

# She Had Many Friends

By Deborah A. Carl

Writing about historical women is challenging. In older United States newspapers, women most often appear with their husband's name and Mrs. in front. Even their family members sometimes struggled as they wrote an obituary. For example, she "was excellent at crochet and afghan making."<sup>1</sup> Mary H. (Mason) Pierce's obituary wasn't much better. The family felt the most memorable thing about her was "she made a wide circle of friends and was well and favorably known, and most highly respected."<sup>2</sup>

Being so well known and loved, she should appear often in the Society pages of the local newspapers, and she is mentioned a few times, such as when she was in charge of the tree for the Christmas gathering of the Universalist Sunday school in Nashua. "...gifts were distributed from a heavily laden tree that – being lighted with wax tapers – was brilliant in the extreme. Mrs Franklin Pierce was chairman of the committee in this department and to her good taste the success is in a great measure due."<sup>3</sup> There was not enough to tell her story. To do that, we need to look at the people who helped shape her life.

The earliest Mason family member arrived in the Massachusetts, Bay Colony around 1649.<sup>4</sup> Sampson Mason was surrounded by Puritans and two of his infants were baptized into the faith, but it is believed Sampson joined the Baptist church.<sup>5</sup> The Puritan beliefs probably influenced the Mason homelife as it did the laws and customs of Massachusetts. While husbands were the head of the household and providers for the family, the women were in charge of the family assets and the children.<sup>6</sup> Education was important and heads of household were required to make sure all, including servants and females, were taught to read and write so they could read the Bible for themselves, and the Bible taught work was ordained of God.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Obituaries, Dec. 1, 2003," *The Saratogian* (<https://www.saratogian.com/2003/12/01/obituaries-dec-1-2003/> : accessed 4 February 2023), no path from homepage, obituary for Audrey M. VanVranken.

<sup>2</sup> "Deaths," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Wednesday, 22 March 1899, p. 6, col. 3, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBNluc60C&dat=18990322&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBNluc60C&dat=18990322&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 6 October 2023), link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 6, obituary for Mrs. Franklin Pierce.

<sup>3</sup> "Santa Claus in Nashua," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Wednesday, 26 December 1877, p. 2, col. 3, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBNluc60C&dat=18771226&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBNluc60C&dat=18771226&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 19 October 2023), link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 2, blurb about the Universalist Church Christmas party.

<sup>4</sup> John Wolf Jordan, *Genealogical and Personal History of the Allegheny Valey, Pennsylvania*, (New York: Lewis Historical Publishin Company, 1913), Vol. 1, pp. 269, imaged at *GoogleBooks* ([https://www.google.com/books/edition/Genealogical\\_and\\_Personal\\_History\\_of\\_the/ELgyAQAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Genealogical_and_Personal_History_of_the/ELgyAQAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1) : accessed 19 October 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, "The Godly Family of Colonial Massachussts," in *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life*, (New York: The Free Press, 1989), pp. 41 & 43, imaged at *OCPS Teacher Press* (<http://teacherpress.ocps.net/stephenhansen/files/2016/07/Husbands-Wives-etc-in-Puritan-Society.pdf> : accessed 19 October 2023).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Also, The Christian Work Ethic, *Trinity Baptist Church, Thomasville, Georgia* (<https://mytrinitybaptist.org/the-christian-work-ethic/> : accessed 19 October 2023).

Six generations later, Mary H. (Mason) Pierce was probably raised to be a proper young lady with the same values that had shaped her community since its Puritan foundation. She was born in 1848 in Fall River, Massachusetts, and at the time was the youngest of six children.<sup>8</sup> Her father was a tailor and had real estate worth \$3,000 and in 1850, they had an Irish maid to help around the house.<sup>9</sup> As Mary grew older, she would have been expected to help with household tasks, to help care for her younger brothers and sisters, and to take care of her own clothes.<sup>10</sup> Depending on her mother's preferences, Mary may have helped with meal preparation. The Irish girl was probably the first to get up in the morning and start the fire in the kitchen and put water on to boil.<sup>11</sup> She also probably cleaned the lamps every day and filled them with whale oil, and she probably did the weekly laundry.<sup>12</sup>



Oil Lamp about 1850-1870<sup>13</sup>

But while Mary's family was comfortably well off in 1850, her grandfather, William Mason, was rich, reportedly having \$13,650 in real estate.<sup>14</sup> When he passed away in 1859, his estate was valued at \$115,942.50 (worth over four and a quarter million dollars in today's money).<sup>15</sup> After his father's passing, Jeremiah appears to have given up the tailoring business and in the 1860

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<sup>8</sup> "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-9979-774> : accessed 19 October 2023), Bristol > Fall River > Births, marriages, deaths 1843-1849 vol 4, image 90 of 217, folio 85, entry 55, birth of no name female daughter of Jeremiah B Mason, tailor, on 24 February 1848; citing Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth, Boston. Also, 1850 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, handwritten p. 43, dwell. 277, fam. 338, line 11, Jeremiah [sic] B. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-DRX3-H3Q> : accessed 19 October 2023), Massachusetts > Bristol > Fall River > image 43 of 275; citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 308.

<sup>9</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, handwritten p. 43, dwell. 277, fam. 338, line 11, Jeremiah [sic] B. Mason household.

<sup>10</sup> Jane C. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home 1760-1860*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112 & 131.

<sup>13</sup> Oil Lamp about 1850-1875, National Museum of American History, not on display, *Smithsonian* ([https://www.si.edu/object/lamp-oil:nmah\\_1115816](https://www.si.edu/object/lamp-oil:nmah_1115816) : accessed 25 October 2023).

<sup>14</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, handwritten p. 50, dwell. 311, fam. 498, line 41, William Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-DRX3-63Z> : accessed 20 October 2023), Massachusetts > Bristol > Fall River > image 50 of 275; citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 308.

<sup>15</sup> "Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881," imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9YP-KS2N> : accessed 20 October 2023), film 7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, image 358 of 1167, Appraisal of the estate of William Mason late of Fall River commissioned by his son and executor of the will, Christopher Mason on 30 August 1859 and submitted to the Probate Court on 4 October 1859; Bristol County Probate Court, Taunton, Massachusetts. Also, Ian Webster, *CPI Inflation Calculator* (<https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1859?amount=115942.50> : accessed 20 October 2023).

census his occupation was listed as “gentleman.”<sup>16</sup> With his inheritance, Jeremiah D. Mason claimed to have \$15,000 of real estate and \$5,000 worth of personal goods.<sup>17</sup>

While William Mason left inheritances to his daughters “to be held by her...to her sole and separate use free from the interference or control of her husband...,” and after all the bequests, the remainder of the estate was divided between his sons Christopher and Allen.<sup>18</sup> It seems William did not trust Jeremiah with money and left him the use of the house on Main Street where he lived worth \$3,300, and a building and lot on Market Square worth \$8,500.<sup>19</sup> Jeremiah was also left the dividend income from 10 shares of Pocasset Bank worth \$1,000 and 12 shares of Fall River Manufacturing Company worth \$6,600.<sup>20</sup> Upon Jeremiah’s death and the death of his wife, the assets were to be divided among Jeremiah’s children.<sup>21</sup>

While Jeremiah was now wealthy in a sense, his two oldest children were employed – Julia as a dressmaker and Abby as a milliner, both occupations the women could perform in their home.<sup>22</sup> They probably started working before Jeremiah received his inheritance to contribute to the household income which was typical at the time.<sup>23</sup> Surprisingly, their 21-year-old brother, William, did not have an occupation in 1860, but he had inherited a woodlot from his grandfather which would have been an easy source of cash.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 294, dwell. 3, fam. 5, line 13, Jeremiah D. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GB9J-SYSZ> : accessed 20 October 2023), Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River > image 12 of 36; citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 491.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9YP-KSLW> : accessed 20 October 2023), film 7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, images 343–345 of 1167, Will of William Mason of Fall River dated 14 May 1857; Bristol County Probate Court, Taunton, Massachusetts.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* Also, “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9YP-F22X> : accessed 20 October 2023), film 7702784, Gardner Mason-John B. Mason, image 597 of 942, Inventory of the Estate of Jeremiah B Mason, Real Estate house and lot on Main Street, Fall River and building and lot on Market Square, Fall River; Bristol County Probate Court, Taunton, Massachusetts.

<sup>20</sup> “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch*, film 7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, images 343–345 of 1167, Will of William Mason of Fall River dated 14 May 1857. Also, “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch*, film 7702784, Gardner Mason-John B. Mason, image 597 and 600 of 942, Inventory of the Estate of Jeremiah B Mason, Personal Estate 10 Shares Pocasset Bank and 12 Shares Fall River Manufacturing Company, and Account of Leander Borden Trustee of the Estate of Jeremiah B Mason.

<sup>21</sup> “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch*, film 7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, images 343–345 of 1167, Will of William Mason of Fall River dated 14 May 1857.

<sup>22</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 294, dwell. 3, fam. 5, line 13, Jeremiah D. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch*, Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River > image 12 of 36. Also, Thomas Dublin, *Transforming Women’s Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 163 & 165.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>24</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 294, dwell. 3, fam. 5, line 13, Jeremiah D. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch*, Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River > image 12 of 36. Also, “Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881,” imaged at *FamilySearch*, film



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Jeremiah also inherited half a pew in the Baptist church. He had probably been raised in this church and his children had probably also attended.<sup>26</sup>

Mary now had expectations of inheriting some of her grandfather's money, and with seven living siblings and an eighth on the way, they weren't great expectations. But unlike their two oldest sisters, Mary (age 22), and her sisters Lydia (age 26), Jane (age 24), and Josephine (age 20),

7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, images 343–345 of 1167, Will of William Mason of Fall River dated 14 May 1857. Also, Henry M. Fenner, *History of Fall River Massachusetts*, Compiled for the Cotton Centennial, (Fall River, Massachusetts: The Munroe Press, 1911), p. 20, imaged at *Forgotten Books* (file:///C:/Users/borgu/Downloads/HistoryofFallRiverMassachusetts\_10289916-1.pdf : accessed 21 October 2023).

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Sinclair Lithography Company, 1865, "Fashions for Spring and Summer, 1865," National Portrait Gallery, *Smithsonian* ([https://www.si.edu/object/fashions-spring-and-summer-1865:npg\\_S\\_NPG.2020.37](https://www.si.edu/object/fashions-spring-and-summer-1865:npg_S_NPG.2020.37) : accessed 25 October 2023).

<sup>26</sup> "Bristol County (Mass.) Probate Records 1690-1881," imaged at *FamilySearch*, film 7702786, Roderick Mason-Collins S. Maxfield, images 343–345 of 1167, Will of William Mason of Fall River dated 14 May 1857.

were not expected to contribute to the family income and did not seek employment before their marriages.<sup>27</sup>

So how did Mary living in Fall River and Franklin Pierce living in Nashua, New Hampshire meet, court, and marry?

Marriage would have been very important to Mary. Even with her inheritance, she probably could not maintain her own household and she probably did not want to work in the mills for the rest of her life.<sup>28</sup> But with the limited employment opportunities for women, the only other acceptable option would be to live with one of her siblings. So when Franklin came courting, Mary probably found it necessary to adjust her age.

Traditionally, men married younger women and Mary was about one and a half years older than Franklin.<sup>29</sup> Mary added a year to her birthdate so they were the same age when they married in October of 1875.<sup>30</sup> Franklin probably never knew or decided to continue the deception after Mary's death. The informant's name is not on Mary's death record, but it was probably a family member, and most likely it was her husband, Franklin.<sup>31</sup> The death record and her gravestone list her birth date as 24 February 1849.<sup>32</sup> However, in a birth register for the Town of Fall River, there is an unnamed female child born on 24 February 1848, the daughter of Jeremiah B. Mason.<sup>33</sup> It matches everything on the death record but the year. (See Documents 1 & 2) Also, in the 1850 census which was taken on 1 August 1850 in Fall River, Mary H. Mason was listed

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<sup>27</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 30, dwell. 120, fam. 220, line 20, Jeremiah B. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-67H3-ZW1> : accessed 21 October 2023), Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River, image 30 of 80; citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 604.

<sup>28</sup> In 1910 Mary's three unmarried sisters and widowed sister were all living at 298 No. Main Street in Fall River, probably the house they grew up in, and lived there until their deaths. See 1910 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, Enumeration District 163, Sheet 4B, dwell. 78, fam. 102, line 73, Lydia B. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GRVL-9ODS> : accessed 21 October 2023), Massachusetts > Bristol > Fall River Ward 7 > ED 163, image 8 of 24; citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 577.

<sup>29</sup> April Sanders, "Age of Marriage in the U.S. in the 1800s," updated 30 April 2023, *The Classroom* (<https://www.theclassroom.com/age-marriage-us-1800s-23174.html> : accessed 21 October 2023).

<sup>30</sup> "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-897M-59CD-X> : accessed 21 October 2023), Bristol > Fall River > Marriages 1875-1878 vol 8, image 3 of 116, folio 25, entry 417, marriage of Franklin Pierce and Mary H. Mason dated 18 November 1875, recorded 18 January 1876; citing Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth, Boston.

<sup>31</sup> "New Hampshire Death Records, 1654-1947," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63J9-B7Q> : accessed 21 October 2023), film 004243768, image 155 of 5079, card for Mary H. Pierce who died 21 March 1899; Bureau Vital Records and Health Statistics, Concord, New Hampshire.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* Also, Ancestry, *FindAGrave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774391/mary-h-pierce> : accessed 21 October 2023), memorial 70774391, Mary H Mason Pierce (1849-1899), Woodlawn Cemetery, Hillsborough, Nashua, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque.

<sup>33</sup> "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch*, Bristol > Fall River > Births, marriages, deaths 1843-1849 vol 4, image 90 of 217, folio 85, entry 55, birth of no name female daughter of Jeremiah B Mason, tailor, on 24 February 1848.

as two years old.<sup>34</sup> Mary's birth year was around 1848 on the 1860 and 1870 censuses, but on her 1875 marriage record and the 1880 census, her birth year appears as 1849.<sup>35</sup>

Franklin also came from a well-off family. In 1860, his father, Thomas Pierce, was the Post Master in Bedford, New Hampshire with real estate worth \$18,000 and personal goods worth \$1,600.<sup>36</sup> In the New England Protestant tradition, Thomas probably expected his children to work and his daughter Julia was working as a domestic servant, but probably in her father's household.<sup>37</sup> In 1868, Thomas, with O.D. Murray, V.C. Gilman, H. W. Gilman, and George D. Murray, created the Nashua Card and Glazed Paper Company.<sup>38</sup>

After attending school in Manchester, New Hampshire, Franklin went to the Appleton Academy in New Ipswich, Massachusetts.<sup>39</sup> "He was employed, on leaving school, with his father in the dry goods business, and later, when his father became president of the Nashua Card and Paper Company, Mr. Pierce entered that factory and learned the paper-making business in all its details."<sup>40</sup> According to the Nashua City Directory, Franklin was working for the Nashua Card and Glazer Paper Co. as a correspondent as early as 1872.<sup>41</sup> Franklin listed his profession as

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<sup>34</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, handwritten p. 43, dwell. 277, fam. 338, line 11, Jeremiah [sic] B. Mason household.

<sup>35</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 294, dwell. 3, fam. 5, line 13, Jeremiah D. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch*, Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River > image 12 of 36. Also, 1870 U.S. census, Bristol County, Massachusetts, population schedule, Town of Fall River, p. 30, dwell. 120, fam. 220, line 20, Jeremiah B. Mason household, imaged at *FamilySearch*, Massachusetts > Bristol > Ward 5 City of Fall River, image 30 of 80. Also, "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch*, Bristol > Fall River > Marriages 1875-1878 vol 8, image 3 of 116, folio 25, entry 417, marriage of Franklin Pierce and Mary H. Mason dated 18 November 1875, recorded 18 January 1876. Also, 1880 U.S. census, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, population schedule, City of Nashua, p. 21, ED 143, dwell. 167, fam. 173, line 7, Franklin Pierce household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYBL-ZL8> : accessed 23 October 2023), New Hampshire > Hillsborough > Nashua > ED 143 > image 42 of 45; citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 763.

<sup>36</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, population schedule, Town of Bedford, p. 54, dwell. 454, fam. 444, line 10, Thomas P. Pierce household, imaged at *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9BSZ-Y9H> : accessed 23 October 2023), New Hampshire > Hillsborough > Bedford > image 25 of 30; citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 672.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Also, Dublin, *Transforming Women's Work*, p. 157.

<sup>38</sup> "The Industries of Nashua: No. 95—The Nashua Glazed Paper Company," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Monday 25 April 1870, p. 2, col. 2, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBNluc60C&dat=18700425&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBNluc60C&dat=18700425&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 23 October 2023), link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 2, Retrospective discusses the history of cardboard manufacture in Nashua and the formation of the Nashua Glazed Paper Company.

<sup>39</sup> "United States, GenealogyBank Historical Newspaper Obituaries, 1815-2011," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSHX-WS7P-3> : accessed 23 October 2023), image 382 of 1577, "Death of Franklin Pierce," *The Springfield Weekly Republican* (Springfield, Massachusetts), Thursday, 27 March 1913, p. 11, col. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> "U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1014018243:2469> : accessed 24 October 2023), New Hampshire > Nashua > 1872 > Nashua, New Hampshire, City Directory, 1872, image 47 of 117, p. 98, entry for Franklin Pierce.

clerk when he married Mary, but he wasn't a store clerk.<sup>42</sup> In addition to his correspondent duties, he was the clerk of the corporation responsible for keeping the minutes of the Board of Directors Meetings.<sup>43</sup>

So how did Mary and Franklin meet? While Nashua had textile mills, Fall River was famous for its textile mills. In 1876, Fall River had thirty-three textile mills.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps Franklin was there to



purchase fiber for the papermaking company. After the cotton was ginned to remove the long fibers from the seeds, the seeds were "run through a machine called a linter."<sup>45</sup> This machine would remove short cotton fibers from the seed which were then used in papermaking.<sup>46</sup> The textile mills' cuttings and discards were a good source of flax fiber and clean rags that were also used in some grades of paper.<sup>47</sup>

Franklin and Mary, being of the same social class and probably having common acquaintances connected to the mills, probably met at social activities while he was in town. Mary probably dressed in kid button shoes that extended above the ankles and a dress with a bustle in the back.<sup>48</sup> For a party, she would have worn slippers and the dress was most likely silk.<sup>49</sup> For everyday wear, it was probably cotton or

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<sup>42</sup> "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch*, Bristol > Fall River > Marriages 1875-1878 vol 8, image 3 of 116, folio 25, entry 417, marriage of Franklin Pierce and Mary H. Mason.

<sup>43</sup> "Annual Meeting for the Card Company," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Tuesday, 19 January 1886, p. 4, col. 2, imaged at *Community History Archive* ([http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&by=1886&bdd=1880&d=01191886-01191886&e=card%20company&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua\\_daily\\_telegraph\\_usa\\_new\\_hampshire\\_nashua\\_18860119\\_english\\_4&df=1&dt=1](http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&by=1886&bdd=1880&d=01191886-01191886&e=card%20company&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua_daily_telegraph_usa_new_hampshire_nashua_18860119_english_4&df=1&dt=1)) : accessed 24 October 2023), image 4 of 4.

<sup>44</sup> Henry H. Earl, *A Centennial History of Fall River, Mass: Comprising a Record of its Corporate Progress from 1856 to 1876 with Sketches of its Manufacturing Industries, Local and General Characteristics, Valuable Statistical Tables, Etc.* (Atlantic Publishing and Engraving Company: New York 1877), imaged at *GoogleBooks* ([https://www.google.com/books/edition/A\\_Centennial\\_History\\_of\\_Fall\\_River\\_Mass/dsgMAAAAYAAJ](https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Centennial_History_of_Fall_River_Mass/dsgMAAAAYAAJ)) : accessed 18 October 2023), p. 112, chart of Statistics of Cotton Manufacturing.

<sup>45</sup> Papermaking, Kenneth W. Britt, updated 10 January 2020, *Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/technology/papermaking>) : accessed 24 October 2023), Rags.

<sup>46</sup> All About Cotton Linter, *Arnold Grummer's* (<https://arnoldgrummer.com/all-about-cotton-linter.html>) : accessed 18 October 2023).

<sup>47</sup> Papermaking, Kenneth W. Britt, updated 10 January 2020, *Britannica*, Rags.

<sup>48</sup> Bobbie Kalman, *Historic Communities: 19th Century Clothing*, (New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 8-10 and 16-17.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

1876 Woman's Dress<sup>50</sup>

wool.<sup>51</sup> Her corset shaped her torso into an hourglass.<sup>52</sup> As a sign of her social standing, Mary probably played the piano or pianoforte.<sup>53</sup>

In 1875, Thomas Pierce built “a large and elegant dwelling house” with the intention of having his children and their families living with him.<sup>54</sup> Mary and Franklin lived with the family at 18 Orange Square in Nashua for several years, before moving into their own home around 1879.<sup>55</sup> While Mary was probably raised as a Baptist, as her father-in-law and most likely her husband were members of the Universalist Church, Mary also attended the Universalist Church after her marriage.<sup>56</sup>

Franklin accepted a position as President of the Holyoke Card and Paper Company and they moved to Springfield, Hampden, Massachusetts in 1887.<sup>57</sup> When Franklin became seriously ill,

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<sup>50</sup> Woman's blue silk taffeta and navy blue velvet dress, 1876, National Museum of American History, *Smithsonian* ([https://www.si.edu/object/womans-dress-1876:nmah\\_374753](https://www.si.edu/object/womans-dress-1876:nmah_374753) : accessed 25 October 2023), not on display.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Harper Franklin, “1870-1879,” published 11 November 2019, *Fashion History Timeline* (<https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1870-1879/> : accessed 24 October 2023).

<sup>53</sup> Derek B. Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlor* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001), transcribed at *The Victorian Web* (<https://victorianweb.org/mt/dbscott/2.html> : accessed 24 October 2023), Music & Theater > Social History > The Piano and Middle-Class Prosperity.

<sup>54</sup> “Change of Business,” *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Thursday, 9 December 1875, p. 2, col. 4, imaged at *Community History Archive* ([http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&by=1875&bdd=1870&d=12091875-12091875&e=elegant%20dwelling%20house&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua\\_daily\\_telegraph\\_usa\\_new\\_hampshire\\_nashua\\_18751209\\_english\\_2&df=1&dt=1](http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&by=1875&bdd=1870&d=12091875-12091875&e=elegant%20dwelling%20house&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua_daily_telegraph_usa_new_hampshire_nashua_18751209_english_2&df=1&dt=1) : accessed 24 October 2023).

<sup>55</sup> “U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/976697288:2469> : accessed 18 October 2023), New Hampshire > Nashua > 1877 > Nashua, New Hampshire, City Directory, 1877, pp.107 & 108, entries for Franklin Pierce, correspondent, living at 18 Orange Square and Thomas P. Pierce, agent, living at 18 Orange Square. Also, “U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/938923010:2469> : accessed 18 October 2023), New Hampshire > Nashua > 1879 > Nashua, New Hampshire, City Directory, 1879, p.102, entries for Franklin Pierce, correspondent, living at Amherst and Thomas P. Pierce, agent, living at 18 Orange Square.

<sup>56</sup> “Col. Thomas P. Pierce,” *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Saturday, 15 October 1887, p. 4, col. 2, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBNluc60C&dat=18871015&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBNluc60C&dat=18871015&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 18 October 2023), link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 4, obituary for Thomas P. Pierce which states he worshipped at the Universalist Church. Also, “Santa Claus in Nashua,” *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Wednesday, 26 December 1877, p. 2, col. 3, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBNluc60C&dat=18771226&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBNluc60C&dat=18771226&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 19 October 2023), link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 2, blurb about the Universalist Church Christmas party where Mary was in charge of the Christmas Tree decorations.

<sup>57</sup> “City Items,” *The Springfield Daily Union* (Springfield, Massachusetts), Saturday, 30 July 1887, p. 8, col. 1, imaged at *MyHeritage* (<https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-10969-2254684981/franklin-pierce-in-newspaper-name-index-usa-canada-australia> : accessed 24 October 2023), A Business Change Which Brings Two Nashua, N.H., Men to Springfield. Note that the article says E.G. Pierce is his brother. That is incorrect, it was E. T. Pierce and he worked with Franklin at the Nashua Card and Glazed Paper Company, but they were not brothers and no close familial connection was found.



they returned to Nashua in 1899 to consult with Dr. E. F. McQuesten.<sup>58</sup> They had been in town for several weeks when Mary developed an intestinal obstruction which resulted in her death.<sup>59</sup>

Mary and Franklin had been married for twenty-three years, but they did not have any children.<sup>60</sup> Married women were expected to leave the workforce and focus on their homes, husbands, and children.<sup>61</sup> As a housewife, Mary probably hired a work girl who was probably a day laborer, to help with the housework and cooking.<sup>62</sup> Mary's household chores were easier than when she had married. Her home most

1890 Advertisement<sup>63</sup>

likely had running water, gas,

electricity, a sewer system, and refrigeration (an icebox).<sup>64</sup> In addition to maintaining her home,



<sup>58</sup> Deaths," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Wednesday, 22 March 1899, p. 6, col. 3, imaged at *GoogleNews*, obituary for Mrs. Franklin Pierce.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Also, "New Hampshire Death Records, 1654-1947," database with images, *FamilySearch*, film 004243768, image 155 of 5079, card for Mary H. Pierce who died 21 March 1899.

<sup>60</sup> Deaths," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Wednesday, 22 March 1899, p. 6, col. 3, imaged at *GoogleNews*, obituary for Mrs. Franklin Pierce does not mention any children but does mention "she is survived by her husband, five sisters and one brother."

<sup>61</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1982), p. 13, imaged at *Monoskop* ([https://monoskop.org/images/a/a7/Hayden\\_Dolores\\_The\\_Grand\\_Domestic\\_Revolution\\_A\\_History\\_of\\_Feminist\\_Designs\\_for\\_American\\_Homes\\_Neighborhoods\\_and\\_Cities\\_1981.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/a/a7/Hayden_Dolores_The_Grand_Domestic_Revolution_A_History_of_Feminist_Designs_for_American_Homes_Neighborhoods_and_Cities_1981.pdf) : accessed 24 October 2023).

<sup>62</sup> Dublin, Transforming Women's Work, pp. 157 & 203. Also, "Wants," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Thursday, 1 October 1896, p. 3, col. 1, imaged at *Community History Archive* ([http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&d=06021890-06021899&e=work%20girl&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua\\_daily\\_telegraph\\_usa\\_new\\_hampshire\\_nashua\\_18961001\\_english\\_3&df=1&dt=10](http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&d=06021890-06021899&e=work%20girl&m=between&ord=e1&fn=nashua_daily_telegraph_usa_new_hampshire_nashua_18961001_english_3&df=1&dt=10) : accessed 24 October 2023), advertisement for a home work girl for a family of two who is a good cook.

<sup>63</sup> Advertisement for refrigerators and oil stoves, *The Charlestown Enterprise* (Charlestown, Massachusetts), Saturday, 19 April 1890, p. 6, col. 1, imaged at *MyHeritage* (<https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-10704-5977824/charlestown-enterprise-charlestown-news> : accessed 25 October 2023).

<sup>64</sup> "1878-1899: Lifestyles, Social Trends, and Fashion: Overview," 2019, *Encyclopedia.com* (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/1878-1899-lifestyles-social-trends-and-fashion-overview> : accessed 24 October 2023), History > News Wires White Papers and Books > 1878-1899: Lifestyles, Social Trends, and Fashion: Overview, Everyday Life. Also, "History & Origins: The International Trade in Ice Was Started by Frederic Tudor of Boston, Known as the Ice King," The Vintage Fridge Company (<https://thevintagefridgecompany.com/about/history-and-origins> : accessed 24 October 2023).

Mary would have been expected to devote her time to good works in her community.<sup>65</sup> Laundry, one of the hardest household chores, was probably sent out.<sup>66</sup>

She and her husband appear to have gotten along. Mary wrote her will about three months before she died.<sup>67</sup> She left her husband all her personal items and the income from her property for his life.<sup>68</sup> After her husband's death, she left \$1,000 to her nephew, Frank Pierce Weaver, and the rest to be divided among her five sisters.<sup>69</sup> Mary was buried in the Pierce family plot with her in-laws, their daughter Julia, and their great-granddaughter, Helen Whitney.<sup>70</sup> Next to Mary is a blank stone, which has been waiting over a hundred years for Franklin, who remarried and was buried in Canada.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> "Woman and Home," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Tuesday, 24 August 1897, p. 5, cols. 3 & 4, imaged at *GoogleNews* ([https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10\\_JBN1uc60C&dat=18970824&printsec=frontpage&hl=en](https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=10_JBN1uc60C&dat=18970824&printsec=frontpage&hl=en) : accessed 24 October 2023), the link takes you to the newspaper, you'll need to scroll to p. 5, The Domestic Service Problem.

<sup>66</sup> Em Ricciardi, "White Clothing and Victorian Laundry," *The Library Company* (<https://librarycompany.org/2017/08/28/white-clothing-and-victorian-laundry/#/>: accessed 24 October 2023). Also, "Wants," *Nashua Daily Telegraph* (Nashua, New Hampshire), Thursday, 1 October 1896, p. 3, col. 1, imaged at *Community History Archive* ([http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&d=06021890-06021899&e=work%20girl&m=between&ord=el&fn=nashua\\_daily\\_telegraph\\_usa\\_new\\_hampshire\\_nashua\\_18961001\\_english\\_3&df=1&dt=10](http://nashua.advantage-preservation.com/viewer/?t=26882&i=t&d=06021890-06021899&e=work%20girl&m=between&ord=el&fn=nashua_daily_telegraph_usa_new_hampshire_nashua_18961001_english_3&df=1&dt=10) : accessed 24 October 2023), advertisement for family washing to do at home by an American woman..

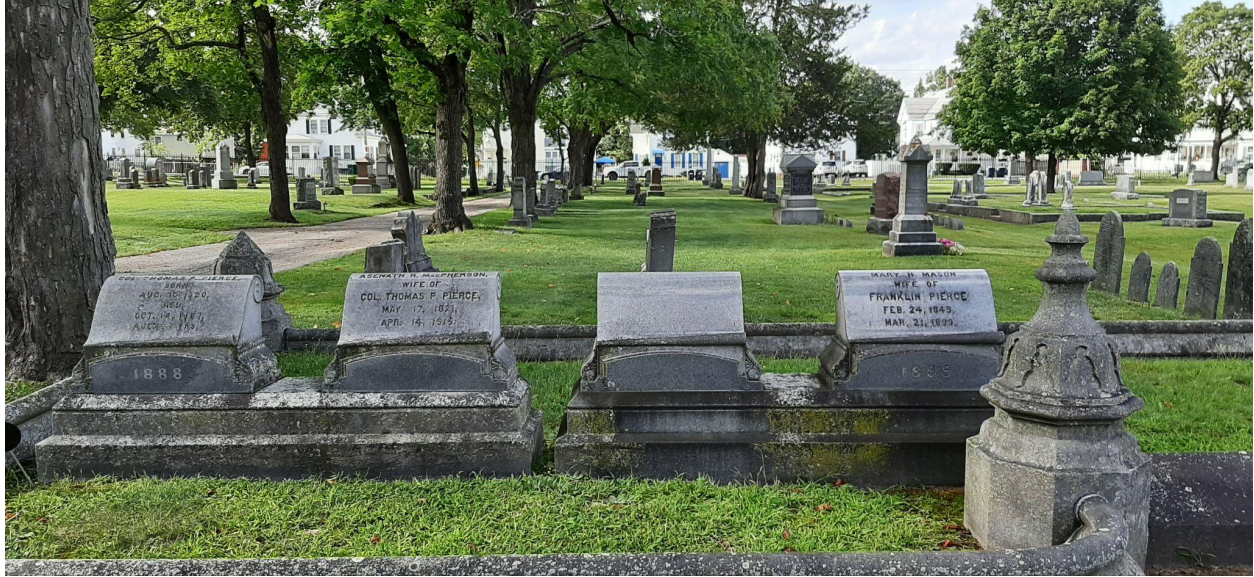
<sup>67</sup> "Massachusetts, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1635-1991," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/602920:9069> : accessed 17 October 2023), Hampden > Wills, Receipts, Appeals, Misc; Wills; Real Estate, Vol 135-137, 1888-1917, image 247 of 722, pp. 432-433, Will of Mary H. Pierce dated 16 December 1898.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ancestry, *FindAGrave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774391/mary-h-pierce> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 70774391, Mary H MasonPierce (1849-1899), Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque. Also, *ibid.* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774392/thomas-prescott-pierce> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 70774392, Col Thomas Prescott Pierce (1820-1887), Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque. Also, *ibid.* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774390/asenath-riddle-pierce> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 70774390, Asenath Riddle MacPherson Pierce (1821-1915), Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque. Also, *ibid.* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774364/julia-m-johnson> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 70774364, Julia M Pierce Johnson (1844-1885), Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque. Also, *ibid.* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70774409/helen-m-whitney> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 70774409, Helen M Whitney (1901-1903), Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashua, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire; gravestone photograph by Amy Maker Levesque.

<sup>71</sup> Ancestry, *FindAGrave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/171884746/franklin-pierce> : accessed 24 October 2023), memorial 171884746, Franklin Pierce (1849-1913), Malvern Cemetery, Lennoxville, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada; gravestone photograph by Marie. Also, "United States, GenealogyBank Historical Newspaper Obituaries, 1815-2011," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS1Z-39WJ-C> : accessed 24 October 2023), image 637 of 1136, "Deaths," *The Springfield Union* (Springfield, Massachusetts), Thursday, 20 March 1913, p. 5, col. 5, obituary for Franklin Pierce.



# Document 1: 1848 Birth record for Mary Mason

85 BIRTHS in <i>Fall River</i>				<i>Samuel B. Massey</i> Registrar					
No.	When Registered.	NAME, (if any)	Sex.	Date of Birth.	Place of Birth.	Name and Surname of Parents.	Occupation of Father.	Residence of Parents.	Informant.
51	Sept 14	George S Bullard	Male	Dec 25 1847		Leper Bullard	Engineer		Charles Aldrich
52		Charles S. Spencer		Nov 24 "		Benjamin Spencer	Blacksmith		
53		Miriam B. Allen		Aug 5 "		Wm. B. Allen	Weaver		
54		Sarah Young	Female	Nov 25 1847		Benjamin Young	Carpenter		
55		George S. Spink	Male	Nov 1847		Arthur Spink	"		
56		Mr. name		July 20 1848		George P. Paine	Carpenter		
57		Sarah Jane Perry	Female	Oct 29 1847		John Perry	Iron Cutter		
58		Frank C. Stone	Male	March 1848		George Stone	Trucker		
59		Arthur S. Conway	Female	Oct 1847		William Conway	"		
60		Emily M. Chadwick		Dec 21 "		Wm. Chadwick	Ship Joiner		
61		Abelina A. Hatch		Aug 24 1848		Arthur Hatch	Manufacturer		
62		Joseph M. Hall		April 30 "		Franklin Hall	Mariner		
63		William C. Sturbridge	Male	July 16 1847		William Sturbridge	Iron Sawyer		
64		William S. Sherman		Feb 20 1848		Wm. Sherman	Teacher		
65		James C. Howard	Female	Nov 1847		Charles Howard	Carpenter		
66		Mary Weaver		May 19 "		John W. Weaver	Sailor		
67		George C. Anthony	Male	July 24 "		Joseph Anthony	Manufacturer		
68		Mr. name	Female	July 20 1848		Samuel De Haven	Sailor		

"Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-9979-774> : accessed 19 October 2023), Bristol > Fall River > Births, marriages, deaths 1843-1849 vol 4, image 90 of 217, folio 85, entry 55, birth of no name female daughter of Jeremiah B Mason, tailor, on 24 February 1848; citing Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth, Boston.

## Document 2: 1899 Death Record for Mary H Pierce

Name	Pierce, Mary H.		
Place of Death	Nashua N.H.		
Date of Death	March 21, 1899.		
Age: Years,	57	Months,	Days, 25
Place of Birth	Fall River Mass.		
Sex	F	Color	W
		Married, Single, Widowed, or Divorced?	
Occupation	Housewife		
Cause of Death	Intestinal obstruction		
Place of Burial	Woodlawn Cem.		
Name of Father	Jeremiah B. Mason		
Maiden Name of Mother	Mary H. Westgate		
Birthplace of Father			
Birthplace of Mother			
Occupation of Father	Merchant Sailor		
Name and Address of Physician (or other person) reporting said Death	E. J. McInerney, M.D. Nashua N.H.		
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.			
<i>I hereby certify that the above death record is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.</i>			
A. A. Kall			
Clerk of	Nashua N.H.		

"New Hampshire Death Records, 1654-1947," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63J9-B7Q> : accessed 21 October 2023), film 004243768, image 155 of 5079, card for Mary H. Pierce who died 21 March 1899; Bureau Vital Records and Health Statistics, Concord, New Hampshire.