

Migration from England to Illinois

Name	Date	From	Settled
Thomas Hardy (1605-1678)	1630	Westmorland, England With Gov. Winthrop	Plymouth, MA
	1633	Plymouth, MA	Ipswich, MA
	1653	Ipswich, MA	Rowley, MA
	1663	Rowley, MA	Bradford, Essex, MA
Gideon Hardy (1722-1759)	1744	Bradford, Essex, MA	Tewksbury, MA
David Hardy (1746-1742)	1790	Wilmington, MA	Lyndeborough, New Hampshire
Gideon Hardy (1779-1851)	1808	Lyndeborough, New Hampshire	Greenfield, Hillsborough, New Hampshire
	1823	Greenfield, Hillsborough, New Hampshire	Orleans, Jefferson, New York
	1828	Orleans, Jefferson, New York	Brownville, Jefferson, New York
Sidney Hardy (1826-1885)	1844-1847	Circumnavigated the globe on a whaling ship	
	1847-1848	Troy, New York	
	1849	Brownville, Jefferson, New York	San Francisco, CA
	1851	Carlton, Orleans, New York	
	1857	Carlton, Orleans, New York	Ingham, Michigan
	1858	Ingham, Michigan	Shabbona, DeKalb, Illinois
	1865	Shabbona, DeKalb, Illinois	Burlington, Kane, Illinois

Thomas Hardy (1605-1678)

Thomas Hardy migrated to New England in 1630 as part of Governor John Winthrop's fleet, leaving Westmorland, England with his wife, Lydia. Although little is known about Hardy's life in England, he was identified as a yeoman, a social class that typically owned land and occupied a solid middle position in English society. Contemporary Massachusetts records indicate that the families who came with Winthrop were generally educated and financially stable men, suggesting that Hardy belonged to a group deliberately selected to help establish a self-sustaining and orderly colony.

This migration was carefully organized to advance both religious and social goals. As Puritans, Winthrop and his associates sought freedom from what they viewed as corruption and persecution within the Church of England, hoping to build a godly society in New England that would serve as a "model" Christian community. At the same time, they aimed to transplant English social structure, governance, and economic stability to Massachusetts. By bringing families like the Hardys—landholding, skilled, and reliable—Winthrop intended to ensure the long-term success of the

Massachusetts Bay Colony and demonstrate that a disciplined, moral society could flourish in the New World.

Establishment in Ipswich (Agawam)

Within a few years of his arrival, Thomas Hardy emerged as a trusted and active participant in the colony's planned expansion. On 1 April 1633, he was one of nine men granted official permission to accompany John Winthrop, Jr. in establishing the settlement of Agawam, later known as Ipswich. This decision was strategic: colonial leaders feared that French interests or Native peoples might gain control of this desirable coastal region, prompting the General Court to act decisively. Agawam was not an untouched wilderness; Native inhabitants had long cleared forests, cultivated fields, and relied on the rich fishing resources of the river and bay, making it both productive and contested land.

Hardy's role in Agawam/Ipswich reflects his growing standing within the community. Records describe him as a prominent citizen entrusted with positions of responsibility, indicating that he was respected for his judgment and reliability. All seven of Hardy's children were born in Ipswich, firmly rooting his family in the town during its earliest decades.

Expansion and Relocation: Rowley and Bradford

As Ipswich matured and available land became increasingly subdivided, Hardy sought new opportunities to expand his agricultural holdings. In 1653, he relocated his family to Rowley, reflecting a common pattern among established colonial families who required additional land to support farming, livestock, and growing households. Rowley, still developing at mid-century, offered the open acreage that Ipswich could no longer provide.

Approximately ten years later, Hardy moved again—this time to Bradford—where he ultimately became the owner of 1,000 acres of land. Bradford, originally part of Rowley before becoming a separate settlement, offered fertile soil along the Merrimack River, abundant timber, and access to transportation and trade routes. Hardy's ability to amass such a large estate indicates both financial success and social standing, marking the culmination of decades of steady advancement in New England.

Leadership and Legacy in Bradford

In Bradford, Thomas Hardy, Sr. became a prominent and influential citizen whose contributions shaped both civic and religious life. He served in trusted community roles, including ferry operator across the Merrimack River and surveyor of highways in 1669—positions vital to transportation, commerce, and settlement growth. His extensive land transactions, public offices, and financial responsibility reflect competence, experience, and respect among his peers.

Hardy's commitment to Bradford extended beyond civic service into lasting spiritual and communal investment. In 1667 he donated land to promote the settlement of a minister, and in 1676 he and his sons, Thomas and John, gave two acres for the village church, which was incorporated in 1682. His estate inventory reveals substantial holdings near his homestead, and his carefully detailed will provided for his wife, children, grandchildren, and the continued security of his family.

Gideon Hardy (1722-1759)

Gideon Hardy was born in 1722 in Bradford, a member of the well-established Hardy family whose roots in Massachusetts stretched back to the earliest decades of settlement. In 1744, at the age of twenty-two, Gideon married Mary Gage in Bradford. That same year, he made a significant transition by moving with his family to Tewksbury, marking a new chapter in his life. This move coincided with the early years of his marriage and the beginning of his family, which eventually included five children born between 1744 and 1755.

Gideon's relocation to Tewksbury reflects broader settlement patterns in mid-18th-century Massachusetts. By this time, older towns such as Bradford were well established and increasingly crowded, while newer or expanding inland communities like Tewksbury offered opportunities for land, farming, and family growth. As a young husband starting his household, Gideon would have been drawn by the promise of available land and the chance to establish himself independently, continuing the Hardy tradition of mobility in pursuit of opportunity.

In addition to his role as a husband and father, Gideon Hardy participated in the wider affairs of the colony. He served during the French and Indian War and was listed among the Hardy men appearing on the colony's "Alarm List," a record of those prepared to respond to military threats. His service reflects both civic duty and the realities of life in colonial Massachusetts, where even established families faced uncertainty and conflict. Gideon died while in service, likely in September 1759, leaving behind a young family. His life and migration to Tewksbury thus illustrate both the opportunities and the hardships experienced by the next generation of New England settlers.

David Hardy (1746-1742)

David Hardy was born on 7 September 1746 in Tewksbury, into a family already well established in New England through several generations. By adulthood, he was living in nearby Wilmington, reflecting the continued mobility of the Hardy family within northeastern Massachusetts. On 18 May 1775, at a moment of growing political tension and armed conflict, David married Hannah Worcester in Hollis. The marriage connected him to New Hampshire communities where many Hardy families had already settled, creating both familial and regional ties beyond Massachusetts.

Shortly after his marriage, David Hardy became directly involved in the American Revolution. He served as a soldier under Captain Ford, marching to Peekskill and participating in the Crown Point Expedition. His military service places him among the generation that defended colonial independence at great personal risk, especially during the war's early years. Like many New England men, David balanced family responsibilities with military duty, reflecting the widespread commitment of ordinary settlers to the Revolutionary cause.

Following the war, David and his family moved north to Lyndeborough, approximately forty miles from Tewksbury. This relocation mirrors earlier Hardy family migrations, driven by the search for land, opportunity, and community in developing areas. Lyndeborough, still growing in the late 18th century, offered space for settlement and farming, as well as proximity to other Hardy families

already living in New Hampshire. David Hardy's life thus bridges three major eras of New England history—colonial settlement, revolution, and postwar expansion—illustrating how one family adapted across generations while continuing a pattern of service, migration, and community building.

Gideon Hardy (1779-1851)

Gideon Hardy grew up in Lyndeborough, a rural community where family labor, practical skills, and adaptability were essential to daily life. In 1808, he married Abigail Burnham and soon relocated to nearby Greenfield, where they began raising their family. Over the next fifteen years, Gideon and Abigail had nine children in New Hampshire. During this period, Gideon would have worked to support a large and growing household, relying on steady employment and the help of older children—conditions that often pushed families to seek new opportunities as land and resources became strained.

In 1823, Gideon made the significant decision to move his family west to Orleans, part of a broader wave of New England migration into upstate New York following the Revolution. Several factors likely influenced this move: farmland in New Hampshire was increasingly divided and expensive, while New York offered cheaper land, growing settlements, and economic opportunity. The journey itself would have been demanding, especially with nine young children. Travel likely involved a combination of wagons, rough roads, river crossings, and extended stops, taking weeks or even months. Such a move required careful planning, physical endurance, and resilience from the entire family.

Life in Orleans would have been markedly different from New Hampshire. The region was still developing, with newly cleared land, scattered farms, and limited infrastructure. Although it is unclear whether Gideon attempted farming there, the family welcomed their tenth child our ancestor, Sidney, in Orleans, suggesting they were settled enough to establish a household. Daily life would have involved hard physical labor, reliance on neighbors, and the gradual transformation of forested land into workable farms and villages.¹

After five years, the Hardy family relocated again, this time to Brownville, where Gideon worked as a carpenter. This move suggests a shift toward skilled trade rather than agriculture, possibly reflecting Gideon's strengths or the economic realities of the region. Brownville, located along the Black River, was growing rapidly and needed craftsmen to build homes, mills, and public structures. There, Gideon and his family would have found a busier, more connected community than Orleans, one shaped by commerce, construction, and westward growth. Gideon Hardy's life illustrates the determination of early 19th-century families who repeatedly uprooted themselves, endured hardship, and adapted their skills in pursuit of stability and opportunity for the next generation.

¹ Information about this move was found in Abigail Burnham's obituary.

Sidney Hardy (1826-1885)

Sidney Hardy was the youngest of ten children of Gideon and Abigail and the only one born in New York. Sidney was an adventurous young man, going on a three-year whaling excursion when he was 18. Then in 1849 he went to California in search of gold. The journal of his experience is located in the Huntington Library.² After spending time in upstate New York and Michigan, Sidney and his family moved to Shabbona, Kane, Illinois and finally Burlington.

[Sidney's life is described more fully in his Biographical Sketch.]

² Sidney W. Hardy, "Sidney W. Hardy Journal, 1849-1851," MS. HM 62959, The Huntington Library, Huntington, California, p. 3. The journal was passed down to Nancy J. Hardy VanDusen (d. 1932), Elgin, IL, daughter of Sidney W. Hardy; Clarissa Helen "Nellie" Hardy Davis (d. 1964), Elgin, IL, daughter of Sidney W. Hardy; Reno A. Davis (d. 19 April 2001), Elgin, IL, son of Clarissa Hardy, grandson of Sidney W. Hardy; Donald R. Kelley, nephew of Reno Davis, great-grandson of Sidney W. Hardy. Around 1985 Kelley, an historian, put the journal in the library at The University of Rochester, New York for preservation, and then he donated it to the Huntington Library on 11 April 2001.