

Life & Context — 1600–1610

Four ancestral lineages in their places, 1600–1610 (England, Wales, Dutch Republic, Swiss/German lands).

(optional – add this link after you drop the file in `docs/downloads/`)

TIP — Skim the decade’s big picture here, then click through to **Families** and **Places** for details and documents. Sources live in the Bibliography and approach notes in Methods & Data.

William Albert Worstell

Region snapshot: Northern England (Lancashire–Yorkshire borderlands), yeoman farming, recusancy pockets, early-1600s popular beliefs. *See also:* Family — Volckertszen / Dircks · Places — Noorman’s Kill / Bushwick shore

- William Albert Worstell’s forebears in the early 1600s lived in the north of England, in regions like

What life felt like (1600–1610) Lancashire and Yorkshire. Life in these areas around 1600 was centered on small farming villages. Families of yeoman farmers worked the land, raising crops and livestock in a landscape of rolling hills and valleys. In Lancashire, some villages such as Wray in the Forest of Bowland would later develop cottage industries (like weaving and tanning) powered by local streams . In the early 17th century, one can imagine Wray as a community of yeoman’s houses and simple cottages – a mix of 17th-century stone farmhouses and humble thatched dwellings . People lived close to the land, with seasonal rhythms of plowing, sowing, and harvest shaping their year.

- Religious and social undercurrents strongly affected daily life. Northern England retained many Catholic

recusants (people refusing to attend Anglican services) in 1600. Lancashire in particular was known as a bastion of recusancy – one official complained around that time that in “Lancashire and those parts, recusants stand not in fear by reason of the great multitude there is of them,” noting that locals even roughed up government informers sent to catch Catholic holdouts . The official religion was Protestant (Church of England), but in practice many country folk in remote areas continued old Catholic traditions in secret. This religious tension contributed to an atmosphere of superstition and suspicion. Notably, in 1612 (just after our decade), Lancashire was the scene of the famous Pendle witch trials – an episode where a dozen people from rural Pendle Hill were accused of witchcraft amid a climate of fear and folklore . These trials (resulting in ten executions) underscore how prevalent belief

in magic and the Devil was in these communities, especially when combined with the era's religious paranoia.

- Despite such turmoil, the everyday pace of life for Worstell's ancestors would have been slow and

traditional. Villages like Thornton-in-Lonsdale (on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border) were quiet enclaves. Families tended small herds of cattle or sheep and engaged in home-based textile work during winters. Travel was by foot or horseback on dirt roads connecting market towns. The broader world began to intrude in subtle ways – for example, by 1600, regional markets were expanding and peddlers brought news from London or Scotland – but many northern villagers were only dimly aware of national events. One event that did directly touch common folk was the enclosure movement. In the Midlands and extending into parts of northern England, lords were consolidating lands and fencing off commons, which threatened peasant livelihoods. In 1607 this anger boiled over in the Midland Revolt, when thousands of farmers pulled down hedges to protest enclosures. (Leicester even imposed a curfew to prevent its townsmen from joining the riots.) While Lancashire/Yorkshire were a bit removed from the focal point of these riots, the tension over land rights was a common concern in rural England. Overall, William Albert Worstell's 17th-century English ancestors witnessed a world where old medieval habits were giving way – slowly – to modern forces. The first decade of 1600s saw them maintain age-old farming traditions and folk beliefs, even as religious conflicts and economic changes stirred in the background.

- Family page → Volckertszen / Dircks
- Nearby places in the story → Wray, Forest of Bowland (*example slug; add if/when you create it*)

Jump to records & notes

Sarah Crew Williams

Region snapshot: Wales (Monmouthshire), Midlands/East Anglia Puritan milieu; Brittany (Rennes) post-Wars of Religion. *See also:* Families — (*add family slugs you create for her lines*) · Places — Tintern valley (wireworks)

- The ancestral lines of Sarah Crew Williams trace to both Wales and England, and even to early colonial

What life felt like (1600–1610) America. Her forebears' experiences around 1600 thus span a range of settings: from the pastoral valleys of Monmouthshire to the towns and countryside of England (and beyond).

- On her Welsh side, Sarah's ancestors lived in Monmouthshire, Wales, near places like Tintern. Life in

early-17th-century Wales was still largely medieval in character. Peasants lived in timber or stone cottages, spoke Welsh in daily life, and followed local customs under the oversight of the English crown (Wales had been officially annexed by England, but many traditions persisted). In Monmouthshire, a remarkable development around 1600 was the rise of early industry alongside agriculture. The secluded valley of the River Angidy at Tintern housed one of the largest industrial enterprises in Wales at that time – the wireworks of Tintern. By 1600, the Tintern wireworks (water-powered mills drawing iron into wire) had become the biggest industrial operation in Wales, employing hundreds of workers. This means some of Sarah's Welsh kin might have witnessed an early industrial boom: the clang of forges and waterwheels turning in an otherwise rural area. Traditional farming did continue (sheep grazing the green hills, smallholders cultivating oats and barley), but this corner of Wales was also a birthplace of modern industry. Such work was often dangerous and arduous – men trudging to charcoal-fueled furnaces, families living in smoky valleys – yet it provided new opportunities. Culturally, Wales at this time held onto a mix of Catholic and Protestant loyalties. Many gentry families in Monmouthshire remained secretly Catholic (records show hundreds of recusants in the county through 1600–1625), even as the official Anglican Church tried to enforce attendance. This covert Catholic presence meant priests in hiding and Masses held in private, a quietly defiant thread in local life much like in neighboring Lancashire. Meanwhile, most ordinary folk conformed outwardly to Anglican worship, but their Christianity was blended with folk practices and a strong sense of community. Storytelling, music, and oral tradition were important – the Welsh bards had diminished under Tudor rule, yet song and poetry still enlivened gatherings.

- Another branch of Sarah Crew Williams's lineage leads to continental Europe and early colonial

migration. One ancestor, for example, was Frances (last name unknown), born about 1611 in Rennes, Brittany (France). To place her life: Rennes in 1600 was a city adjusting to the end of France's Wars of Religion. Just a decade earlier, in 1598, King Henry IV had issued the Edict of Nantes granting limited toleration to Protestants (Huguenots) after nearly 40 years of bloody conflict. Brittany, a mostly Catholic region, had seen its share of strife. In fact, the Parliament of Rennes initially resisted registering the Edict – only in 1600 did Rennes formally accept it, under pressure from the crown. Thus in Frances's childhood,

Rennes would have been experiencing a fragile peace. The city's Catholics and Protestants now had to coexist by law, and for a few years France enjoyed a respite from civil war. Daily life in Rennes at this time would reflect this patchy peace: craftsmen and merchants resumed trade, churches and Protestant "temples" operated (with Protestants worshipping just outside city walls per the Edict's terms), and royal administrators worked to rebuild loyalty to the French state. Yet tensions lingered – everyone knew the peace was uneasy, and indeed in 1610 Henry IV was assassinated, rekindling fears. For ancestors like

- Frances, such events were formative. Notably, she later ended up in Barbados (in the 1660s), suggesting

she or her family may have left France due to renewed persecution when the toleration waned. In 1600–1610, however, Brittany was relatively calm: a time of rebuilding and cautious hope that religious violence had ended. The people of Rennes, including any of Sarah's kin there, lived modest urban lives – houses of timber and stone on winding medieval streets – and they witnessed France's early steps toward stability and centralized authority under Henry IV.

- Sarah Crew Williams's English ancestors around 1600 faced their own challenges. Some were in the English

Midlands and East Anglia, regions that would fuel the Puritan migration to America. In 1600, these places were feeling the first winds of social change. One major issue was land enclosure in the Midlands. We've mentioned the Midland Revolt of 1607: in Leicestershire and neighboring counties, thousands of common people rioted against landlords enclosing common fields. If Sarah's fore-family lived in a village affected by enclosure, they might have lost grazing rights or seen neighbors evicted. The unrest of 1600–1610 – angry petitions, fences torn down, even pitched battles – would be part of local memory. Meanwhile, in East Anglia (e.g. Essex), the seeds of religious migration were being sown. This area was known as a center of Puritanism in the early 17th century, "a centre for Puritan belief and practice" where many future New England colonists originated. In practical terms, that meant that in towns and villages of Essex, devout families attended long sermons, frowned on traditional festive pastimes, and pressed for a stricter moral code. These Puritans were still within the Church of England in 1600, but dissatisfied. By 1603, with James I on the throne, Puritan hopes for further reform were dashed – prompting some to begin contemplating leaving England. Indeed, within a generation, figures from Essex (like Thomas Hooker or John Eliot) would lead congregations to the New World. For now, circa 1600, Sarah's East Anglian kin might have been yeoman farmers or tradesmen imbued with "godly" zeal – holding Bible study in their homes, enforcing Sabbath

observance, and educating their children to read Scripture. This culture produced literate, skilled families, many of whom ultimately sought greater religious freedom abroad.

- By the end of our decade (1610), we see hints of what was to come for Sarah Crew Williams's lines. Some of

her ancestors (like William Almy and Audrey Barlow of Leicestershire, or Thomas Cornell and Rebecca Briggs of Essex) would, a couple of decades later, emigrate to America (Rhode Island) as part of the great Puritan exodus. But in 1600–1610 those individuals were still young (children or teenagers in England) and experiencing the conditions that motivated migration: economic pressure (land enclosures, limited opportunity) and religious ideals (a desire for a purified church). Thus, through Sarah's lineage we glimpse a microcosm of 17th-century life – Welsh villages on the cusp of industrial change, French cities healing from war, and English communities stirred by conflict and conviction.

- Family page → *(add links as families get pages)*
- Place pages → *(add links as places get pages)*

Jump to records & notes

Adam A. Launer

Region snapshot: Swiss Oberland (Bern); German southwest/Palatinate (calm before Thirty Years' War). *See also:* Families — *(Küster/Kuster, Bushong/Boschung, etc.)* · Places — *(Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald, Palatinate towns)*

What life felt like (1600–1610)

- Adam A. Launer's ancestry in the 1600s leads us into the heart of Central Europe – particularly Switzerland

and the Germanic lands – during one of the most tumultuous periods in European history. His forefathers include families from the Swiss Alps as well as German immigrants who later came to America. The years 1600–1610 were relatively peaceful in their immediate locales, but they stood on the brink of devastating conflict (the Thirty Years' War would erupt in 1618). Let's explore what life was like for them just before the storm.

- One branch of Adam's family hails from Switzerland – the Bernese Oberland. In places like Lauterbrunnen

and Grindelwald (deep valleys beneath the Alps), life around 1600 was traditional, insular, and hardy. These Swiss ancestors were likely alpine farmers, living in wooden chalets on

green mountainsides. They raised cattle and goats, made cheese, and cut hay on steep slopes to store for winter. Communities were small and close-knit; villages of a few hundred people were scattered in high valleys, connected to the outside mainly by mule tracks over mountain passes. Bern (the canton ruling Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald) had adopted the Protestant Reformed faith in the 16th century, so by 1600 the local population was staunchly Calvinist in religion. Church attendance was mandatory and pastors preached a strict moral code. However, unlike elsewhere in Europe, these Swiss communities enjoyed relative stability at the turn of the century. Switzerland managed to stay neutral during the great wars of religion. In fact, the Swiss Confederacy would remain untouched by the coming Thirty Years' War – it “remained neutral in the Thirty Years War” and thereby avoided the ruin that befell neighboring regions. This doesn't mean the Swiss were entirely at peace (there were occasional Catholic–Protestant tensions internally), but it means Adam Launer's Swiss forebears did not see their towns burned or their fields trampled by armies, a fate so common elsewhere. They did, however, witness many Swiss men leaving to serve as mercenary soldiers abroad – a traditional occupation for surplus young men in these areas. Those who stayed continued a pre-industrial alpine lifestyle that had changed little in centuries. The first decade of the 1600s for them would be remembered for good harvests or harsh winters, not political events. A notable backdrop: in 1602 the city of Bern (leading canton) joined other Swiss in forming the Defensive Alliance to guard their neutrality, reflecting how seriously the Swiss took staying out of others' wars.

- Another part of Adam A. Launer's lineage includes German and Swiss-German families who would

eventually emigrate to America (in the 1700s). In 1600–1610, those ancestors were living in the German territories of the Holy Roman Empire, a land on the verge of catastrophe. The Holy Roman Empire was a patchwork of states – duchies, counties, free cities – and our interest is in areas like the Palatinate (Pfalz) and southwest Germany/Alsace-Swiss borderlands, from which many 18th-century immigrants came. In 1600 these regions were prosperous: fertile farmlands along the Rhine, thriving market towns, and a mixture of Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic populations coexisting under the Peace of Augsburg (1555 agreement allowing princes to choose their state's religion). For example, the Electoral Palatinate was a Calvinist-ruled principality and one of the more modern, commercially active parts of Germany. However, dark times were imminent. In 1618, religious and political tensions would ignite the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) – and the Palatinate would be one of the first areas devastated. Although this is just outside our decade, it's worth noting what lay just ahead: by 1623, invading armies had overrun the Palatinate and “put as much as 50 percent of the population to death” in that territory. This

gives a sense of how brutal life would become. But in 1600–1610, Adam’s German ancestors were likely living in a relatively normal environment, unaware of the coming cataclysm. They lived in walled towns and villages by rivers and vineyards. A craftsman in a Palatine town might have spent 1600 working his trade (say, a cooper making wine barrels), attending the local Lutheran church on Sundays, and hearing rumors of trouble in distant Prague (where a Protestant-Catholic conflict was brewing). Peasants in the countryside paid their taxes and labored in the fields of their landlord, not knowing that armies would soon requisition their grain and burn their barns. It was, in other words, the calm before the storm.

- One illustrative family from Adam’s line is the Küster (Kuster) family, of Swiss-German origin. Around 1600

they may have lived in regions like the Duchy of Jülich or the Swiss-German border. The Kusters were likely Reformed (Calvinist) in faith. In the decade of 1600, that area saw religious contention as well – for instance, nearby, the city of Aachen had riots between Protestants and Catholics in 1601. The environment was tense: the Holy Roman Empire’s uneasy religious peace was fraying. Yet daily life went on – people married, children were born, crops planted and harvested. Families like the Kusters or Bushongs (originally Büsching or Boschung in German, a name in Adam’s ancestry) persevered through these challenges. Later in the century, faced with war, famine (the winter of 1708/09 was brutally cold, destroying crops), and continued persecution, many from these German families decided to seek a new life in America. The experiences around 1600–1610 – alternating between relative prosperity and lurking instability – set the stage for that decision.

- In summary, Adam A. Launer’s ancestors lived in a Europe of contrasts during 1600–1610. In Switzerland,

they benefited from stability and alpine self-sufficiency, insulated from Europe’s conflicts. In the German southwest, they enjoyed a last few years of normalcy before one of history’s worst wars would upend everything. Their lives in that decade encapsulate the end of an era: the final days of the old German order and the eve of massive social upheaval.

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Jump to records & notes

Ada Arabelle Powell

Region snapshot: North Wales (Denbighshire borderlands); Amsterdam & Huguenot refugee communities; Dutch Golden Age onset. *See also:* Families — (Powell, Fulkerson/Volckerszon) · Places — Amsterdam

What life felt like (1600–1610)

- Ada Arabelle Powell’s lineage encompasses Welsh, English, and Dutch/French Huguenot roots, giving us

a broad view of life in 1600–1610 across Western Europe. Her family lines highlight the experiences of rural Wales, Quaker precursors in England, and Protestant refugees in the Netherlands at the dawn of the 17th century.

- One prominent ancestral branch is the Powell family of Wales. The Powells trace back to Denbighshire in

North Wales, where an ancestor (possibly a Thomas Powell’s father) would have been living circa 1600. North Wales at that time was a land of ancient castles, market towns like Wrexham and Denbigh, and village communities still steeped in Welsh language and custom. By 1600, Wales had been under English rule for generations, but the everyday culture remained distinctly Welsh. A man of the Powell family around 1600 might have been a yeoman farmer or minor gentry in the borough of Holt (Denbighshire) – Holt was a small town near the English border. Life here revolved around agriculture: cultivating wheat or barley on the lowlands and pasturing sheep or cattle. Homes were built of timber frame or local stone, with slate roofs common in that region. The social structure in Wales was transitioning; the old tribal clan system had faded, replaced by English-style land ownership, yet strong kinship bonds endured among Welsh families. Religiously, Wales in 1600 was officially Anglican, but Catholic sympathies lingered among many families (especially in the gentry). For instance, in nearby Monmouthshire (South Wales), recusant rolls between 1580–1625 counted hundreds of Catholics. In North Wales, recusancy was less documented but undoubtedly present in pockets. Thus, the Powell ancestors may have practiced a cautious conformity – attending parish church but perhaps privately holding older faith traditions. By the late 1600s, some of the Powell descendants would embrace nonconformist religion (one Joab Powell born later became a noted Baptist minister on the American frontier), but in 1600 this was yet to come. The first decade of the 17th century for the Powells of Denbighshire would have been peaceful and parochial. Not far away, in 1601, Queen Elizabeth’s forces put down a last rebellion in Ireland – news that might have reached Welsh ears due to geographic proximity – but Wales itself saw little armed conflict then. Instead, a visitor to Holt around 1600 would note the quiet streets of a border town, a mix of English and Welsh residents, weekly markets where farmers sold

butter and wool, and perhaps local gossips talking about the new King James (who inherited the throne in 1603).

- Ada Powell's maternal side includes the Fulkerson (Volckerszon) family, which leads us to the Dutch

Republic and the Huguenot diaspora. In the late 1500s and early 1600s, some of her ancestors were French-speaking Protestants from the Spanish Netherlands who fled north to Holland. A key example is Jean Hochede de la Vigne and his wife Jeanne, who lived in Valenciennes (then part of the Spanish-controlled Netherlands, now northern France) and escaped to Amsterdam around this time. Valenciennes in the 1560s had been a hotbed of Calvinism and had revolted against Spanish Catholic rule – a rebellion brutally crushed by 1567. By 1600, Valenciennes was re-Catholicized under Spanish governance, making it hostile territory for Protestants. Thus, families like the de la Vignes left. For them, the United Provinces (Dutch Republic) offered a haven. In Amsterdam circa 1600, they found a remarkably tolerant and booming city. Amsterdam was entering its Golden Age – a center of global trade and one of Europe's most cosmopolitan cities. The population of Amsterdam doubled between 1570 and 1600 to around 50,000, and fully one-third of the residents were foreign-born by 1600. These included French Huguenots and Walloons (Frenchspeaking Belgians) arriving as religious refugees. Amsterdam prided itself on offering *vrijheid van geweten* – freedom of conscience – to Protestants of all stripes. So while Catholicism could not be practiced openly, Protestants from abroad could worship freely. Ancestors like Jean de la Vigne likely joined the French Reformed church in Amsterdam and became part of the merchant or artisan class there. Imagine them walking along Amsterdam's canals, speaking French or Dutch, engaging in commerce (perhaps Jean was a tradesman or involved in the textile market) – all while back in their hometown Valenciennes, those who stayed behind contended with Inquisitors and Spanish soldiers. Amsterdam in 1600–1610 was a vibrant, urban environment: ships from all over Europe and beyond crowded its harbors, markets sold spices and silk from Asia, and intellectual life flourished (it was common to encounter people reading new maps or discussing trade ventures). It must have been a dramatic change for a family coming from a smaller city like Valenciennes. Yet they adapted, and some of their descendants would later (by the mid-1600s) go even further afield – emigrating to New Amsterdam (New York) in the Americas. In this decade, however, the focus was on resettlement and opportunity. The Dutch Republic's relative freedom and prosperity were a beacon: a contemporary noted that Amsterdam had become “a refuge for Protestants of varying kinds, including French Huguenots,” where skilled refugees were welcomed as valuable members of society.

- Additionally, through the Fulkerson line, Ada Powell had ancestors in the Netherlands who were ethnic

Dutch, such as Cornelis Langelaan in South Holland. Daily life for native Dutch families in 1600 was comfortable by 17th-century standards. The Dutch were leaders in agriculture (employing advanced techniques on reclaimed polder lands) and in commerce. A Dutch burgher's household circa 1600 would be well-furnished for the time: perhaps windows with glass, a cabinet of Chinese porcelain or books, and a diet enriched by the Baltic and colonial trade (herring, beer, rye bread, with sugar or spices occasionally). Children learned to read and write at a higher rate than elsewhere in Europe, due to the Protestant emphasis on Bible-reading. So, Ada's Dutch ancestors enjoyed a standard of living and personal freedom that was relatively high for that era. By 1609, the Dutch even entered a truce with Spain, ushering in twelve years of peace and even greater prosperity.

- Finally, Ada Arabelle Powell's English roots (likely via the York family or others) would connect to early

colonial themes. For instance, some collateral ancestors in her tree (like the Todds, Micheners, etc., from related lines) were Quakers or Baptists who came to Pennsylvania in the late 1600s. The impulse for that migration often stemmed from conditions around 1600–1610 in England – persecution of dissenters, economic hardship, or the allure of William Penn's promise of religious freedom later. In the first decade of the 1600s, those ancestors – still in England – would have been ordinary folk in villages or towns, experiencing the reign of James I. This was the time of Jamestown's founding (1607), so the idea of English colonies was just beginning. It's possible that the Powell-York ancestral circles heard news of these endeavors. Perhaps an adventurous young man in the family joined the Virginia Company as a laborer or a soldier – or more likely, they waited until the more inviting prospect of Pennsylvania arose in the 1680s.

- In sum, Ada Arabelle Powell's ancestors during 1600–1610 lived in a world of rich contrasts. Some were in

rural North Wales, keeping ancient traditions alive under a veneer of English rule. Others were refugees and reborn citizens in Amsterdam, part of a forward-looking, tolerant society that was shaping modern capitalism. Through them, we see the resilience and adaptability of families in the 17th century: whether persisting in their ancestral homeland or seeking new horizons for faith and survival. Each thread of her lineage – Welsh farmer, Dutch burgher, French Huguenot – contributes a chapter to the

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Notes on sources

Short in-page notes if needed. For full citations, see the Bibliography.