

Parsons' Paper Company Workers Database

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Introduction

Mining the Mystery of Holyoke 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 an old registry found in an attic in Holyoke.

This book kept the names of employees who worked at the Parsons Paper Mill in Holyoke 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 names, and each name has its own story worth telling.

In the registry, we can see one's name, number of days worked, their wages, whether or not the worker had rent or board due, the final balance owed, and signature.

Workers' Summary

Tasked with finding information about employees at a paper mill, we used the database ancestry.com.

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

Figure 2

*Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum specified to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to March 1st 1868.*

NAMES.	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
Geo Papillion			22 15/4	59 07			59 07	14 March	George Papillion
James P. Dow			19 4/10/6	33 67			33 69		James P. Dow
W. T. Lord			24 4/14/	57 16	725	49 91			Walter T. Lord
Eus A. Day			23 4/15/	58 75	725	51 50			Eli A. Day
O. & Whelby			22 4/14/	51 93	16 57	38 36			Orrin & Whelby
A. L. P. Sykes			25 10/	48 75	16 57	27 18			Ade P. Sykes
J. Fairchild			23 4/15/	58 75	8 57	50 18			Newland Fairchild
Chas Robertson			25 7/6	31 25			31 25		Charles W. Robertson
Chas H. Morgan			25 8/	21 88			20 83		Charles H. Morgan
Ellen Donohue			23 6/	23 11			23 00		Ellen Donohue
Johannah Stack			25 "	25 00			25		Job & Stack
H. Casey			24 "	24 00			24		H. Casey
Fannie Strong			25 "	25 00			25		Fannie Strong
Geo Whittemore			25 "	25 00	12 42	12 58			George Whittemore
Maria Brown				00 00					
Sarah Slatte			24 "	24 50	12 42	12 08			Sarah Slatte
Clara Woodworth			23 4/ "	28 75	12 42	11 33			Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: Sample page of the Registry



Figure 2: Once on the Amherst website, we clicked the link to Ancestry Library Edition

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

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 number of names that appear in first search. We used educated guess to selected the most appropriate person.

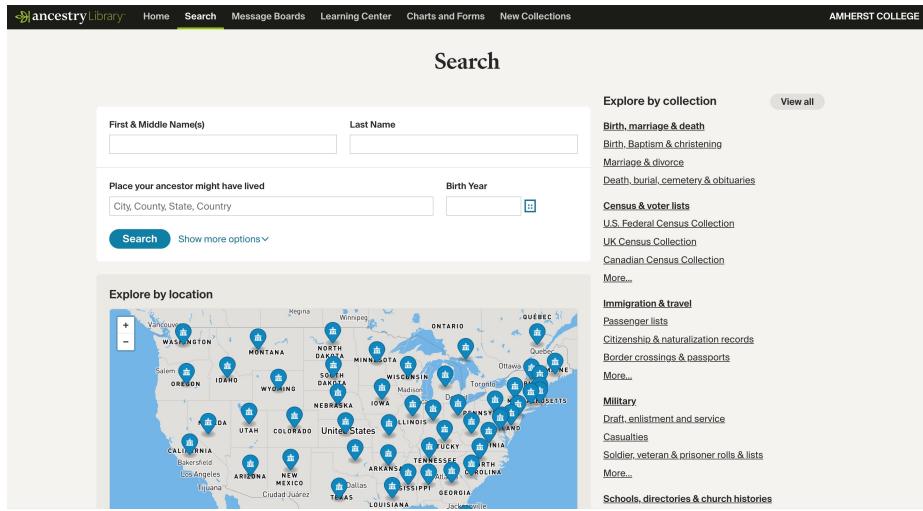


Figure 3: Ancestry.com ‘search’ screen

Figure 4: 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. We then compiled these results into a spreadsheet.

On page 259, we found two women with the same last name which was common back then but still we decided to search for one of 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!

Larah Camp	22	9	1875
Mary Smith	22	4	22.01
H. Brown	34.30	14	18.92
Joh. D. Dow	2.981	6	28.68
Lucy Allen	2.284	44	58
John Brown	2.10.22	44	28.36
J. D. Dow	2.11.29	49	"
E. A. Allen	2.6.82	"	13.73
C. D. Dow	2.14.23	33	"
E. A. Allen	2.6.95	"	12.03
C. D. Dow	2.3.97	20	8
Eliza Ann Allen	2.10.34	3	2.0.68
C. D. Dow	2.7.97	2	"
Martha Thigpen	2.7.58	2	"
E. A. Allen	2.11.08	2	2.2.16
S. E. Cunnigham	2.9.02	2	1.8.04
Mary Dow	2.15.15	2	3.0.10
Mary Holland	2.9.10	2	6.2.0
	2.8.60	2	14.11

Figure 5: Lucy and Eliza Ann Allen in the Registry

Lucy was born in Massachusetts in 1842 and Eliza Ann was her older sister born in 1841. They lived in dwelling 42.

The screenshot shows a detailed profile for Lucy M. Allen. At the top, it says "Lucy M Allen" and "in the 1870 United States Federal Census". Below this is a thumbnail image of the original census page. To the right is a "Detail" table with the following information:

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

Below the detail table is a "Household Members (Name)" table:

Household Members (Name)	Age
Job H Allen	64
Anna Allen	48
Eliza Ann Allen	29
Lucy M Allen	28

Figure 6: Lucy Allen's Profile

Their father's name was Job Allen and their mother was Anna Allen.

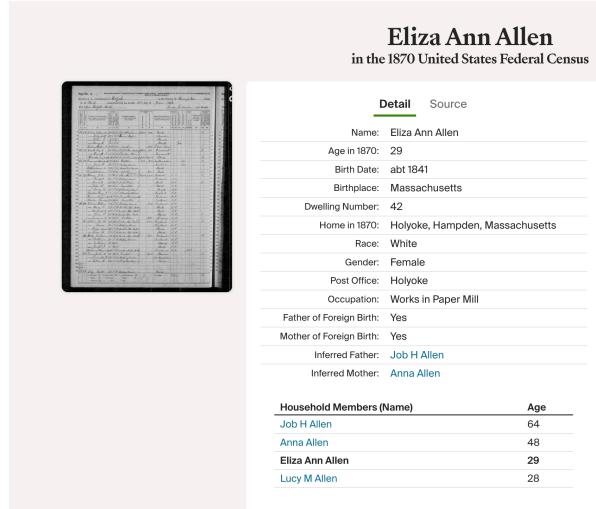


Figure 7: Eliza Ann Allen's Profile

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 on page 264.



Figure 8: Job Allen in the Registry

Anna Allen stayed at home.

This was an unfortunate but somewhat common life for a working-class family in Holyoke, Massachusetts in the 1860s.

Conversely, we were able to find records on Joseph C. Parsons; the founder of the Parsons Paper Company.

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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Suggested Records ⓘ

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

Figure 9: Joseph C. Parsons' Profile

Born on February 6, 1814, in Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts to Lydia and Justice Parsons, Joseph Clark 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.

Appendix

First, we accessed the Amherst College Library account for Ancestry.com. Second, we clicked the “Search” option and typed in the names of the workers and set the location to Holyoke, Hampden, MA. Finally, we used common sense by checking if occupation of the worker was the paper industry to figure out which of the search results were our person of interest.

Database

This is the aggregated info for some of the workers who worked in Parsons' paper in the 1860s:

```
ancestry <- readr::read_csv("ancestry_addresses_updated.csv")  
  
Rows: 22 Columns: 11  
-- Column specification -----  
Delimiter: ","  
chr (11): First name, Last Name, Birthday, Death Day, Address, Spouse, Child...  
  
i Use `spec()` to retrieve the full column specification for this data.  
i Specify the column types or set `show_col_types = FALSE` to quiet this message.
```

```
glimpse(ancestry)
```

```
Rows: 22  
Columns: 11  
$ `First name` <chr> "Ellen", "Joseph", "William", "James", "Patrick", "Patric~  
$ `Last Name` <chr> "Strick", "Parsons", "Kelly", "Casey", "Kelley", "Hollom"~  
$ Birthday <chr> "1859", "2/6/1814", "1834", "1843", "1840", "1835", "1849~  
$ `Death Day` <chr> "N/A", "3/12/1886", "N/A", "N/A", "N/A", "N/A", "N/A", "N~  
$ Address <chr> "N/A", "House 22, Dwelling 165, Suffolk Street", "Holyoke~  
$ Spouse <chr> "N/A", "Lucretia Hoyt Parsons", "Catherine Kelly", "Ann C~  
$ Children <chr> "N/A", "Catherine Turner Taft, Fannie Colton Parsons, Eli~  
$ Birthplace <chr> "Chicopee, Mass", "Northampton, Hampshire County, Massach~  
$ Mother <chr> "N/A", "Lydia Parsons", "Irish", NA, "N/A", "Irish", "Can~  
$ Father <chr> "N/A", "Justice Parsons", "Irish", "Patrick Casey", "N/A"~  
$ `US born?` <chr> "Yes", "Yes", "No", "No", "No", "No", "N/A", "Yes", ~
```

Here is a [LINK](#) to this repo