

# **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 1<sup>st</sup> 1868.

NAMES.	No. Pounds.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
Geo Papillion	22 <sup>1/2</sup>	15 <sup>1/4</sup>	59	07	59.07		59.07	March 14	George Papillion
James P. Dowd	19 <sup>4/10</sup>	6	33	69	33.69		33.69		James P. Dowd
W. S. Lord	24 <sup>2/10</sup>	14 <sup>1/2</sup>	57	16	72.5	44.91	27.59		Walter S. Lord
Geo A. Day	23 <sup>4/10</sup>	15 <sup>1/4</sup>	58	75	72.5	51.50	21.25		Geo A. Day
O. E. Wheler	22 <sup>4/10</sup>	14 <sup>1/2</sup>	51	93	16.57	35.36	16.57		Oren E. Wheler
A. L. P. Sykes	25	10 <sup>1/2</sup>	48	75	16.57	27.18	16.57		A. L. P. Sykes
J. Faull	25 <sup>2/10</sup>	18 <sup>1/4</sup>	58	75	85.7	50.18	35.59		David J. Faull
Chas Robertson	25	7 <sup>1/2</sup>	31	25			31.25		Charles W. Robertson
Chas H. Morgan	25	8 <sup>1/2</sup>	21	83			20.83		Charles H. Morgan
Ellen Donohue	23	6 <sup>1/2</sup>	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 <sup>3/4</sup>	"	28	75	12.42	11.33	12.42		Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: Page 259 of the Registry

Sarah Camp	22	8 <sup>1/2</sup>	18.75
Mary Smith	22	4 <sup>1/2</sup>	22.00
M. Brown	34.30	14 <sup>1/2</sup>	18.92
J. P. Dowd	34.81	14 <sup>1/2</sup>	18.92
Lucy Allen	12.84	4 <sup>1/2</sup>	5.88
C. Brown	10.22	4 <sup>1/2</sup>	5.61
James P. Dowd	11.29	4 <sup>1/2</sup>	5.61
E. A. Allen	6.86	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	3.43
C. B. Lord	2.46	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	1.23
Martha Wright	4.95	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	2.48
E. Whittemore	3.67	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	1.83
S. Beaman	2.22	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	1.11
Mary Dowd	1.03	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	0.52
Mary Holland	7.97	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	3.98
	7.88	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	3.94
	1.18	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	0.61
	9.02	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	4.51
	15.15	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	7.58
	81.02	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	40.51
	56.72	2 <sup>1/2</sup>	28.36
			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
Suey Allen	20	0	12.50	12.50	0	Lura Allen
Suey Botten	24	0	15.50	15.50	0	W. Jennie Botten
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 Cram	316	0	6.38	6.38	0	Lura Cram
Suey Allen	361	0	7.22	7.22	0	Lura Allen
Suey Cram	199	0	7.84	7.84	0	Lura Cram
Suey Cram	387	0	7.74	7.74	0	Lura Cram
Suey Allen	1680	0	20.00	20.00	0	Lura Allen
Suey Cram	527	0	10.52	10.52	0	Lura Cram
Suey Cram	868	0	17.28	17.28	0	Suey Cram
Suey Cram	150	0	15.00	15.00	0	E. M. Perry
Ada Burkham	369	0	6.80	6.80	0	Ada Burkham
	6881		107.62			
						Cont'd below
Suey Perry	30	00	50.4			
Suey Perry	15	195.58	1	29.12	29.12	Jan 18 E. M. Perry
Suey Cram	1528	0				
Suey Perry	1515.62	0	50.25	50.25	0	Suey Cram
Angie Romeo	2000	0				
	12.00		12.00	12.00	0	

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

Figure 6: Lucy Allen's Profile

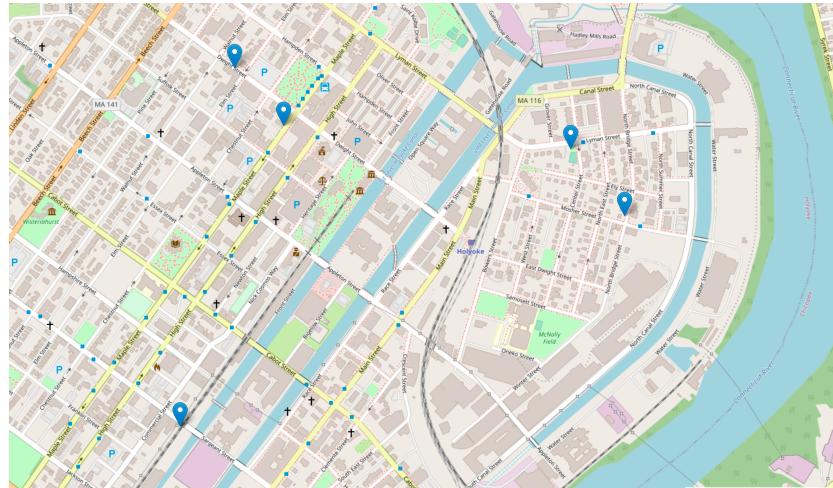


Figure 7: Lucy Allen Residency between 1869-91

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:	<a href="#">Justice Parsons</a>
Mother:	<a href="#">Lydia Parsons</a>
Spouse:	<a href="#">Lucretia Hoyt Parsons</a>
Children:	Catherine Turner Taft Fannie Colton Parsons Elizabeth Hoyt Prescott
URL:	<a href="https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137384548/joseph-clark-parsons">https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137384548/joseph-clark-parsons</a>

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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

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

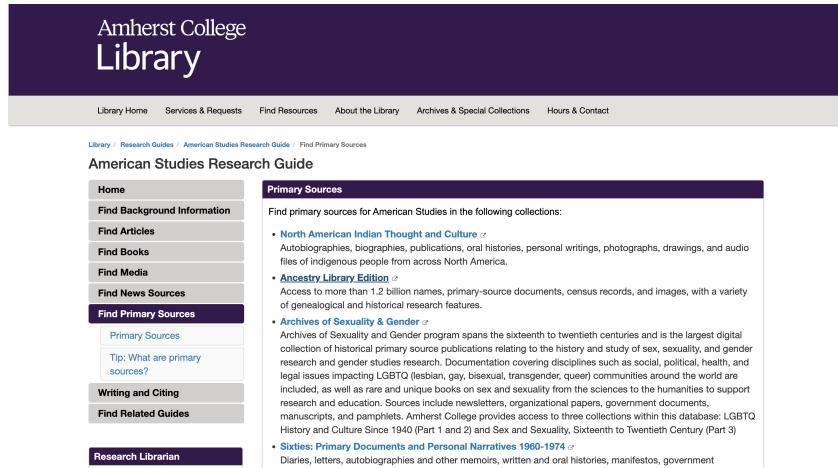
## Database

Here is the database we made. It tells us 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. 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:

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

## Technical Appendix

The goal of this technical appendix is to provide an account of our process of collecting the information from Ancestry.com. First, we accessed the Amherst College Library account for Ancestry.com.

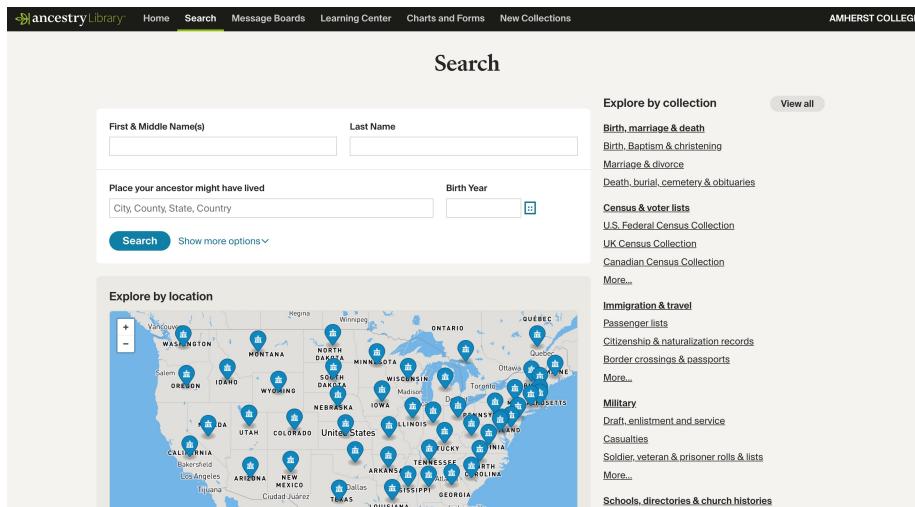


The screenshot shows the Amherst College Library website. The header reads "Amherst College Library". Below the header is a navigation bar with links to "Library Home", "Services & Requests", "Find Resources", "About the Library", "Archives & Special Collections", and "Hours & Contact". Under "Find Resources", there is a sub-menu for "American Studies Research Guide". The main content area displays the "American Studies Research Guide" with a sidebar on the left containing links for "Home", "Find Background Information", "Find Articles", "Find Books", "Find Media", "Find News Sources", "Find Primary Sources" (which is highlighted in purple), "Primary Sources", "Tip: What are primary sources?", "Writing and Citing", and "Find Related Guides". The right side of the page contains sections for "Primary Sources", "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 links for "Home", "Search", "Message Boards", "Learning Center", "Charts and Forms", and "New Collections". On the far right, it says "AMHERST COLLEGE". The main search area has fields for "First & Middle Name(s)" and "Last Name", with a "Birth Year" dropdown menu. Below these fields is a map titled "Explore by location" showing the United States and Canada with various cities marked. To the right of the map is a sidebar titled "Explore by collection" with categories like "Birth, marriage & death", "Census & voter lists", "Immigration & travel", and "Schools, directories & church histories". Each category has a list of specific collections underneath.

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.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com search interface with the following details:

- Search Bar:** Joseph Clark Parsons
- Filter Options:**
  - Exact vs Broad search selector (Broad is selected)
  - Date range: Born: 1814
  - Location: Any: Holyoke, Hampden, MA
  - Apply button
- Results Summary:** 1-20 of 123,945
- Help Tip:** To get better results, add more information such as Death Info—even a guess will help. Edit your search or learn more.
- Result Preview:** 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
- Result Preview:** 1880 United States Federal Census
 

Name: Joseph C. Parsons
Birth: Abt 1814 Massachusetts
Residence: 1880 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
- Result Preview:** 1870 United States Federal Census
 

Name: Joseph C Parsons
Birth: abt 1814 Massachusetts
Residence: 1870 Holyoke, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA

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 a spreadsheet linked above.

**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	
<b>Household Members (Name)</b>	
Job H Allen	Age
Anna Allen	64
Eliza Ann Allen	48
Lucy M Allen	29
	28

Figure 12: Eliza Ann Allen's Profile

1870 United States Federal Census for Lucy M Allen										
Massachusetts - Hampden - Holyoke										
13	47	Allen, John	52	W. W. Paper Manufacturer	\$38,000	4110	Irishland	1	1	/
14	-	Bridget	43	W. W. Paperhouse			Irishland	1	1	/
15	-	Jane E.	32	W. W. Paper Manufacturer			Irishland	1	1	/
16	-	John L.	21	W. W. Teamster			Irishland	1	1	/
17	-	Mary L.	11	W. W. Academy School			Irishland	1	1	/
18	-	Madeline Mary	5	W. W. Academy School			Irishland	1	1	/
19	-	Marvin Maynard	22	W. W. Teamster			Irishland	1	1	/
20	-	Whalen Thomas	26	W. W. Teamster			Irishland	1	1	/
21	47	Dorothy Ellen	33	W. W. Paperhouse	300	Irishland	1	1		/
22	-	Mary L.	22	W. W. Paperhouse			Irishland	1	1	/
23	-	Maryest N.	25	W. W. Paperhouse			Irishland	1	1	/
24	-	John P.	23	W. W. Paperhouse			Irishland	1	1	/
25	-	Lawrence D.	21	W. W. Butcher	200	Circus	1	1		/
26	41	Allen, Job H.	49	W. W. Paperhouse	600	Englishland	1	1		/
27	-	Aura	35	W. W. Paperhouse			Englishland	1	1	/
28	-	Eliza Ann	37	W. W. Paperhouse			Mass	1	1	/
29	-	Lucy M.	35	W. W. Paperhouse			Mass	1	1	/
30	42	Holly, William	26	W. W. Paperhouse	350	Irishland	1	1		/
31	-	Catharine	37	W. W. Paperhouse			Irishland	1	1	/
32	-	William	6	W. W.			Mass	1	1	/
33	-	Jack J.	2	W. W.			Mass	1	1	/
34	-	Mr. Lawrence Chapman	41	W. W. Paperhouse	300	Irishland	1	1		/
35	43	Brown, Justice E.	30	W. W. Grocer	3,300	Maine				/
36	-	Serinda R.	32	W. W. Paperhouse			North Carolina			

Figure 13: Zoomed in Image of the 1870 Census