

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 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 1). 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 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 7 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 8). 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. Cassay	24	"	24	00			24		H. Cassay
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 ^{3/4}	"	28	75	12.42	11.33	12.42		Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: Page 259 of the Registry

Sarah Camp	22	8 ^{1/4}	18.75
Mary Smith	22	4 ^{1/4}	22.00
H. Brown	34.30	14 ^{1/4}	18.92
J. P. Dowd	34.30	14 ^{1/4}	18.92
Lucy Allen	28.44	4 ^{1/4}	28.68
C. Brown	10.22	4 ^{1/4}	28.36
James P. Dowd	11.29	4 ^{1/4}	28.36
E. A. Allen	6.86	2 ^{3/4}	13.73
C. Brown	24.62	3 ^{1/4}	13.73
Eliza A. Dowd	4.95	2 ^{3/4}	12.03
C. A. Allen	3.67	2 ^{3/4}	12.03
E. A. Allen	3.67	2 ^{3/4}	12.03
C. H. Lord	10.34	3 ^{1/2}	20.68
Martha Wright	7.97	2 ^{1/2}	15.94
E. H. Minison	7.88	2 ^{1/2}	15.16
S. Beaman	1.18	2 ^{1/2}	2.216
Mary Dowd	9.02	2 ^{1/2}	18.04
Mary Holland	15.15	2 ^{1/2}	30.10
	81.02	2 ^{1/2}	62.00
	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		11
Lucia M. Crandall	Sorties	756
	"	603
Symma. Perry	"	304
D. E. Morey	"	64

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

Florida Lopez	20	00	11.50			
Suey Murphy	11	39	10.00	10.00	0	Mrs. J. Murphy
Suey Cram	5	0	3.00	3.00	0	Lura Cram
Suey Perry	15	0	9.50	9.50	0	E. M. Perry
Suey Allen	12	0	9.00	9.00	0	Lura Allen
J. G. Allen	20	0	12.50	12.50	0	Lura Allen
K. Samie Bottet	24	0	15.52	15.52	0	W. Jennie Bottet
Suey Campion	18	70	12.00	12.00	0	Lury Campion
			105.70			
						dated
Suey Perry	341	30	6.82	6.82	Jan 18	E. M. Perry
Suey Allen	316	0	6.38	6.38	0	Lura Allen
J. G. Allen	361	0	7.22	7.22	0	Lura Allen
Suey Cram	199	0	9.84	9.84	0	Lura Cram
Ada F. Cram	387	0	7.74	7.74	0	Lura Cram
S. G. Sonney	1160	0	20.00	20.00	0	J. G. Sonney
Souise Nash	527	0	10.52	10.52	0	Louise Nash
J. P. Strohs	684	0	17.28	17.28	0	J. P. Strohs
K. S. Perry	150	0	15.00	15.00	0	E. M. Perry
Ada Burkham	369	0	6.80	6.80	0	Ada Burkham
	6831		107.62			
						Cont'd below
J. M. Perry	30	00	50.4			
Sarah E. Haynes	12	165.58	1	29.12	29.12	Jan 18 E. M. Perry
Angie Remore	12	00	1			
	12.00					

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

Figure 6: Lucy Allen's Profile

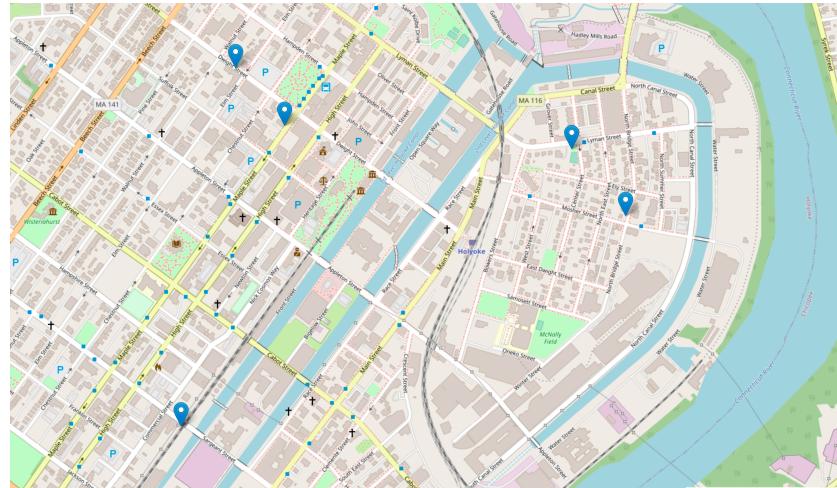


Figure 7: Lucy Allen Residency between 1869-91

Print

Joseph Clark Parsons

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



Want to get involved? [Click here.](#)

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)

Table 1: Employee Database

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

Database

Here 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:

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" which lists several 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 dropdown menus for "Birth Year" and "Place your ancestor might have lived" (City, County, State, Country). To the right, there's a sidebar titled "Explore by collection" with categories like Birth, marriage & death, Census & voter lists, Immigration & travel, and Schools, directories & church histories. A large map of the United States shows various locations with blue pins. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Search" and "Show more options".

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 criteria are displayed: "Your search" with fields for "joseph Clark", "Parsons", "Born: 1814", and "Any: Holyoke, Hampden, M...". Below this is a "Broad Exact" slider set to "Exact". A "Filters" section lists various categories with their counts: 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), and Family trees (70,000+). A "Browse by collection" link is located at the top right. A callout box suggests adding more information like "Death Info" to refine the search. The search results are presented in three rows. The first row shows a result from "U.S., Find a Grave™ Index, 1600s-Current" with details: 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. The second row shows the "1880 United States Federal Census" with details: Name Joseph C. Parsons, Birth Abt 1814 Massachusetts, Residence 1880 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA. The third row shows the "1870 United States Federal Census" with details: Name Joseph C Parsons, Birth abt 1814 Massachusetts, Residence 1870 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA. Each result includes a "View" link.

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		1
15		—	Jamie E	22	M	W	Beth Reber	✓	Mass.	1
16		—	John S	20	M	W	Teamster	✓	Mass.	1
17		—	Mary L	11	F	W	Attending School		Mass.	1
18		—	Madden Henry J	8	F	W	Attending School		New York	1
19		—	Merric Margaretha	22	F	W	Domestic servant		Iceland	1
20		—	Whalen Thomas	26	M	W	Teamster	✓	Ireland	1
21	42	40	Dover Ellen	53	F	W	Ropery house	500	Ireland	1
22		—	Mary F	27	F	W	Workers Wife		Mass.	1
23		—	Margaret N	25	F	W	Workers Wife	✓	Mass.	1
24		—	Jane P	23	M	W	Workers Wife	✓	Mass.	1
25		—	Lorraine D	21	M	W	Brother	✓	Cogn.	1
26	41	40	Aller Job H	64	M	W	Workers Wife	600	England	1
27		—	Anna	48	F	W	Ropery house		England	1
28		—	Eliza Ann	29	F	W	Workers Wife		Mass.	1
29		—	Lucy M	28	F	W	Workers Wife		Mass.	1
30	42	40	Perry William	36	M	W	Workers Wife	350	Ireland	1
31		—	Catherine	31	F	W	Ropery house		Ireland	1
32		—	William	6	M	W			Mass.	1
33		—	Joseph J	2	M	W			Mass.	1
34		—	Merric Margaretha	41	F	W	Workers Wife		Ireland	1
35	43	40	Brown Justin E	30	M	W	Grocer	350	Maine	1
36		—	Lorraine B	57	F	W	Ropery house		Nor Hampshire	1

Figure 13: Zoomed in Image of the 1870 Census