries,"

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/what-is-full-text-search>

"How do I Use Fulltext Search?" <https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/how-do-i-use-fulltext-search>