

This guide will help you trace your American Indian ancestry. Genealogy is very important to Indian people because ancestry must be documented in order to receive most health, education and other tribal benefits.

Most federal laws and state programs require one-quarter (1/4) American Indian blood or more to qualify.

Each tribe establishes their own enrollment criteria. It is **not** true that all people possessing American Indian blood will receive tribal funds. Not all tribes have funds to distribute. To be eligible to share in assets owned by a tribe, you must be a recognized and enrolled member.

You are about to begin an exciting, interesting and educational pursuit. Consider yourself the beginning twig on a large family tree. Start with yourself and work toward the unknown past.



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No copies printed; web only



Tracing Your American Indian Ancestry



Begin the process by filling out the attached family tree chart as well as you can.

Going back three generations is usually enough: Yourself, your parents and your grandparents. Copies of birth and death certificates for these relatives can help by providing missing names on your family tree chart. These documents are available through the county clerk's office or vital records office where your family members were born or died.

It is important to know your tribal affiliation: Ottawa, Chippewa, Potawatomi, etc.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, may be able to confirm or identify your tribal affiliation if it is a **Michigan** tribe. If it is not a Michigan tribe, the Michigan Bureau will direct you to the appropriate Bureau of Indian Affairs Office.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) area offices can do an initial search for free, help in determining blood quantum level and identify the tribe(s) in which you may be eligible to enroll. Written requests for help should include a cover letter asking for assistance, a family tree, and copies of birth and death certificates showing relationships on the family tree chart.

Send **Michigan** tribal affiliation requests to:

Bureau of Indian Affairs/Michigan Agency
2845 Ashmun Street
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
Phone: 906-632-6809
Toll-Free: 877-659-5028
Fax: 906-632-0689



Note: You may be eligible to enroll in more than one tribe. If so, you need to determine which tribe you are interested in enrolling in based on services available, location and family history values. You **cannot** enroll in more than one federally-recognized tribe. **Contact the tribal certifier or enrollment office and ask for their application forms.**

Tribes will certify you upon confirming your blood line with their tribal records, including treaty and annuity rolls. It may be helpful to indicate if other family members are already members of the tribe. The tribal office will contact you if you need to give them more information.

In cases of adoption, the Bureau of Indian Affairs will make third-party requests to

get ethnic information from your records, and help you with your tribal certification. It is very important to keep copies of all your Indian ancestry information and photocopy whenever possible.

Getting Started on Your Family Research

Using the attached family tree, begin with yourself and work back to your parents, grandparents and so on. Write their full names, maiden names, tribal affiliation, other names they are known by, brothers and sisters, dates or approximate dates and places of birth, marriage and death.

Following these steps will save you time.

Step 1—Home Sources

- Talk with immediate family
- Check family records

See how much of the family tree chart you can fill in using home sources. These include:

Baby books;
Diaries, journals and letters;
Certificates of birth, marriage and death;
Marriage announcements;
Church records;
Memorial cards;
Military records;
Family bibles;
Medical records;
Previous family tree charts;

Newspaper clippings;
Family traditions;
School records;
Identified family photo albums;
Scrapbooks; and
Information from immediate family.

Step 2–Contact Relatives

- Talk with other relatives
- Check on research or tribal certifications done in the past by other family members

Ask relatives to help you fill in the blank spots on your family tree. Be specific about what information you need. You may only want direct line ancestry information and not all relatives in general. A self-addressed,



stamped envelope or phone call may help older family members answer more easily.

Talk to relatives on both sides of your family, in person if possible, starting with the oldest relatives. Often, they can give a lot of information.

Take notes during your visits/phone calls. Find out where they lived, the relationships or bloodlines, what tribe and what clan, when they moved to different places, if they married and who, date of birth, if they belonged to a church, if they served in the military, what their maiden name was, and so on. If exact dates aren't known,

approximate dates will help. Also, get contact information for other living relatives.

Concentrate on direct bloodlines to save time, that is: parents, grandparents, great grandparents. If you are doing a complete family history, you may want to include cousins, aunts, uncles and their children. Knowledge about these family members may help you track down your bloodlines. If the blood degree is known, indicate that on the family tree chart.

When you work on your family tree chart, record your source of information and put a date on it.

Step 3–Vital Records

- Get vital records (birth, marriage and death certificates). These were usually recorded at the county level and are available from:

State of Michigan Vital Records Office
201 Townsend Street
Capital View Building, 3rd Floor
Lansing, MI 48913

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-5 except state holidays

General Information: 1-517-335-8656
Email: VRCustomerService@michigan.gov
Website: www.michigan.gov/mdch

They can also help you with other states' vital records contact information.

Step 4–Visit Libraries and Other Sources

- Visit libraries, genealogy groups, etc.
- Contact depositories containing Indian genealogy information

A visit to a large library may help you. A librarian will be able to direct you to the library's American Indian Records.

The following are available for you to trace your family names back to these documents:

- Annuity and treaty rolls;
- Census rolls from 1890, 1900 and 1910 are indexed and give names, ages and location of birth;
- Military and tax rolls;
- Land and allotment records;
- Indian agent reports and field notes;
- Indian school records;
- Indian cemeteries have information from before the state kept records (check with cemetery keepers);
- County records – deeds and wills;
- Missionary records

The libraries in Michigan with extensive American Indian genealogical collections are:

- Bently Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

- Burton Collection, Detroit Public Library
- Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant
- Flint Public Library
- Grand Rapids Public Library
- Hoyt Public Library, Saginaw
- Library of Michigan, Lansing
- Michigan State University, East Lansing

There are other libraries with smaller collections. They will help and refer you on request; write or call them for help:

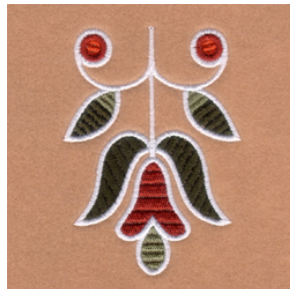
- Bay City Public Library
- Bayliss Library, Sault Ste. Marie
- Bishop Baraga Archives, Marquette
- Grace A. Dow Library, Midland
- Hackley Public Library, Muskegon
- Kalamazoo Public Library
- Mark Osterlin Library, Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City
- Monroe County Library, Monroe
- Owosso Public Library

Another source of information is your local genealogical association, a group of researchers with a common interest in family research. They exchange information, teach beginning classes and hold informational workshops. To locate a society or professional genealogist by county, contact your library or check the Library of Michigan. Go to:

www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/ and click on Family History.

Final Tips

- During the middle 1880s, many Indian people took English names for various reasons. You may notice that within the same family, brothers and sisters were given different last names. When names were written down by others, there could have been misspellings.
- A genealogical rule to remember is to write dates by day, month and year. Always spell out the month with a three letter abbreviation and write out the year, as usually you will be working with more than one century. For example, 2/6/34 may mean February 6 or June 2, 1934 or 1834. Whereas 2 Jun 1934 leaves no doubt as to what is meant. Always separate two sets of numbers with a written word.
- Use a pencil to work on your family tree chart and black ink for the final copy when the information is 'proven'. Blue ink is not permanent.
- Information is considered a primary source when photocopied. This also eliminates errors that can happen when information is hand-copied.



Depositories Containing Records of American Indian Genealogy

Ancestry.com

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com

Bureau of Indian Affairs

www.bia.gov/WhereisMy/index.htm

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

<https://familysearch.org>

National Archives

www.archives.gov/research/native-americans

People of the Three Fires

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~minatam

The US GenWeb Project

www.usgenweb.org

*They have records prior to state records. Even if records were destroyed, they may be available here. They also have early Canadian census data.

This is a general guide to get you started in gathering family information. Researching genealogy is like being a detective and solving a mystery, and it can become a very interesting and fascinating pursuit. Good luck!

Date: _____

Source information: _____

Applicant: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____

Place: _____

DOM: _____

Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Spouse: _____

Children: _____

Researched by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Copies provided to: _____

Father: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Mother: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Grandfather1: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Grandmother1: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Grandfather2: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

Grandmother2: _____

AKA: _____

Tribe: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

Bro. & Sis: _____

GGF1: _____

AKA: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

GGM1: _____

AKA: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

GGF2: _____

AKA: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

GGM2: _____

AKA: _____

DOB: _____ Place: _____

DOM: _____ Place: _____

AKA: Also known as
DOB: Date of Birth
DOM: Date of Marriage
DOD: Date of Death
GGM/F: GreatGrandmother or Grandfather