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Vital Records of Townsend, Massachusetts

From the introduction of the book, by Robert Charles Anderson, F.A.S.G.:

"Townsend was originally the northern part of a plantation known as Turkey Hills (the southern portion becoming Lunenburg), and was incorporated as a town in 1732. During the decades in the early eighteenth century when Townsend was being settled, migrations in New England were moving generally in an east-to-west direction, so that most of the early settlers came from older established towns in Middlesex and Essex counties. Also, because Townsend bordered directly on New Hampshire, many marriages are seen in which one party was from Townsend and the other from a nearby New Hampshire town."

"Through most of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, the population of Townsend, as in so many New England towns, remained relatively stable, and the same mix of family names is seen from decade to decade. But by the middle of the nineteenth century some changes may be noted, with the beginnings of Irish immigration. Because the marriage intention records and cemetery inscriptions published in this volume go beyond 1850 (the usual stopping point in the vital records volumes published earlier in the century) we also see the beginnings of other changes in the ethnic composition of the town. In these later records appear some of the Finnish families who began to settle in Fitchburg, Ashby and Townsend in the last quarter of the nineteenth century."

"This volume also includes some types of records which are not normally found in vital records volumes. There are warnings out, notices issued when a new family arrived in town and the town wanted to ensure that it would not have to support the family if it fell on hard times. These records are mostly from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and are useful in tracking migrations. This volume also includes a number of religious certifications, issued for a brief period to those who belonged to some church other than the Congregational."

The original volume is available in the NEHGS Boston Research Library, call no. **F74/T7/V58 1992**.

To locate additional genealogy and local history resources, search our [library catalog](#).

Vital Records of Townsend, Massachusetts., (Online Database: NewEnglandAncestors.org, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2006), (Vital Records of Townsend, Massachusetts. Transcribed by Henry C. Hallowell, assisted by Lee K. Kugler and Caroline Lewis Kardell, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, 1992.)