

STAT 210 Parsons' Paper Company Workers Database

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2023-03-03

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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 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 (see Figure ??). Click [here](#) for an interactive display of the register.

Workers' Summary

We took on the task of finding information about some of the employees at the paper mill using the database Ancestry.com. 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! (see Figure ??). 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 ??). 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 ??). 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 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 sisters name, one year after her sister first started working. (see Figure ??). 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 ??). 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 ?? for Lucy's places of residence. It is also worth noting that Lucy, Eliza, and Job worked for roughly the entire decade at the mill suggesting the daughters were not pursuing any form of education in this period. 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.

Conversely, we were able to find records on Joseph C. Parsons; the founder of the Parsons Paper Company. (see Figure ??). 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. If we continued our research, we would aim to find descendants of the Parsons Paper Company that are still living today.

Photo References

Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed 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 ^{1/2}	15 ^{1/4}	59	07	59.07		59.07	March 14	George Papillion
James P. Dowd	19 ^{4/10}	6	33	69	33.69		33.69		James P. Dowd
W. S. Lord	24 ^{2/10}	14 ^{1/4}	57	16	72.5	44.91	27.59		Walter S. Lord
Geo A. Day	23 ^{4/10}	15 ^{1/4}	58	75	72.5	51.50	21.25		Geo A. Day
O. E. Wheler	22 ^{4/10}	14 ^{1/4}	51	93	16.57	35.36	16.57		Oren E. Wheler
A. L. P. Sykes	25	10 ^{1/2}	48	75	16.57	27.18	16.57		A. L. P. Sykes
J. Faull	25 ^{2/10}	15 ^{1/4}	58	75	85.7	50.18	35.59		David J. Faull
Chas Robertson	25	7 ^{1/2}	31	25			31.25		Charles W. Robertson
Chas H. Morgan	25	8 ^{1/2}	21	83			20.83		Charles H. Morgan
Ellen Donohue	23	6 ^{1/2}	23	11			23.00		Ellen Donohue
Johannah Stack	25	"	25	00			25		John J. Stack
H. Casey	24	"	24	00			24		H. Casey
Fannie Strong	25	"	25	00			25		Fannie Strong
Geo Whitemore	25	"	25	00	12.42	12.58	12.42		George Whitemore
Maria Brown					00.00				Maria Brown
Sarah Slater	24	"	24	50	12.42	12.08	12.42		Sarah Slater
Clara Woodworth	25 ^{2/10}	"	28	75	12.42	11.33	12.42		Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: Page 259 of the Registry

Sarah Camp	22	8 ^{1/2}	18.75
Mary Smith	22	4 ^{1/2}	22.00
M. Brown	34.30	14 ^{1/2}	18.92
J. P. Dowd	34.30	14 ^{1/2}	18.92
Lucy Allen	28.44	4 ^{1/2}	28.68
C. Brown	10.22	4 ^{1/2}	28.36
J. P. Dowd	11.29	4 ^{1/2}	28.36
E. A. Allen	6.86	2 ^{1/2}	13.73
C. Brown	24.62	3 ^{1/2}	13.73
C. Brown	4.95	2 ^{1/2}	12.03
E. A. Allen	3.67	2 ^{1/2}	12.03
E. A. Allen	10.34	3 ^{1/2}	20.68
C. H. Lord	7.97	2 ^{1/2}	15.94
Martha Wright	7.88	2 ^{1/2}	15.16
E. H. Minison	1.18	2 ^{1/2}	2.216
S. Beaman	9.02	2 ^{1/2}	18.04
Mary Dowd	15.15	2 ^{1/2}	30.00
Mary Holland	9.10	2 ^{1/2}	6.20
	56.72	2 ^{1/2}	14.00

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

Figure 3: Job Allen in the Registry page 3. February 1st, 1861

Adele Burnham		20
Ellen Perry		14
Zuey Allen	Sorties	11
Lucia M. Crandall		756
Eyma, Perry	"	603
S. E. Morey	"	304
	"	64

Figure 4: Lucy Allen in the Registry page 2. January, 1861

Frances Pennington	25	100 ⁰	10.50		
Mary Murphy	16	39	10.00	10.00	% Mrs. J Murphy
Sueca Cram	5	3	3.21	3.21	% Lucia Cram
Eyma Perry	15	0	9.37	9.37	% E. M. Perry
Suey Allen	12	0	9.07	9.07	% Alice A. Allen
E. A. Allen	20	0	12.50	12.50	% Clara Allen
Frances Bottom	24	3	15.32	15.32	% F. penni Bottom
Suey Campion	18	7	12.91	12.91	% Lucy Campion
			100.00		
Subtotal					
Eyma Perry	341	20	6.82	6.82	Jan 18 th E. M. Perry
Suey Allen	310	0	1.35	1.35	% Alice A. Allen
E. A. Allen	361	0	7.22	7.22	% Clara Allen
Suey Cram	149	0	9.84	9.84	% Lucia Cram
Ada F. Cram	379	0	7.74	7.74	% Anna Cram
S. C. Society	1680	0	20.00	20.00	% S. C. Society
Soule Cash	327	0	10.54	10.54	% Louisa Cash
J. B. Strohs	840	0	17.28	17.28	% A. B. Strohs
K. St. Guy	750	0	15.00	15.00	% E. M. Perry
Ada Beetham	360	0	6.80	6.80	% Ada Beetham
	6381		107.62		
Grand Total					
J. M. Perry	341020	504			
Sarah E. May	12	165.53	1	29.12	29.12 Jan 18 th E. M. Perry
Angie Remore	12	165.53	1	30.35	30.35 % Sarah E. May
	24	330.00	1		
	12	165.53	1	12.50	12.50 % 10

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

Figure 6: Lucy Allen's Profile

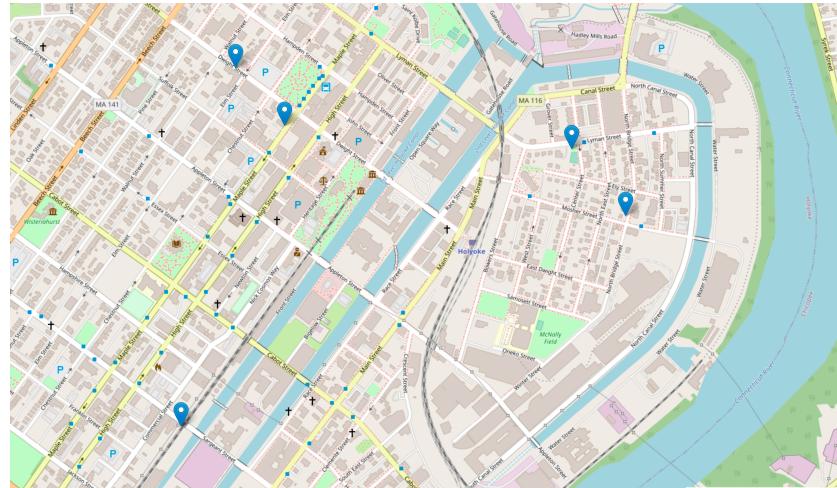


Figure 7: Lucy Allen Residency between 1869-91

Print

Joseph Clark Parsons

in the U.S., Find a Grave™ Index, 1600s-Current



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