



Researching Indigenous Ancestors

General Sources

Civil Registration

Civil registration started in 1869 in Ontario. The following years are currently available:

Births, 1869-1917

Marriages, 1869-1938

Deaths, 1869-1948

Ontario Vital Statistics are available on microfilm from the Archives of Ontario, on Ancestry, and on the FamilySearch website. Check to see which years are available at each location. The Brantford Public Library has some of these indexes on microfilm.

For more recent years you must contact the Registrar General of Ontario.

Prior to 1869 you can check the following for local marriages:

District Marriage Register, Gore District, 1842-1856 (GenRef 929.3713 WAL, vol. 13; MS 248 Reel 1),
and

County Marriage Registers of Ontario, Canada, 1858-1869, Brant County, vol. 22 (GenRef 929.3713
COU, vol. 22; MS 248 Reel 5)

Church Records

Some Six Nations baptism, marriage, and burial records may be in Anglican and Methodist church records. Specific local resources include:

Brant County Mohawk Chapel baptisms, marriages, burials 1827-1836 (R283.71347 WAL Local History)

The early registers of baptisms, burials and marriages (1827-1850s) Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks (R283.71347 HER Local History)

New Credit Indian Mission and Cooksville United Church (formerly Methodist), Peel County, Ontario: baptisms, 1802-1922, marriages, 1836-1925, burials, 1868-1922... (GenRef 929.3713533 HAL-NEW)

Cemetery Records

Most of the cemeteries in Ontario have been transcribed by local branches of the Ontario Genealogical Society. Specific local resources include:

Onondaga Township cemeteries: Baptist Church and Pleasant Hill (R929.371347 BRA-ON Local History)

Onondaga Township cemeteries: Harrison, Holy Trinity Anglican, Middleport, Onondaga Township and Salt Springs (R929.371347 BRA-ON Local History)

Tuscarora Township Indian burial sites, Ontario Genealogical Society. Brant County Branch.
(R929.371347 BRA-T Local History)

Census Records

Census records are available for Canada for 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, and 1921. These records are useful because they list the person's ethnic origin. All of the Canadian censuses are available on Ancestry and on the Library and Archives Canada website, including images of the original forms.

Local printed indexes include:

Brant County personal & agricultural 1851 census of the Township of Tuscarora with index
(R929.37134 BRA Local History)

Brant County personal & agricultural 1861 census of the Township of Tuscarora (R929.37134 TUS Local History)

1881 census: Tuscarora Township, Brant County, Ontario (R929.371347 NIN Local History)

Brant County 1891 census Tuscarora Township (R929.37134 TUS Local History)

1901 census: Tuscarora Township, Brant County, Ontario (R929.371347 NIN Local History)

Published Genealogies

The following books contain genealogical information about some Six Nations families:

Dictionary of Canadian Biography (R920.071 CAN, vol. 1-15)

History of the County of Brant (LH 971.347 HIS, p. 643-644, 686-689)

Loyalist lineages of Canada: 1783-1983 (GenRef 929.20971 LOY)

Loyalist families of the Grand River Branch, U.E.L. (LH 971.336 LOY)

Ontarian families: genealogies of United Empire Loyalists and other pioneer families of Upper Canada
(GenRef 929.2 CHA)

The Trail of the Iroquois Indians (LH 970.00497 REA)

Special Sources

Treaty Annuity Pay Lists

These lists recorded the names of band members who received an annual payment from the government. Only bands who had signed a treaty were eligible for these payments. The early lists, which started in 1850, only gave the names of the heads of households while later ones included everybody's name. To find these records, which are kept at Library and Archives Canada, you need the number of the treaty. Lists after 1909 are subject to privacy restrictions.

Interest Distribution Pay Lists

These lists recorded the names of band members who received interest payments from the federal government. The earliest lists, which started in 1856, only provided the names of the heads of households while later ones included everyone's name. These records, which are kept at Library and Archives Canada, are listed by band name or agency. Lists after 1909 are subject to privacy restrictions.

Enfranchisement Lists

Enfranchisement lists record the names and former band affiliation of Indigenous people who lost their status. The lists from 1920 to 1945 are available to the public (may be some access restrictions). Search for case files by name for enfranchised individuals in the online Government of Canada Archives Search (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/collectionsearch/Pages/collectionsearch.aspx).

Special Indian Censuses

Beginning in 1871, there were some special Indigenous censuses but many of the ones that listed personal information were not kept. There were also lists of Indigenous people in Upper Canada who received “presents” from the 1830s to 1860s. Some of this information is available at Library and Archives Canada.

Land Records

Library and Archives Canada has registers of location tickets which gave Indigenous people the right to occupy and use a section of reserve land. These tickets were replaced by certificates of possession or notices of entitlement in 1951. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

There are some leases and deeds in the Indian Affairs Papers at Library and Archives Canada that were created when the Six Nations Council transferred sections of their land holdings during the 1787 to 1847 time period.

Indian Register

The Indian Register, which was first created in 1951, is a list of all registered Status Indians and provides the person’s name, information about vital events, family relationships, religion, and band membership. There is a paper copy containing information up to 1984 at Library and Archives Canada but there are privacy restrictions.

Government Correspondence and Administration Records

There are a lot of records from colonial, federal, and provincial governments that include information about Aboriginal people.

Records of Anthropologist and Historians

Published studies about the history and culture of Indigenous groups in the late 19th and 20th centuries are in anthropological and historical journals while unpublished research notes are often found in the archives of universities and museums.

Family Papers

These records include the private papers of government officials, personal diaries, and letters.

Personal papers include: the Claus Papers, the Brant Papers, and the Moses Papers. Diaries include the ones by David Thorburn about his investigations of various land claims.

Websites

Researching Your Metis Ancestors in Ontario (Metis Nation of Ontario) (www.metisnation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/genealogy_guide_PRINT_2014-02-14-up2021.pdf)

Access Genealogy (Native American History and Genealogy) (www.accessgenealogy.com/native/)

Archives of Ontario Records Relating to Aboriginal Peoples
(www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/aboriginal_peoples_records.aspx)

Canada First Nations Genealogy – Family Search Wiki (familysearch.org/wiki/en/Canada_First_Nations)

CanGenealogy-Metis and Indigenous (www.cangenealogy.com/metis.html)

Canadian Genealogy-Indian Tribes of Canada (www.canadiangenealogy.net/indian_index.htm)

Metis Scrip Records (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/metis-scrip/index-e.html)

Tracing Native American Family Roots (National Indian Law Library)
(narf.org/nill/resources/roots.html)

Woodland Cultural Centre (woodlandculturalcentre.ca/)

Ancestry (databases include)

- 1) U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940
- 2) U.S. Native American Enrollment Cards for the Five Civilized Tribes, 1898-1914
- 3) United States Federal Censuses (can narrow down search by race – Indian and later Native American)
- 4) 1901 and 1911 Canadian Censuses (can narrow down search under Tribal – Native American) Note: enumerators didn't have specific instructions on how to record this in earlier censuses

Books and Articles to Help With Your Research

Records of the Department of Indian Affairs at Library and Archives Canada: a source for genealogical research (2nd ed.), Bill Russell, Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 2004. (Genealogy Reference 929.108997 RUS)

“Researching Aboriginal Ancestors in Ontario”, Janice Nickerson in **Family Chronicle**, September/October 2009, p. 37-41. (www.tbpl.ca/upload/documents/researching-aboriginal-ancestors-in-ontario-by-janice-nickerson.pdf)

Discusses the special challenges, basic sources, and unique sources involved in aboriginal ancestor's genealogy.

Indigenous Genealogy (Library and Archives Canada) (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/Pages/genealogy.aspx)

-provides background information on how to research your indigenous ancestry in records at Library and Archives Canada and how to use their online records and databases

Understanding Ontario First Nations Genealogical Records: sources and case studies, David K. Faux, Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 2002. (929.371347 FAU – circulating copy, genealogy reference copy, local history copy)