

STAT 210 Parsons' Paper Company Workers Database

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Introduction

Mining the History of Holyoke (STAT210) is a class at Amherst College with a mission statement of curating and publishing a piece of Holyoke's history and making it accessible to the town's people. One way our class has begun this journey is by analyzing and curating an old payroll registry found in an attic in Holyoke and now available in the archives of the Holyoke Public Library History Room. This register tracked pay for employees who worked at the Parsons Paper Mill in Holyoke, Massachusetts (the "Paper City") in the 1860s.

It has been remarkable to track down so much history as each page of this nearly 400 page registry has upwards of 30 employees, and each name has its own story worth telling. In the registry, we can see the name, number of days worked, their wages, whether or not the worker had rent or board due, the final balance owed, and signature (see Figure 1). Click [here](#) for an interactive display of the register.

Workers' Summary

We took on the task of finding more information about some of the employees at the paper mill using the genealogical database Ancestry.com. On page 259, we found two women with

the same last name (see Figure 2) which was common back then and decided to search for them on Ancestry.com. Their names were Lucy and E.A. Allen.

When we searched for Lucy, we found that E.A. stood for Eliza Ann Allen—they were sisters! (see Figure 2). Lucy was born in Massachusetts in 1842 and Eliza Ann was her older sister born in 1841. They lived in dwelling 42. Their father's name was Job Allen and their mother was Anna Allen. Job was born in England and moved to the United States sometime before 1841. Like his daughters, he too worked at the Parsons Paper Company. We found record of him first on page 3. (see Figure 3). Anna Allen stayed at home. This was a common life for a working-class family in Holyoke, Massachusetts in the 1860s.

From what we were able to gather, Eliza and Lucy were finishers meaning they helped with finalizing the paper making process. We made this assumption when we found Lucy's name on Page 2 under the label "Finishers." See (Figure 4). Eliza and Lucy were paid not by the number of hours or days they worked but rather the number of reams they finished. We can see on page 2 that Lucy finished 756 reams of paper for the month of January in 1861. Eliza's name first appeared in 1862 on page 34 right below her sister's name, one year after her sister first started working. (see Figure 5). Coincidentally, they were one year apart in age. Perhaps their father Job did not want his daughters to work until they were 20 years of age.

It seemed that the Allen family had trouble finding a permanent residence as we found a number of addresses reported across different resources. In 1869, the Holyoke city directory shows that the Allen family lived on Dwight Street. Ancestry.com showed that the Allen family lived in dwelling 42 with no street name reported in 1870. (see Figure 6). We were able to follow Lucy's places of residence in several years after 1870 until her death on May 11, 1893 in Holyoke, MA. See Figure 8 for Lucy's places of residence.

Following the inspection of the payroll pages (pg 1-319) of the PPP register, we observe that Lucy, Eliza, and Job all worked throughout the decade. It is reasonable to presume that the Allen daughter were unlikely to be pursuing education on this time. Lucy also appears to have continued working in the PPC mill until her death. It is difficult to determine if the Allen family's literacy due to inconsistencies in signatures. Some signatures have "X" in them while others do not, and the handwriting is different across the decade suggesting they multiple people could have been signing for them.

Additionally, we were able to find records on Joseph Clark Parsons; the founder of the Parsons Paper Company (see Figure 7). We chose to explore his ancestry and observe how it would differ to those of his employees.

Parsons was born on February 6, 1814, in Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts to Lydia and Justice Parsons. Parsons was a local businessman who became very successful after founding his mill. He married Lucretia Hoyt Parsons and had three daughters; Catherine Turner Taft, Fannie Colton Parsons, and Elizabeth Hoyt Parsons. We found that Parsons lived in house 22 of dwelling 165 on Suffolk street which was quite close to his Mill. This was surprising because we expected him to live in the upper-class district because wealthier people lived in hills above sea level.

If we continued our research, we would aim to find descendants of the Parsons Paper Company that are still living today.

Photo References

NAMES.	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
Geo Papillion	22 ¹ / ₂	15 ¹ / ₂	59 07		59 07			March 14	Geo Papillion
James P. Dow	19 ⁴ / ₁₀	33 69			33 69				James P. Dow
W. J. Lord	24 ² / ₁₄	57 16	725	44 91					Walter J. Lord
Geo A. Day	23 ⁴ / ₁₅	58 75	725	51 50					Geo A. Day
O. E. Wheler	22 ⁴ / ₁₄	51 93	1657	35 36					Oren E. Wheler
A. L. P. Sykes	25 16	48 75	1657	27 18					A. L. P. Sykes
T. Faull	25 ² / ₁₅	58 75	857	50 18					T. Faull
Chas Robertson	25 76	31 25			31 25				Charles Robertson
Chas H. Morgan	25 87	21 83			20 83				Charles H. Morgan
Eliza Donohue	23 6	23 11			23 00				Eliza Donohue
Johannah Stack	25 "	25 00			25				Johannah Stack
N. Cassay	24 "	24 00			24				N. Cassay
Fannie Strong	25 "	25 00			25				Fannie Strong
Geo Whittimore	25 "	25 00	1242	12 58					George Whittimore
Maria Brown					00 00				
Sarah Slater	24 "	24 50	1242	12 08					Sarah Slater
Clara Woodworth	25 ³ / ₄ "	28 75	1242	11 33					Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: This is page 259 of the PPP registry, demonstrating how the name, days worked, wages, whether or not the worker had rent or board due, final balance owed, and signature were recorded

Sarah Campa	22	\$1	18 75
Mary Smith	22	64	22 00
H. Brown.	34 30	48	18 92
John Dowd	4 981	44 58	28 68
Lucy Allen	4 128 449	44	28 36
M. Brown	4 10 72	44	13 73
Wmgt. Dowd	4 11 29	44	12 03
E. A. Allen	4 4 86	28 4	20 68
C. D. Dowd	2 4 623	"	
Martha Wright	4 4 95	28 4	
E. Tomlinson	4 3 47	28 4	
S. Beanegard	5 0 34	2	
Mary Dowd	7 97 2	"	15 16
Mary Holland	7 58 2	"	2 2 16
	1 1 08 2	"	
	7 02 2	"	18 04
	1 5 15 2	"	3 11 0
	3 10 2	2	6 20
	5 6 0 2 2	2	14 11

Figure 2: Lucy and Eliza Ann Allen entries in the Registry page 259. March 1st, 1868

Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum specified to our Signatures.									
Job Allen being in full of all demands up to February 1 1861									
NAMES.	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
J. H. Ordway	20 000	40 00			10 000 Feb 15	5 7 7 C. Ordway			
John Jones	26 0	52 00			52 00				Wm J. Jones
James S. Pease	28 10	13 75			23 75				James S. Pease
Samuel Green	34 2 7	10 25			20 25				Samuel Green
Eliza Allen	27 8	56 00			31 00				Eliza Allen
Patrick S. Green	30 2 7	56 08			39 58				Patrick S. Green
Benjamin Green	32 7	40 00			40 00				Benjamin Green
Patrick Green	11 2 100	11 50			11 50				Patrick Green
Anthony Game	28 4 90	25 55			25 55				Anthony Game
Patrick Game	26 0	25 00			25 00				Patrick Game
Otis Pease	26 0	25 12			25 12				Otis Pease
John Vaughan	26 0	22 80			22 80				John Vaughan
Michael Ryan	26 7	50 05			50 05				Michael Ryan
James Vaughan	13 0	13 00			13 00				James Vaughan
William Kelly	61 0	3 80			3 80				William Kelly
William Johnson	26 0	31 50			31 50				William Johnson
John Kelly	19 95	28			48				John Kelly
James Gould	36 150	36 00			36 00	Feb 15			James Gould
Richard S. Kelly	62 90	29 02			29 02				Richard S. Kelly
William Kelly	30 100	36 00	10 00		20 00				William Kelly
James H. Shry	28 0	12 87	5 00		7 87				James H. Shry

Figure 3: Job Allen in the Registry page 3, line 5. February 1st, 1861. In this pay period he worked 27 days and received \$31

Mary Melody	20	0	11	00	7.02	4	Julia A. Smith
S. A. Perry	10	0	11	00	11.69	4	Mary Melody
Lucy Allen	Sorties	11	0	07	8.75	4	Ada Bradham
S. A. Perry	7.06	20	15	12	6.87	4	E. M. Perry
S. A. Cram	6.03				10.12	4	Lucy Allen
Syma Cram	3.00				12.06	4	Lucia M. Cram
D. E. Money	6.99				6.12	4	E. L. Perry
A. J. Hallworth	6.63	15	80		1.28	4	George Money
					7.50	4	Julia A. Smith
					7.50	4	
					37.859	4	
					37.159	4	

Figure 4: Lucy Allen in the Registry page 2, line 3. January, 1861. In this pay period she worked 24 and received \$15.12

Orchard Geronimus	20	00	11	00	10.00	4	Mary A. Murphy
Mary Murphy	16	.99	10	00	3.00	4	Suzia Cram
Suzia Cram	5	0	3	00	9.59	4	E. M. Perry
Syma Cram	15	0	9	37	9.07	4	Eliza A. Allen
Suey Allen	16	0	9	07	12.50	4	Eliza Allen
E. A. Allen	20	0	12	50	15.52	4	W. Jennie Bolton
W. Jennie Bolton	24	0	15	32	12.96	4	Lucy Campion
Suey Campion	18	70	12	96	105.570		
					6.82	Jan 15 th	E. M. Perry
					6.38	4	Eliza A. Allen
					7.22	4	Eliza Allen
					9.84	4	Suzia M. Cram
					7.74	4	Suzia Cram
					20.00	4	George Money
					10.524	4	Louise Hatch
					17.28	4	A. R. Hart
					15.00	4	E. M. Perry
					6.80	4	Ada Bradham
					107.62		
					10.50		
					29.12	Jan 16 th	E. M. Perry
					30.25	4	Sarah E. Hay
					10.50	4	

Figure 5: Lucy and Eliza Ann Allen on page 34 line 5 and 6. January, 1862

Ancestry Library Home Search Message Boards Learning Center Charts and Forms New Collections

Lucy M Allen in the 1870 United States Federal Census

Detail		Source
Name: Lucy M Allen		
Age in 1870: 28		
Birth Date: abt 1842		
Birthplace: Massachusetts		
Dwelling Number: 42		
Home in 1870: Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts		
Race: White		
Gender: Female		
Post Office: Holyoke		
Occupation: Works in Paper Mill		
Father of Foreign Birth: Yes		
Mother of Foreign Birth: Yes		
Inferred Father: Job H Allen		
Inferred Mother: Anna Allen		
Household Members (Name)		
Job H Allen	Age	
Job H Allen	64	
Anna Allen	48	
Eliza Ann Allen	29	
Lucy M Allen	28	

Figure 6: Lucy Allen's Profile from Ancestry.com providing details on her birth year and family members

Print

Joseph Clark Parsons in the U.S., Find a Grave™ Index, 1600s-CURRENT

Detail		Source
Name: Joseph Clark Parsons		
Gender: Male		
Birth Date: 6 Feb 1814		
Birth Place: Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, United States of America		
Death Date: 12 Mar 1886		
Death Place: Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts, United States of America		
Cemetery: Forestdale Cemetery		
Burial or Cremation Place: Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts, United States of America		
Has Bio?: N		
Father: Justice Parsons		
Mother: Lydia Parsons		
Spouse: Lucretia Hoyt Parsons		
Children: Catherine Turner Taft Fannie Colton Parsons Elizabeth Hoyt Prescott		
URL: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137384548/joseph-clark-parsons		

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Send document

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Find a Grave
Provided in association with Find a Grave

Suggested Records ⓘ

[Thumbnail]	North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000 Joseph Clark Parsons
[Thumbnail]	Geneanet Community Trees Index Joseph Clark Parsons

Figure 7: Joseph C. Parsons' Profile (1814-1886)

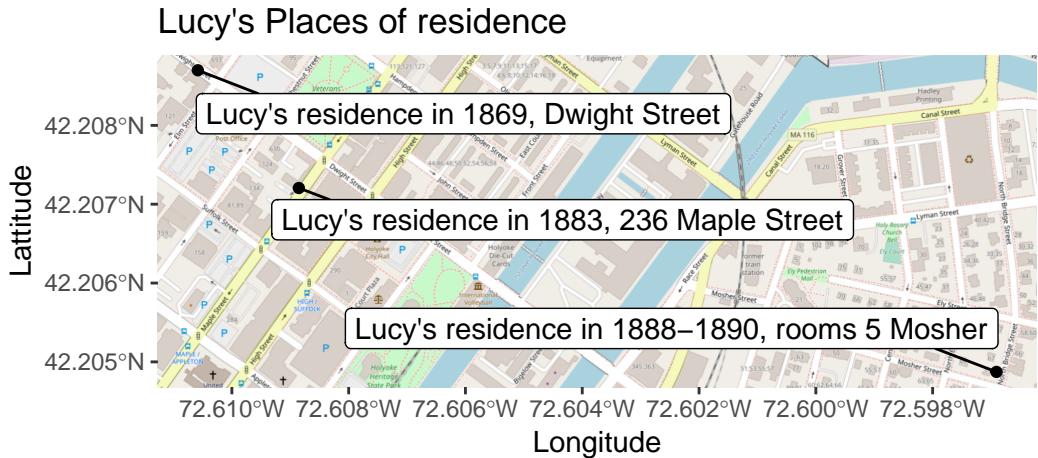


Figure 8: The black dots shows the 3 residences for Lucy Allen from years 1869-90

Database

Here¹ is the database we created. It displays personal information about Parson's Paper employees. We can find who they are, when they were born, their address, family members, and place of origin. Naturally, with data this old, we could not find each and every piece of information for all of the employees. This is just a start that will hopefully fuel other individuals to contribute to this document. If we had extended time and resources, we would search up more employees on Ancestry.com and try and find their living descendants today. For this project, we were only able to access basic information on Ancestry.com. It would be great to access the full database and find more documentation of the employees as each additional document provides more information about someone's life that we might not have had before. The table shown below shows some of the columns of the data set. More information is viewable in the full spreadsheet. This is the aggregated info for some of the workers who worked in Parsons' paper in the 1860s:

Table 1: Aggregated Data from Employees on Page 253 of the Registry From Ancestry.com

Last Name	Birthday	Death Day	Spouse	Birthplace
Strick	1859	N/A	N/A	Chicopee, Mass
Parsons	2/6/1814	3/12/1886	Lucretia Hoyt Parsons	Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts
Kelly	1834	N/A	Catherine Kelly	Ireland
Casey	1843	N/A	Ann Casey	Ireland
Kelley	1840	N/A	Hanna Kelley	Ireland
Hollom	1835	N/A	Ann Hollom	Ireland
Corner	1849	N/A	Anna Corner	Ireland
Mitchell	1852	N/A	N/A	MA
Allen	1842	N/A	N/A	MA
Allen	1841	N/A	N/A	MA
Allen	1806	N/A	Anna Ellen	England
William	1849	12/12/1912	Magaret Kelly	Ireland
Martin	2/7/1838	11/11/1907	Barbara F. Kelly	Crusheen, County Clare, Ireland
James	4/4/1852	8/12/1915	Mary O'Brien	Monson, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
Thos	1856	N/A	N/A	N/A
Phillip	1843	10/22/1902	Ann Gilday	Ireland
John	1843	2/23/1907	Octavia Bordeaux Beaudry	Canada
Frank	N/A	1853	Lillian Short	Massachusetts
John	1836	11/27/1922	Mary Kelliher	Ireland
William	1843	1930	Florence Nightingale Growden	Maryhill, Lanarkshire, Scotland
Chester	1819	4/18/1892	Sarah Cooley	Easthampton, Hampshire, Massachusetts, USA
Martin	6/24/1827	9/2/1903	Emily Louisa Moore	Petersham, Worcester County, Massachusetts, United States

Technical Appendix

The goal of this technical appendix is to provide a repeatable procedure of our process of collecting the information from Ancestry.com so that other passionate historians can build off our work. First, we accessed the Amherst College Library account for Ancestry.com.

The screenshot shows the Amherst College Library homepage with a dark purple header. Below it, a navigation bar includes links for Library Home, Services & Requests, Find Resources, About the Library, Archives & Special Collections, and Hours & Contact. The main content area is titled "American Studies Research Guide". On the left, there's a sidebar with links for Home, Find Background Information, Find Articles, Find Books, Find Media, Find News Sources, Find Primary Sources (which is highlighted in dark blue), Primary Sources, Writing and Citing, and Find Related Guides. The right side contains a section titled "Primary Sources" with a list of collections: North American Indian Thought and Culture, Ancestry Library Edition, Archives of Sexuality & Gender, and Sixties: Primary Documents and Personal Narratives 1960-1974.

Figure 9: Once on the Amherst website, we clicked the link to Ancestry Library Edition

The link to Amherst's access to ancestry website is [here](#).

Here is how the ancestry website looks at a first glance:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com search interface. At the top, there are tabs for Home, Search, Message Boards, Learning Center, Charts and Forms, and New Collections. The "Search" tab is active. Below the tabs, there are input fields for "First & Middle Name(s)" and "Last Name", and a "Birth Year" dropdown. A map of the United States and Canada is displayed with various location markers. To the right, there are sections for "Explore by collection" (Birth, marriage & death; Birth, Baptism & christening; Marriage & divorce; Death, burial, cemetery & obituaries; Census & voter lists; U.S. Federal Census Collection; UK Census Collection; Canadian Census Collection; More...), "Immigration & travel" (Passenger lists; Citizenship & naturalization records; Border crossings & passports; More...), and "Military" (Draft, enlistment and service; Casualties; Soldier, veteran & prisoner rolls & lists; More...). A "Schools, directories & church histories" section is also present.

Figure 10: Ancestry.com 'search' screen

By searching for a name and a place, (Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts), we were able to find census information from the 1800s and track down paper mill workers.

The are a number of names that appear in first search. We used educated guesses to select the most appropriate person looking at dates of birth and death, places lived, and any other information that might've given us a clue.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com library interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Search, Message Boards, Learning Center, Charts and Forms, New Collections, and AMHERST COLLEGE. The main title is "All results for joseph Clark Parsons". On the left, the search bar shows "joseph Clark Parsons Born: 1814 Any: Holyoke, Hampden, M...". Below the search bar are "Broad" and "Exact" filter options, and a "Browse by collection" link. A note says "To get better results, add more information such as Death Info—even a guess will help. Edit your search or learn more." To the right, the search results are displayed in three rows. Each row contains a thumbnail, the record type, the name, birth date, birth place, and death date if available. Row 1: U.S., Find a Grave™ Index, 1600s-Current, Name: Joseph Clark Parsons, Birth: 6 Feb 1814 Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, United States of America, Death: 12 Mar 1886 Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts, United States of America. Row 2: 1880 United States Federal Census, Name: Joseph C. Parsons, Birth: Abt 1814 Massachusetts, Residence: 1880 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA. Row 3: 1870 United States Federal Census, Name: Joseph C Parsons, Birth: abt 1814 Massachusetts, Residence: 1870 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA. The sidebar on the left lists filters: Census & voter lists (9,000+), Birth, marriage & death (30,000+), Military (10,000+), Immigration & emigration (1,586), Newspapers & periodicals (13), Pictures (6), Stories, memories & histories (283), Maps, atlases & gazetteers (5), Directories & member lists (50,000+), Court, land, wills & financial (7,000+), Dictionaries, encyclopedias & reference (208), Family trees (70,000+).

Figure 11: Initial search results

The amount of information we could find on each worker varied from name to name but in general, we were able to find birth year, birthplace, spouse, children, parents, occupation, and address. Here is what Eliza Ann's profile looks like on Ancestry.com. We then compiled these results into this table¹.

Eliza Ann Allen
in the 1870 United States Federal Census

Detail		Source
Name: Eliza Ann Allen		
Age in 1870: 29		
Birth Date: abt 1841		
Birthplace: Massachusetts		
Dwelling Number: 42		
Home in 1870: Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts		
Race: White		
Gender: Female		
Post Office: Holyoke		
Occupation: Works in Paper Mill		
Father of Foreign Birth: Yes		
Mother of Foreign Birth: Yes		
Inferred Father: Job H Allen		
Inferred Mother: Anna Allen		
Household Members (Name)		Age
Job H Allen		64
Anna Allen		48
Eliza Ann Allen		29
Lucy M Allen		28



Figure 12: Eliza Ann Allen's Profile (1841-?)

1870 United States Federal Census for Lucy M Allen										
13	41	37	Glancy John	57	M	W	Anne Glancy	Contractor	\$34000	4800
14			Bridget	42	F	W	Ropery house	Ireland		
15			Jamie E	22	M	W	Beth Reber	✓	Mass.	
16			John S	20	M	W	Teamster	✓	Mass.	
17			Mary L	11	F	W	Attending School		Mass.	
18			Madden Henry J	8	F	W	Attending School		New York	
19			Marietta Margarette	22	F	W	Domestic servant		Scotland	
20			Whalen Thomas	26	M	W	Teamster	✓	Ireland	
21	42	40	Dover Ellen	53	F	W	Ropery house	500	Ireland	
22			Mary F	27	F	W	Works Ropery	Mass.		
23			Margaret N	25	F	W	Works Ropery	Mass.		
24			Jane P	23	M	W	Works Ropery	Mass.		
25			Lorraine D	21	M	W	Brother	200	Cogn.	
26	41	40	Aller Job H	64	M	W	Works Ropery	500	England	
27			Anna	48	F	W	Ropery house		England	
28			Eliza Ann	29	F	W	Works Ropery	Mass.		
29			Lucy M	28	F	W	Works Ropery	Mass.		
30	42	40	Perry William	36	M	W	Works Ropery	350	Ireland	
31			Catherine	31	F	W	Ropery house		Ireland	
32			William C W						Mass	
33			Joseph J	2	M	W			Mass	
34			Mary Margarette	41	F	W	Works Ropery		Ireland	
35	43	40	Brown Justin E	30	M	W	Grocer	350	Maine	
36			Frances B	57	F	W	Ropery house		Nor Hampshire	

Figure 13: Zoomed in Image of the 1870 Census