

New England Vital Records to Present Day

Melanie McComb, melanie.mccomb@nehgs.org

Massachusetts

- 1841 - Statewide registration began
- Vital Records up to 1850 published for over 200 towns, majority in eastern Massachusetts. Known as the “tan books”.
 - Most of these books are online on AmericanAncestors.org in our Massachusetts Vital Records 1620-1850 database - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/190/massachusetts-vital-records-1620-1850>
 - 1841-1910 – <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/191/massachusetts-vital-records-1841-1910>
 - 1911-1915 – <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/192/massachusetts-vital-records-1911-1915>
 - 1916-1920 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/2738/massachusetts-vital-records-1916-1920>
 - 1921-1925 – being digitized by FamilySearch. Originals are at Massachusetts State Archives.
 - Birth Records - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2859768>
 - Marriage Records - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/3010705>
 - Death Records - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/3010706>
 - 1926 to Present – state records are at the State Registry of Vital Statistics. Also, held at local town clerk’s office.
- Alternative collections:
 - Corbin Collection - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/199269>
 - Rollin H. Cooke Collection (available on microfilm at NEHGS)
 - Holbrook Microfiche
 - Manuscripts
- Divorce Records
 - Pre-1887 records are held at the Massachusetts State Archives
 - Index to divorces in Court of Sessions volumes, 1758-1789 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/607210>
 - Divorce records, 1760-1786 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/339255>
 - Suffolk County, Mass. Court Files, 1629-1797 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/240378>
 - 1887-1921 records are at the Superior Court in the county the divorce occurred



- 1922-Present records are held at Probate and Family Court where divorce occurred
- 1952-Present Index at the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics
 - Can only provide the court that granted divorce and the docket number
 - Divorce index 1952-1970 -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/76413>

Connecticut

- 1897 – Statewide registration began
- Barbour Collection:
 - Compiled under the direction of Lucius Barnes Barbour
 - Includes vital records from 136 towns that cover the period 1636-1870
 - Statewide alphabetical slip index – available FamilySearch.org
 - Bound volumes by town – available AmericanAncestors.org, Ancestry.com (\$), FamilySearch.org
 - Bound volumes were not prepared for the towns of Bolton, Coventry, Enfield, Mansfield, New Haven, Norwich, and Vernon. The towns had previously published compilations of vital records.
- AmericanAncestors:
 - Barbour Collection -
<https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/414/connecticut-vital-records-the-barbour-collection-1630-1870>
 - Marriages and Deaths, 1790-1833 -
<https://americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1704/connecticut-marriages-and-deaths-1790-1833>
- FamilySearch
 - Connecticut Births and Christenings (1649-1906) -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1674736>
 - Connecticut Marriages (1630-1997) -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1674749>
 - Connecticut Deaths and Burials (1772-1934) -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1674748>
- Divorce Records
 - Original Divorce Records at Conn. State Library
 - New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties, Indexed 1719-1910
 - Hartford Counties Indexed 1740-1849
 - Litchfield Counties Indexed 1752-1922
 - New London County on FamilySearch 1719-1875 -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/578513>

Rhode Island

- 1853 – Statewide registration began
- Pre-1850 vital records can be found in James N. Arnold's 21-volume *Vital Records of Rhode Island 1636-1850*
- Post-1850 vital records

- Local town clerk offices
- State Archives
 - Births, deaths, and marriages 1853-1900 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/493530>
 - Births and marriages (1853-1920)
 - Births and marriages 1890-1900 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/712355>
 - Returns of birth 1893-1898 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/828708>
 - Delayed births, 1846-1892, 1896-1898, 1901-1905 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/783665>
 - Delayed births 1893-1895 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/771224>
 - Delayed births 1899-1900 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1007641>
 - Deaths (1853-1970)
 - 1901-1943 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/698695>
 - 1944-1945 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/771147>
 - 1946-1948 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/828708>
 - 1949-1950 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1007641>
- Databases on AmericanAncestors.org
 - Vital Records, 1636-1850 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databaserecordsearch/532/rhode-island-vital-records-1636-1850>
 - Providence, RI: Alphabetical List of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1931-1940 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databaserecordsearch/444/providence-ri-alphabetical-index-of-births-marriages-and-deaths-1931-1940>
- Divorce Records
 - Pre-1900 court records are at the Judicial Records Center Archives
 - A research request form can be sent to the Judicial Archivist
 - Post-1900 records are held at the Clerk of Family Court in Providence, Rhode Island

Vermont

- 1857 – Statewide registration began
- Births, Marriages, and Deaths 1700-2008 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databaserecordsearch/500/vermont-births-marriages-and-deaths-1700-2008>
- Microfilm at NEHGS
 - Vital Records (through 1979)
 - Divorce Index (1861-1989)
- Divorce Records

- 1925-2003 index on Ancestry.com -
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8954/>
- Post-1982 records available from Vital Records Office in Burlington, Vermont
- Records from the last 5 years available from the Department of Health

New Hampshire

- 1866 – Statewide registration began
- AmericanAncestors.org Databases
 - Births, Deaths, and Marriages, 1654-1969 –
<https://americanancestors.org/search/databaserecord/516/new-hampshire-births-deaths-and-marriages-1654-1969>
 - New Hampshire Gazette: Vital Records, 1756-1800 -
<https://americanancestors.org/search/databaserecord/297/new-hampshire-gazette-vital-records-1756-1800>
- Microfilm at NEHGS
 - New Hampshire Town Records
 - Pre-1900 Vital Records
 - Alphabetized by first and third letter of surname
 - Not every town is included
 - Brides Index
 - Post-1900 Marriages and Deaths
 - Divorces (to 1938)
- Divorce Records
 - Records prior to 1938 are at the Bureau of Vital Records
 - Divorce index for pre-1938 records on FamilySearch and at the Bureau of Vital Records
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/310806>
 - Hillsborough County Divorce Records, 1948-1959 -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1876929>

Maine

- 1892– Statewide registration began
- Maine Vital Records, 1670-1921 -
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1803978>
- Post-1892 Vital Records
 - Births, Marriages and Deaths filmed together
 - Microfilm is arranged by surname
 - Then by year
 - Birth alphabetical by given name of father
 - Marriage alphabetical by given name of groom
 - Deaths alphabetical by given name of death
 - Back of form filmed upside down
- AmericanAncestors.org Databases



- Pre-1850 records can be found in Massachusetts Vital Records, 1620-1850 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasearch/190/massachusetts-vital-records-1620-1850>
- Deaths Index, 1960-1996 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasearch/129/maine-deaths-index-1960-1996>
- Marriages Index, 1892-1966, 1977-1996 – <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasearch/130/maine-marriages-index-1892-1966-1977-1996>
- Marriages and Intentions 1849-1870 - <https://americanancestors.org/search/databasearch/168/maine-marriages-and-marriage-intentions-1849-1870>
- Microfilm at NEHGS
 - Individual microfilm for certain towns
 - Vital Records Prior to 1892 (including index – 80 towns)
 - Vital Records (1892-1955)
 - Index to Divorce Records (1892-1983)
- Divorce Records
 - Records prior to 1892 are at the Maine State Archives
 - 1892-present records are held at Office of Vital Statistics in Augusta, Maine
 - 1892-1963 Divorce Index on Digital Maine Repository - https://digitalmaine.com/divorce_index/

Publications

McClure, Rhonda R., *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research* (Boston, MA: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2022).