Vermont Genealogy Research

Located in the northeast region of the United States, Vermont is divided into 14 counties and its capital is Montpelier.
The land that is Vermont was fought and argued over by the French, British, Native Americans, and the governments of New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Vermont was created from the Province of New York, New Hampshire Grants and Vermont Republic.

Early Inhabitants
Native Americans lived in the area that became Vermont for 10,000 years. The most prominent early Indian tribes at the time of European exploration were the Abénaki and the Mahican. The western Abénaki Indians were composed of subdivisions including Sokoki, Missisquoi, and Cowasuck.
Warfare in the 1600's with European colonists, disease, and forced migration reduced the population of these peoples. Most survivors were forced to move onto reservations in Canada.

Indian Tribes and Communities in Vermont today:
Although these communities are currently not recognized as tribes by the U.S. Federal Government, there are two groups in Vermont today.
1) **Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi – St. Francis/Sokoki Band:**
The Missiquoi (or the Missisquoi or the Sokoki) are located in the Wabanaki region of what is now northern Vermont and southern Quebec. This Algonquian group is a sub-group of the Abenaki who lived along the eastern shore of Lake Champlain when Europeans began exploring the area. Their name Missiassik, from which "Missisquois" is derived, means "place of flint" in the Abenaki language; or alternatively, from "Masipskoik, a word that means "place where there are boulders", more specifically "boulders point." Today, the tribe is known as the St. Francis-Sokoki Band of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi.
The State of Vermont recognized the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi as a tribe in 2012.
2) **Traditional Abenaki of Mazipskwik and Related Bands, Inc.:**
This Native American band is based in Swanton, Vermont. They are dedicated to the cultural, historical and spiritual development of the Abenaki people in Vermont. They formed in 1995 and were formerly part of the Missisquoi Band -
http://web.archive.org/web/20030207172313/http://www.hmt.com/abenaki/

European Settlement
In 1609, French explorer Samuel de Champlain was the first European to set foot in Vermont. During the 1600's, a few French military settlements were established and abandoned, and the area became primarily a thoroughfare between French and Native American settlements to the north and English settlements to the south.
In 1699, a French outpost, Fort St. Anne, was set up on Isle La Motte, in the middle of Lake Champlain near Canada.
In 1724, Fort Dummer was set up by Massachusetts colonists near present-day Brattleboro. It became the first permanent European settlement in Vermont.
In 1763, Britain took control of present day Vermont at the end of the French and Indian War.

While it was a British colony, the governors of New York and New Hampshire issued land grants in Vermont; these grants sometimes overlapped and neither colony was willing to recognize grants from the other.

In 1764, King George III ruled that the land in Vermont was part of New York.
In 1774, the Scottish-American Land Company brought settlers from Scotland to Vermont.
In 1775, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys captured Fort Ticonderoga.
In 1777, Vermont (then known as New Connecticut) declared its independence from Great Britain. It petitioned Congress to join the Union, but the petition was rejected. Delegates met in July to form their own government. Its constitution was the first in North America to abolish slavery, provide for public schools, and remove land ownership as a requirement for voting.
Early Vermont industries included potash and logging.
In 1785, Vermont's first marble quarry opened. Granite quarrying is a major Vermont industry. Some of the oldest and largest monument companies in the country are in Vermont.
In 1779, Vermont established property rights for women.
On 4 March 1791, Vermont became a state. It was the first state to join after the original 13 colonies.
In 1813 lung fever killed more than 5,000 people in Vermont.
In 1814, U.S. forces took control of Lake Champlain and ended a British invasion.
In 1823, The Champlain Canal opened, which made travel between Vermont and New York City much Industry diversified in the late 1800s.
In 1846, construction began on the Central Vermont Railway, the first railroad in the state. It was completed in 1849.
The two largest groups of immigrants were French-Canadians and Irish, many of whom found work building canals and railroads.
In 1847, Vermont granted women the right to own, inherit, and bequeath their property.
In 1853, a new state law prohibited the consumption of alcohol.
In 1857, Town Clerks were required to keep vital records.
In 1863, a riot broke out in West Rutland when Vermont instituted the draft.
In 1864, Confederate soldiers attempted a raid in St. Albans. They robbed three banks and set fire to a shed. They escaped to Canada and were caught. Canada, which was officially neutral in the U.S. Civil War, did not extradite the men but did return the money.
Machine tool plants spurred the economy around Windsor and Springfield. During the Civil War, Robbins & Lawrence made rifles for the Union Army and produced machinery for Colt, Remington and other gun makers.
In 1879, women in Vermont were allowed to vote in town elections and could hold the office of school commissioner. Later, women would be granted the vote in state legislative elections.
Dairies became a major part of Vermont's economy in the late 1800s. By 1900, Vermont produced 55% of the butter and 92% of factory-made cheese in the United States.
In 1902, Vermont allowed localities to decide whether or not to allow the sale of alcohol.
The logging industry declined in the early 1900s due to competition from western states and Canada.
In 1919, statewide registration of vital records began.
In 1934, the U.S. Supreme Court finally established the Vermont - New Hampshire boundary.

Vermont Vital Records
Online Indexes of Vital Records

Familysearch.org – several databases of births, marriages, and deaths, 1760 – 2003
Ancestrylibrary.com – several databases of birth, marriage, and death records, 1720 – 2008
MyVermont.gov – gives *Vermont residents* free access to vital records indexes on Ancestry.com

Records

Many church clerics recorded the births, baptisms, marriages and deaths of their members in colonial years and after statehood.
Town clerks were required by law to record births, marriages, and deaths beginning in 1779.
Some town clerks had already begun to record vital events before 1779.
In 1857, the state required town clerks to send copies of their vital records to the state.
However *pre-1909 state records* are *incomplete*.

Obtain Copies

Obtain **copies of vital records** from the **Town Clerk** where the event occurred. In some instances only the Town Clerk has a copy of a record, especially if it is dated before 1909.

Obtain **certified copies of records of vital events that occurred in the last 5 years** from the **Vermont Department of Health, Vital Records Office**.

Obtain **certified copies of records of vital events that occurred from 1909 till 5 years ago** from the **Vermont State Archives and Records Administration. (VSARA)** VSARA records include births, marriages, divorces, civil unions, civil union dissolutions, and deaths.

Non-certified, informational copies of **vital records from 1909 till 5 years ago** are available free of charge from the **VSARA.**

Look for **church records** of your colonial ancestor's birth, baptism, marriage or death. Even into the years of statehood, many churches continued to keep these records of their members.

Vermont Historical Churches

Before 1900 the largest religious groups in Vermont were the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches.

- For more information about early Episcopal churches in Vermont, see:
Historical Records Survey (Vermont). "Inventory of Church Archives of Vermont, No.1, Diocese of Vermont, Protestant Episcopal." Montpelier, Vermont: The Survey, 1940.
- For a history of the Baptist church in Vermont, see:
Crocker, Henry. "History of the Baptists in Vermont." Bellows Falls, Vermont: P. H. Gobie Press, 1913. Digital version: *FamilySearch.org*
- For a history of Congregational churches in Vermont from 1762 to 1914, see:
Comstock, John Moore. "The Congregational Churches of Vermont and Their Ministry, 1762–1914, Historical and Statistical." St. Johnsbury, Vermont: Caledonian, 1915.
Historical information is arranged by town. Digital version: *Internet Archive*.
- Roman Catholic genealogical records are kept in parish or diocese offices.

Vermont Counties

Extinct or Renamed Counties
Albany · Charlotte · Cumberland · Dominion of New England · Gloucester · Jefferson · Massachusetts Bay Colony · New Hampshire · New York · Washington (old)

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

Vermont Land Records

Vermont's first landholders were called proprietors.

- Lotting plans divided land among the proprietors of a town who were originally granted the land from the colonial governor. The **Vermont State Archives** has the original lotting plans. Some have been digitized and can be viewed online at: https://www.sec.state.vt.us/archives-records/state-archives/find-records/maps-and-plans.aspx
- There are many proprietors' records in the **Town Records** of each town.

1600s - Vermont was part of Massachusetts.

1749 - New Hampshire claimed a large portion of the area and granted land for 129 towns in Vermont.

1764 - New York claimed jurisdiction over a large portion of the land held by New Hampshire.

1777 - Vermont became independent, and after statehood claimed the land was under its jurisdiction. (It is a state land state.) The towns remained the same, and the **Town Records** contain the land deeds without regard to the political jurisdiction of the time.

Because of land disputes, records of land transactions before 1777 may be located in New Hampshire, New York or Vermont.

Pre-1777 Vermont land records in New Hampshire:

- Most New Hampshire grants within the present boundaries of Vermont, 1749 to 1764, are recorded in the *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers*, Volume 26.
- Read them online at *Internet Archive* - http://www.archive.org/stream/provincialstatep26newh#page/n7/mode/2up

Pre-1777 Vermont land records in New York:

- New York land transactions in Vermont are recorded in *New York Land Patents, 1688-1786, Covering Land and Included in the State of Vermont (Not Including Military Patents)*, (Montpelier, Vermont : Secretary of State, 1947)
- *Calendar of New York Colonial Manuscripts, Indorsed Land Papers in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643–1803. 1864*. O'Callaghan, Edmund Bailey, comp. This book indexes the Land Grant Application Files, 1642–1803, commonly referred to as the New York Colonial Manuscripts, Endorsed Land Papers, in 63 volumes at the State Archives. The records pertain to New York and Vermont.

Pre-1777 Vermont land records in Vermont:

- *The State Papers of Vermont* start in 1778. The Nye index is a name index to the State Papers and other early Vermont records. The entire index, with entries for records up through the 1850s, is located in the Vermont State Archives Reference Room. It is open to the public.

1777 and later Vermont Land Records

- Deeds are stored in the **Town Clerk's offices**.
- Microfilms of most deeds can be viewed at the Vermont Historical Society and at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

Vermont Migration Routes
Chambly Canal · Champlain Canal · Connecticut River · Erie Canal · Hudson River · Lake Champlain

State Historical/Genealogical Repositories
Bennington Museum Research Library
Genealogical Society of Vermont
Vermont Genealogy Library - specializing in French Canadian and Vermont genealogy
Vermont Historical Society Leahy Library
Vermont Old Cemetery Association
Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
Vermont State Library
Regional Historical/Genealogical Repositories
Brattleboro Historical Society - History Center and Museum
Brooks Memorial library – Brattleboro, VT
Martha Canfield Library - Russell Collection – Arlington, VT
Vermont French-Canadian Genealogical Society – Burlington, VT

Vermont Genealogy Websites

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

New England Historic Genealogical Society - **$** - online databases of genealogical records in the New England states, including Vermont – www.americanancestors.org/
"Some Vermont Vital Records of the Early 19th Century" – this digitized book contains dates and notes about Vermont deaths and marriages compiled by John Elliott Bowman from 19 newspapers published in the early 1800's - http://vermonthistory.org/documents/transcriptions/BowmanVtVRs.pdf
Vermont History – indexes and transcriptions of baptisms, marriages, deaths, naturalizations, and town records - http://vermonthistory.org/research/genealogy/genealogy-indexes-and-lists
Vermont in the Civil War – profiles, photos, gravestones of Vermont Civil War soldiers – www.vermontcivilwar.org
Vermont State Archives and Records – Nye index to Vermont State Papers, colonial lotting plans – https://www.sec.state.vt.us/archives-records/state-archives/research-guides.aspx
Vermont Trails History and Genealogy – some veterans, links to genealogical information for each county - http://genealogytrails.com/ver/

Vermont 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/

Vermont Cemetery Research

DORSET, VT: **Maple Hill Cemetery** – search index of burials by name, cemetery map included - http://www.dorsetvthistory.org/cemetery/index.html

Vermont Cemetery Records – alphabetical listings of burials- cemeteries organized by county and city - http://www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/cemetery-records-vermont.htm

Vermont 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/

Vermont Native American Research

First People - Links to State Recognized Tribes, sorted by state - http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Links/state-recognized-tribes-in-usa-by-state.html

Native Languages of the Americas: Native American Cultures: type the name of a state in the search bar for information about indigenous peoples living in that area – http://www.native-languages.org/home.htm

Vermont Newspaper Research

Vermont Digital Newspapers – search 70 historical Vermont newspapers, published in varying years - https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/?state=Vermont&ethnicity=&language

The above information is courtesy of:
Idealist - https://www.idealist.org
Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi – St. Francis/Sokoki Band - https://www.abenakination.com/
Native American Tribes of Vermont - http://www.native-languages.org/vermont.htm
"International Vital Records Handbook; 7th Edition"; author Thomas Jay Kemp; copyright 2017
Familysearch.org – Wiki, Vermont Genealogy Research
Ancestrylibrary.com – Learning Center, Vermont Map – Genealogy Research
Genealogy Gems from the Allen County Public Library
Family Tree Magazine