

## Ancestral Lives in the 1630s (1630–1640)

*An ancestor's-eye narrative for four family lines in the fourth decade of the 17th century*

**How to use this page.** Skim the decade's big picture here, then drop into *Families* and *Places* for documents and close-up notes. Citations sit in the site Bibliography; brief method notes in *Methods & Data*.

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### William Albert Worstell line — Lancashire/Yorkshire yeomen, covenant and cloth

In the 1630s, Worstell forebears and neighbors in northern England lived between market towns and weaving villages. **Enclosure** and **copyhold** disputes continued; the **cloth** and **leather** trades pulled young people toward town wards. Under **Laudian** reforms, church courts pressed conformity—communion rails, surplice, and set prayers—while lectureships and conventicles signaled dissent. Some neighbors departed with the **New England migration**; others tightened parish networks, guild ties, and credit among kin. Wills list looms, cloth stock, and small parcels; manorial books trace tenures split among children and in-laws.

**Clues to look for:** manorial rolls (copyhold admissions/surrenders), cloth guild records, quarter sessions on enclosure or dissent, parish vestry minutes, wills with loom/stock bequests, settlement certificates.

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### Sarah Crew Williams line — Chesapeake families and a new neighbor, Maryland (1634)

The **Chesapeake** pushed upriver in the 1630s. Virginia's eight **shires (1634)** anchored county courts and parish routines; **Maryland (1634)** opened across the Potomac under a proprietary charter. **Tobacco** still set the terms—indentures, debts, crop cycles—yet more cabins, cattle, and cornfields signaled permanence. Marriages stitched creek to creek; orphans' inventories and guardianships show the toll of disease. Boundary and credit disputes appear in court minutes; headright claims plot riverside settlement.

**Clues to look for:** county court orders and inventories, parish registers, headright/land patents, shipping/customs notes, boundary depositions, tobacco-pledged debts.

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### Adam A. Launer line — Rhine–Main crafts through the Thirty Years' War

In the **Rhine–Main** towns, the war's middle years (1630s) strained craft families. Garrisons requisitioned grain and animals; **billeting** brought soldiers into homes; refugees crowded

walled places; journeymen ranged far for work. Parish entries faltered; notaries recorded debts, lost tools, and “**soldier’s damages.**” Some kin angled toward Dutch ports and credit networks; a few aimed for later colonial ventures via the Republic.

**Clues to look for:** guild admission books and fines, town poor relief/aid rolls, refugee baptisms/marriages, notarial debt/damage acts, military contribution lists.

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### **Ada Arabelle Powell line — Walloon/Huguenot cousins in the Dutch Republic**

French-speaking cousins worked among **Walloon, French, and Dutch** artisans. The **Dutch West India Company** widened Atlantic ventures—trade at Manhattan/Hudson, and sugar campaigns in Brazil—while **New Sweden (1638)** appeared on the Delaware. Church consistories logged marriages across language lines; notaries filed **apprenticeships** and **business partnerships**; diaconal aid supported widows and migrants. Some kin kept shop in Leiden or Haarlem; some attached to merchant houses; a few touched **New Netherland** via company service or trade.

**Clues to look for:** Walloon/French church registers, notarial contracts/apprenticeships, diaconal support logs, WIC petitions, shipping lists.

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### **What to notice across the four lines**

- **Demography & power:** Indigenous nations remained the overwhelming majority in the Americas; European towns were small and contingent.
- **Property & labor:** Copyhold and enclosure pressures in England; **headrights** and dispersed plantations in the Chesapeake; townhouse rentals and craft shops in the Republic.
- **Faith & order:** Parish/consistory discipline and town-meeting habits knit communities; dissent produced new places (Providence, 1636; others).
- **Mobility:** The **Great Migration** swelled New England; indentured labor widened the Chesapeake; Dutch/Walloon circuits tied the Hudson to North Sea ports.