

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 the 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 more information about some of the employees at the paper mill using the genealogical database Ancestry.com. On page 259, we found two women with

the same last name (see Figure 2) which was common back then and decided to search for 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 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 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 8 for Lucy’s places of residence.

Following the inspection of the payroll pages (pg 1-319) of the PPP register, we observe that Lucy, Eliza, and Job all worked throughout the decade. It is reasonable to presume that the Allen daughter were unlikely to be pursuing education on this time. 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.

Additionally, we were able to find records on Joseph Clark Parsons; the founder of the Parsons Paper Company (see Figure 7). We chose to explore his ancestry and observe how it would differ to those of his employees.

Parsons was born on February 6, 1814, in Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts to Lydia and Justice Parsons. 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 proficed 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 Papillio			22 ^{1/2}	15/9	\$ 9 07		59 07	March 14	Geo Papillio
James P. Dowse			19 ^{3/4}	10/6	33 69		33 69		James P Dowse
W. J. Lord			24 ^{1/2}	19/	57 16	7 25	49 91		Walter J Lord
Geo A. Day			23 ^{3/4}	15/-	58 75	7 25	51 50		Geo A Day
O. C. Whelan			22 ^{3/4}	14/-	51 93	16 57	35 36		Orrin C Whelan
A. G. P. Sykes			25	10/6	43 75	16 57	27 18		A G P Sykes
G. Farrell			23 ^{1/2}	15/-	58 75	8 57	50 18		Lawrence Farrell
Chas Robertson			23	7/6	31 25		31 25		Charles W Robertson
Chas W. Morgan			25	5/-	21 50		20 83		Charles W Morgan
Ellen Donohue			23	6/-	23 00		23 00		Ellen Donohue
Johannah Stack			25	"	25 00		25		John Stack
H. Casey			24	"	24 00		24		H. Casey
Thomas Strong			25	"	25 00		25		Thomas Strong
Geo Whittemore			25	"	25 00	12 42	12 88		George Whittemore
Maria Bowen					00 00				
Sarah Slater			24 ^{1/2}	"	24 50	12 42	12 08		Sarah Slater
Clara Woodworth			23 ^{3/4}	"	23 75	12 42	11 33		Clara Woodworth

Figure 1: This is page 259 of the PPP registry, demonstrating how the name, days worked, wages, whether or not the worker had rent or board due, final balance owed, and signature were recorded

Sarah Camp		22	9-	1875
Mary Smith		22	64	2211
H. Brown		3430	11	1092
John Dorer	35	1284	49 ^{1/2}	2868
Lucy Allen	60	1072	49 ^{1/4}	2836
H. Brown		686		
Wm. Dorer		246	23 ^{3/8}	1373
E. A. Allen		495		
E. H. Lord		327	28 ^{3/4}	1203
Martha Wright		797	2	1594
E. Tomlinson		758	2	1516
S. Beauregard		1108	2	2216
Mary Dorer		902	2	1804
Mary Holland		1515	2	3110
		310	2	620
		560	2 ^{1/2}	1411

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

Receipts of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum preferred to and Signatures,
 being in full of all demands up to February 1 1861

NAMES	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
J. H. Ordway			20	\$200	20.00		20.00	Feb 15	J. H. Ordway
J. S. Sawyer			26	"	52.00		52.00	"	Wm. J. Seymour
James S. Lewis			26	1/2	23.75		23.75	"	James S. Lewis
James Lewis			26	1/2	23.75		23.75	"	James Lewis
John H. Allen			27	1/2	26.00	5.00	31.00	"	John H. Allen
Patrick Byrne			31	1/2	39.58		39.58	"	John S. Page
Benjamin Rogers			32	1/2	40.00		40.00	"	Henry A. Page
Patrick Price			11	1/2	11.50		11.50	Mar 27	Patrick Price
Anthony Gause			28	1/2	25.65		25.65	Feb 18	Joseph A. Brown
John Dorer			26	"	26.00		26.00	"	John Dorer
John Dorer			26	"	26.12		26.12	"	Henry A. Page
John Dorer			26	"	23.50		23.50	"	James S. Lewis
James Laughan			26	1/2	26.25		26.25	"	Patrick Byrne
James Laughan			13	1/2	13.00		13.00	"	James S. Lewis
William Kelly			31	"	31.50		31.50	"	William Kelly
William Johnson			26	1/2	26.50		26.50	"	Henry A. Page
John Dorer			26	1/2	26.25		26.25	"	Patrick Byrne
Richard Dyer			26	1/2	26.02		26.02	"	Richard Dyer
William Dyer			20	1/2	20.00	10.00	20.00	"	William Dyer
James S. Lewis			28	1/2	28.57	5.00	33.57	"	James S. Lewis

Figure 3: Job Allen in the Registry page 3, line 5. February 1st, 1861. In this pay period he worked 27 days and received \$31

Mary Melody		10	0	102	702	4	Julia A Smith
John P.		25	0	111 69	111 69	4	Mary Melody
John Melroy		11	0	8 77	8 77	4	Ada Buchanan
Lucy Allen	20	786	20	15 12	15 12	4	E. M. Perry
John M. Crum		10	0	12 06	12 06	4	Lucy Allen
Emma Perry		306	0	6 12	6 12	4	Louisa M. Crum
D. G. Money		611	0	1 28	1 28	4	E. M. Perry
A. J. Halcomb	10	897	15	7 50	7 50	4	George Money
				578 89	578 89		Julia A Smith

Figure 4: Lucy Allen in the Registry page 2, line 3. January, 1861. In this pay period she worked 24 and received \$15.12

Roberta Donnell		25	0	11 50	11 50	4	Mary J. Murphy
Mary Murphy		16	0	10 00	10 00	4	Lucia Crum
Lucia Crum		5	0	3 44	3 44	4	E. M. Perry
Emma Perry		15	0	9 57	9 57	4	Eliza A Allen
Lucy Allen		14	0	9 07	9 07	4	Eliza Allen
E. A. Allen		20	0	12 50	12 50	4	W. Jennie Bolton
H. Jennie Bolton		24	0	15 52	15 52	4	Lucy Campi
Lucy Campi		18	0	12 96	12 96	4	
				115 70	115 70		
Emma Perry		341	20	6 82	6 82	Jan 16	E. M. Perry
Lucy Allen		319	0	6 38	6 38	4	Eliza A Allen
E. A. Allen		361	0	7 22	7 22	4	Eliza Allen
Lucy Crum		492	0	9 84	9 84	4	Louisa M. Crum
John P. Crum		587	0	7 74	7 74	4	Louisa Crum
D. G. Money		1000	0	20 00	20 00	4	D. G. Money
Louisa Crum		527	0	10 54	10 54	4	Louisa Crum
A. P. Hunt		862	0	17 28	17 28	4	A. P. Hunt
A. J. Perry		750	0	15 00	15 00	4	E. M. Perry
Ada Buchanan		320	0	6 80	6 80	4	Ada Buchanan
		6381		107 62	107 62		
E. M. Perry		1050	30	4			
Sarah E Haynes		1165	58	29 12	29 12	Jan 16	E. M. Perry
Angie Roman		1326	0	30 25	30 25	4	Sarah E Haynes

Figure 5: Lucy and Eliza Ann Allen on page 34 line 5 and 6. January, 1862

Lucy M Allen
in the 1870 United States Federal Census

Detail Source

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

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 from Ancestry.com providing details on her birth year and family members

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>

Send Your Find Home!
 Enter your email address and we will send you a link to your personalized Discovery Page where you can view and download all of the great finds you make while here.
 Send document
 We value your privacy. [Read our Privacy Statement](#)

Find a Grave
 Provided in association with Find a Grave

Suggested Records

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

Figure 7: Joseph C. Parsons’ Profile (1814-1886)

Lucy's Places of residence

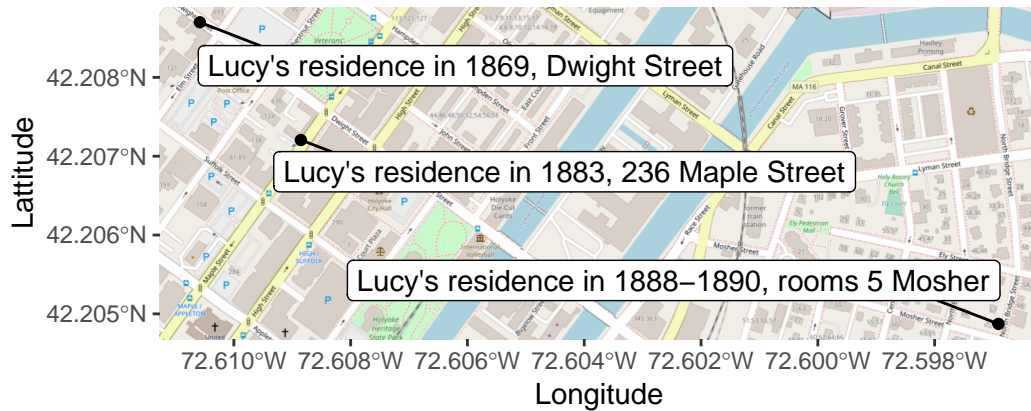


Figure 8: The black dots shows the 3 residences for Lucy Allen from years 1869-90

Database

Here¹ 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:

Table 1: Aggregated Data from Employees on Page 253 of the Registry From Ancestry.com

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

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.

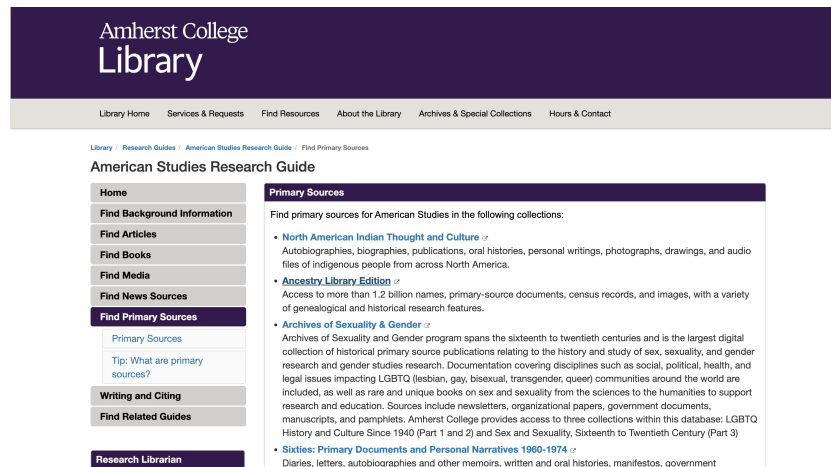


Figure 9: Once on the Amherst website, we clicked the link to Ancestry Library Edition

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

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

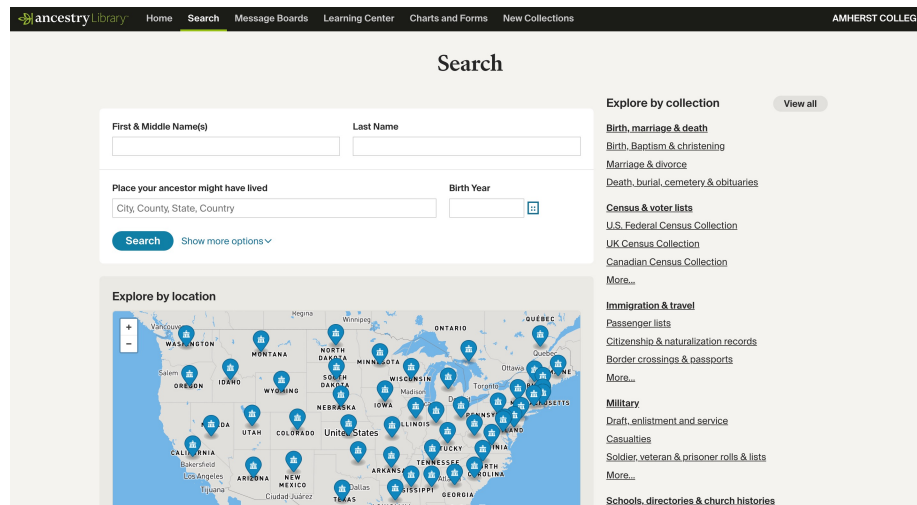


Figure 10: Ancestry.com 'search' screen

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.

There 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.

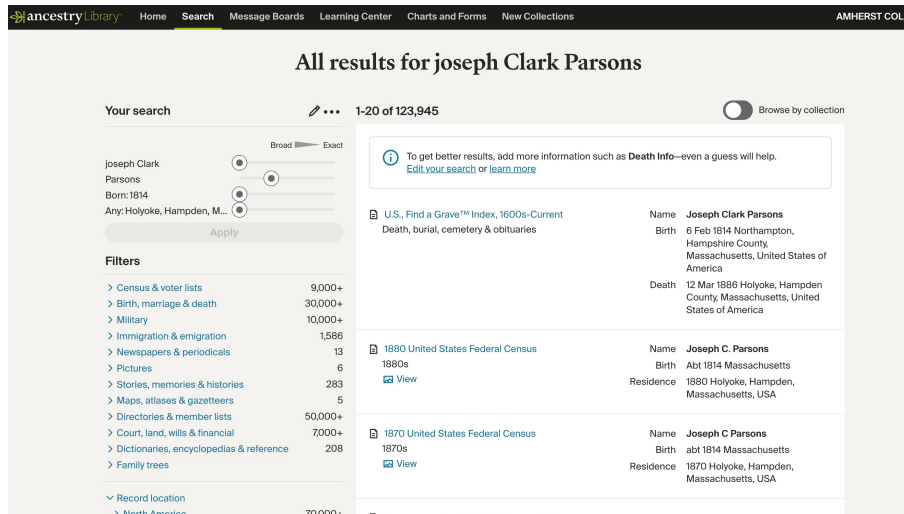
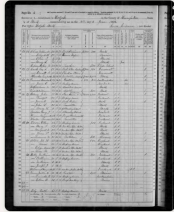


Figure 11: Initial search results

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

Massachusetts > Hampden > Holyoke

Line	Name	Age	Sex	Color	Mar	Prof	Value	Place	Birth	Imm	...
13	Belamy John	57	M	W		Shoe Maker	3600	4300	Ireland	/	/
14	— Bridget	53	F	W		Keeping house			Ireland	/	/
15	— James E.	22	M	W		Book Binder			Mass	/	/
16	— John S.	20	M	W		Teamster			Mass	/	/
17	— Mary S.	11	F	W		Attending School			Mass	/	/
18	Madden Mary J.	8	F	W		Attending School			Ind. Ark	/	/
19	Reverin Margaret	23	F	W		Domestic Servant			Ireland	/	/
20	Whalen Thomas	26	M	W		Teamster			Ireland	/	/
21	40 Dower Ellen	53	F	W		Keeping house		500	Ireland	/	/
22	— Mary T.	27	F	W		Works Paper Mill			Mass	/	/
23	— Margaret D.	25	F	W		Works Paper Mill			Mass	/	/
24	— James P.	23	M	W		Works Paper Mill			Mass	/	/
25	— Lawrence W.	21	M	W		Butcher		200	Conn	/	/
26	41 Allen Job H.	44	M	W		Works Paper Mill		500	England	/	/
27	— Anna	43	F	W		Keeping house			England	/	/
28	— Eliza Ann	29	F	W		Works Paper Mill			Mass	/	/
29	— Lucy M.	28	F	W		Works Paper Mill			Mass	/	/
30	42 Kelly William	36	M	W		Works Paper Mill		350	Ireland	/	/
31	— Catherine	31	F	W		Keeping house			Ireland	/	/
32	— William	6	M	W					Mass	/	/
33	— Joseph J.	2	M	W					Mass	/	/
34	McDonough Margaret	41	F	W		Works Paper Mill			Ireland	/	/
35	43 Brown Justin E.	30	M	W		Grocer		3500	Maine	/	/
36	— Lavinia B.	57	F	W		Keeping house			New Hampshire	/	/

Figure 13: Zoomed in Image of the 1870 Census