New Hampshire Genealogy Research

Native Americans

The area that became New Hampshire was home to members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, which included the Abnaki, the Maliseet, the Passamaquoddy and the Pennacook (Penobscot) people. They lived primarily in the Merrimack River Valley.

Disease contracted from European settlers weakened these tribes. Defeat in King Phillips War meant that surviving Native Americans were enslaved or they escaped and joined tribes in other areas.

European Settlers

Lumber, fishing, and agricultural pursuits drew early settlers to the area that is now New Hampshire.

Initially they came from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and later from other New England colonies.

In 1622, King James I of England granted land in the area to John Mason and Sir Fernando Gorges. Land between the Merrimack and Kennebec rivers was granted to David Thomson. He settled near what is now Rye, at Pannawa, the first white settlement.

David Thomson and Thomas Hilton were fish merchants based in London. They set up facilities for drying fish near what is now Rye and Dover, beginning the fishing industry in New Hampshire.

In 1629, John Mason and Sir Fernando Gorges split the grant of 1622, with Mason receiving the portion south of the Piscataqua River. This area became the Province of New Hampshire.

In the 1630's, Puritans from Massachusetts began moving to New Hampshire and settling in Exeter and Hampton.

In the 1640's:

- New Hampshire was part of the Massachusetts Commonwealth, although home rule by towns was allowed.
- A Massachusetts law of 1642 required that children be educated in the laws of the commonwealth and in basic religion. It also required proficiency in reading and writing. Towns of fifty families or more were required to hire a schoolmaster.

1675 – 1676: King Philip's War, a series of skirmishes and battles between the Narragansetts and white settlers, ended with the death of Narragansett chief Metacomet (called "King Philip" by the settlers). Surviving Native Americans were enslaved or they escaped to other areas.

In 1679, the Province of New Hampshire was founded independent of Massachusetts.

In 1686, the Dominion of New England was created, encompassing the present - day states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. However, it was unpopular only lasted three years.

1702 – 1713: Queen Anne's War was fought between Britain and France. The result was that Acadia, Newfoundland, Hudson Bay, and Saint Kitts became part of Britain.

By 1718, widows were legally entitled to one - third of their husband's real and personal estate.

In 1734, colonists rebelled against the laws that reserved pine trees near Exeter for use by the British Navy to build masts. Colonists dressed as Indians attacked surveyors who were inspecting a mill used by the British Navy.

1754 – 1763: The French and Indian War was fought between Britain and France, pitting the British, the colonists, and their Native American allies against the French and their Native American allies. France lost and ceded all its land east of the Mississippi River, except for New Orleans.
By 1761, widows were entitled to 1/3 of their husbands' real and personal estate, and their dower.

In 1776, New Hampshire framed the first commonwealth constitution.
In 1788, New Hampshire became the 9th state in the new union.
In the 1800's, the growing lumber industry drew French-Canadian, Irish, Polish, Italian and Greek immigrants.
In 1808, Concord became the state capitol.
On December 22, 1813, the third of the "Christmas fires" destroyed 300 buildings on State Street in Portsmouth. The fires prompted the city to begin building brick structures.
1816 became known as "The Year without a Summer." It was also known as the "Poverty Year." A series of nor'easters and cold fronts from Canada resulted in frost each month, which killed most of the crops in the region. The weather accelerated migration from New England to western lands with more moderate climates.
In 1819, the "Toleration Act" put all religions in New Hampshire on equal footing. It legislated that churches could no longer tax the public to support their congregations.
The Peterborough Public Library was established in 1833. It is the oldest tax supported library in the United States.
1832 – 1835: The Republic of Indian Stream was a small unrecognized republic that existed for a short time in disputed territory along the New Hampshire border with Canada. Britain gave up control in 1836, and it officially became part of New Hampshire in 1842 with the Webster Ashburton Treaty.
1842: Women could legally own land if their husbands were incapacitated or had abandoned them.
1852: Women obtained the legal right to write a will.
1861 – 1865: Over 32,000 soldiers from New Hampshire fought in the Civil War.
1867: Women were granted the legal right to own property free from any influence of their husbands.

New Hampshire Vital Records
Indexes of Vital Records
FamilySearch.org and *Ancestry.com* – various databases of New Hampshire birth, marriage and death records, some include records of colonial years

Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths
Churches recorded the births, marriages, and deaths of members beginning in colonial times.
Government records of births, marriages, and deaths have been kept by town clerks since the towns were formed, some in the early 1600's.
In the mid-1800s, Town and County Annual Reports included births, marriages, and deaths of residents with detailed information.
Statewide registration of births, marriages and deaths began in 1866. By the 1880's most vital events were recorded.
Total compliance began in 1905 with the establishment of the State Bureau of Vital Records.

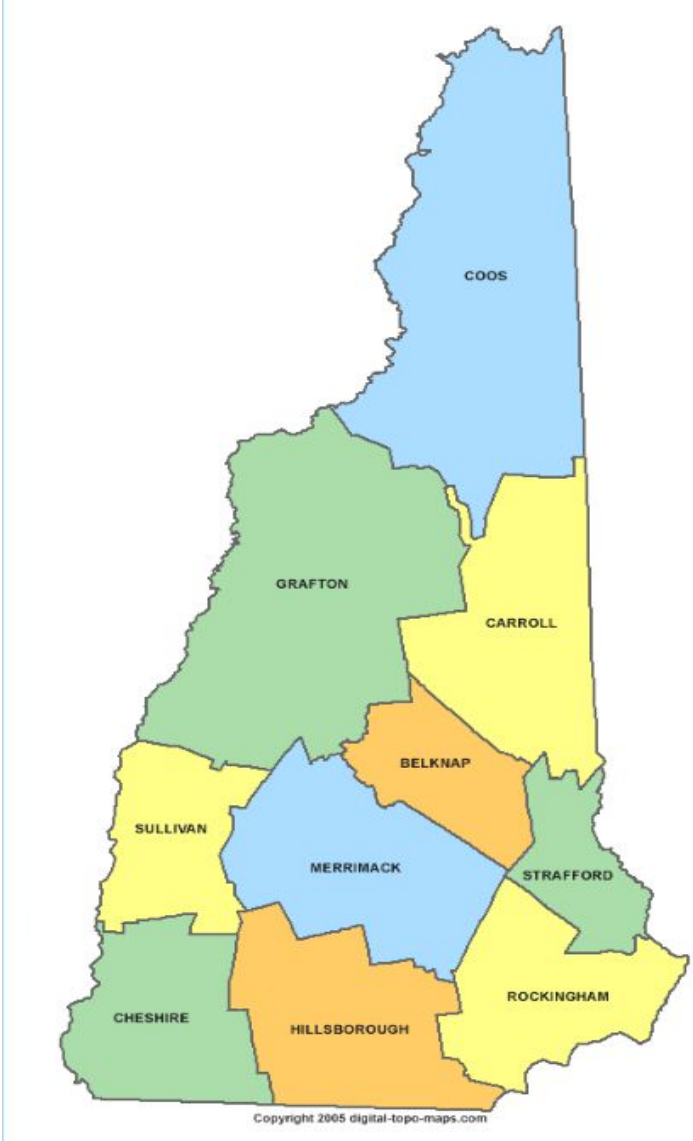
Copies of Vital Records
Public Records
Birth records more than 100 years old and death, marriage, and divorce records more than 50 years old are considered public records.

Restricted Records
Private New Hampshire vital records can be acquired by individuals who have a "direct and tangible interest" in the record.

Obtain a copy of a vital record from the **Town or City Clerk** where the event occurred or from the **State Bureau of Vital Records**.

Genealogical Research Archives/Societies
New Hampshire Society of Genealogists
State Bureau of Vital Records - microfilmed town records, early to 1900.
The New Hampshire Historical Society - early town and church vital records and cemetery records
Genealogy Section, New Hampshire State Library – index of town records 1640 – 1840
New Hampshire State Archives

New Hampshire Counties



The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries – Interactive maps and text covering the historical boundaries, names, organization, and attachments of every county, extinct county and unsuccessful county proposal from the creation of the first county through December 31, 2000. - http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html

New Hampshire Migration Routes
Connecticut River - Merrimack River - Saco River - Kennebunk Road - King's Highway – Crown Point Highway

Registration of Deeds before 1772
When colonial proprietors sold their land to others, the deeds and all subsequent transactions were recorded in provincial, county, and some town records.
From 1623 to 1772, the Registry of Deeds was at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
All existing pre-1772 deeds are at the **New Hampshire Division of Records Management and Archives** and on film at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT.

County Registries of Deeds
New Hampshire County Registries of Deeds began to keep deed records in 1769, when the first five New Hampshire counties were created (Cheshire, Grafton, Hillsborough, Rockingham, and Strafford).
Online indexes of county deeds dating back to the early 1600's can be searched at *New Hampshire County Registries of Deeds* - http://www.nhdeeds.com/

New Hampshire Genealogy Websites

NOTE: Check online for the *GenWeb* or *Genealogy Trails* of any county in which your ancestor lived.

Cyndi's List – links to NH genealogy research websites - https://www.cyndislist.com/us/nh
New Hampshire Genealogy – links to websites with NH genealogical information - https://newhampshiregenealogy.com/
New Hampshire Genealogy and History – links to websites of New Hampshire genealogy records, maps, photographs and county/town histories – www.nh.searchroots.com
New Hampshire Genealogy Trails – "Our goal is to help you track your ancestors through time by transcribing genealogical and historical data for the free use of all researchers" - http://genealogytrails.com/newham/index.html
University of New Hampshire Library – digital collections: photos, maps and atlases, town reports beginning in the 1800's, civil war regiments -

New Hampshire African American Research

Access Genealogy – links by state to websites of African American genealogy, cemeteries, and censuses
AfricaMap – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data - http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/
AfriGeneas – slave records, death and marriage records, censuses, surnames – chat or send messages to other researchers - http://afrigeneas.com/
International African American Museum - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories – military records of the U.S. Colored Troops are currently being digitized - https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/

Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery - search thousands of "Information Wanted" advertisements taken out by former slaves in all states searching for family members lost by sale, flight, or enlistment – the collection currently includes newspapers from 1853 to 1911 - http://www.informationwanted.org/
Slave Voyages - the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* documents vessels along the Atlantic slave routes from 1514 to 1866; *Intra-American Slave Trade Database* documents vessels traveling between the Atlantic and Pacific ports ranging from the United States to Brazil; the *African Names Database* gives names, ages, possible origins of slaves liberated from captured slave ships between 1808 and 1862 - https://www.slavevoyages.org/

New Hampshire Cemetery Research

CARROLL COUNTY, NH: **Brookfield Historic Cemetery** – list of burials in historic 1819 Town Cemetery – list of burial permits 1884 – 1897 - http://www.brookfieldnh.org/Pages/BrookfieldNH_Bcomm/Cemetery/index
CHARLESTOWN, SULLIVAN COUNTY, NH: **Forest Hill Cemetery** – index of burials in the original and oldest sections of the cemetery – map of the "most historic section" – http://www.charlestown-nh.gov/Public_Documents/CharlestownNH_Cemetery/index
HAMPTON, NH: **Cemetery Records of Hampton** – burial listings, photos of 10 local cemeteries - http://www.hampton.lib.nh.us/hampton/graves/graves.htm
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, NH: **Bedford Cemeteries** – search the burial listings for Old Bedford Cemetery, Beal's Road Cemetery, a.k.a. South Cemetery, Joppa Hill Cemetery and Bedford Center Cemetery – http://www.bedfordcemeteries.org/
NASHUA, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, NH: **Woodlawn and Edgewood Cemeteries** – index of burials includes, names, dates of birth and death, comments, grave location and cemetery - https://www.nashuanh.gov/192/Cemetery-Search
SPRINGFIELD COUNTY, NH: **Small Cemeteries and Single Graves** - click on "Research" to view photographs and read historical stories – click on "Cemeteries" to view burial information, some tombstone photos - http://www.historicalspringfieldnh.org/cemeteries.php

New Hampshire Military Research

Grand Army of the Republic Records Project – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - http://suvcw.org/garrecords/

Information on these pages is compiled from information in:

- *FamilySearch.org Wiki- New Hampshire Genealogy Research page*
- *Ancestry.com Learning Center - New Hampshire Genealogy Research page*
- Family Tree Magazine
- *The Weekly Genealogist, NEHGS; Genealogy Gems from the Allen County Public Library*