

Tracing Your Native American and Alaska Native Ancestors

Background Info

- According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as of January 28, 2022 there are 574 Federally Recognized Tribes in the United States
- There are approximately 229 of these diverse nations located in Alaska; the other federally recognized tribes reside in 35 U.S. states.
- Tens of millions of Indigenous peoples lived in North America prior to European governments
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, almost five million Americans identify themselves as Native/Indigenous. The Bureau of Indian Affairs puts the number enrolled in federally recognized tribes at just under two million

Beginning Your Research

- As with any other genealogy research, always begin with yourself and move backwards.
- Gather Information and records in order to provide a well-documented lineage of your direct connection to a known and accepted tribal ancestor (birth, death, marriage records, etc.)
- Keep notes on areas and records you've searched
- Pay attention to unique names and/or lack of surnames

Where to look for records

- **U.S. Federal Census (1860-1950)**
 - Any Census records prior to 1860 do not use the term "Indian" or "I" under the Race column
 - 1870 First US census that includes "Indian" as an option for Race
 - 1900 U.S. Federal Census first to have a "Special Inquiries relating to"
 - 1910 U.S. Federal Census repeats the "Special Inquiries" section
 - 1940 U.S. Federal census included supplemental questions for random numbers called
 - 1950 U.S. Federal census had an additional form called the P8 Indian Reservation Schedule
 - Info for each census can be found following this link:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/online-resources>
- **Indian Census Records 1885-1940**
 - Conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs

- The Records included those living on reservations and Indian Land that formally affiliate with tribes under federal supervision
 - Entries were usually grouped by family, which included names, relationships, and ages of all family members
 - Some records included degree of Indian blood
 - Info on these records can be found on microfilm and online databases such as Ancestry, Fold3, HeritageQuest, and FamilySearch
 - National Archives and Records Administration information - <https://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1885-1940.html>
- **Base Rolls/Rolls/Original Enrollee (Specific to each tribe)**
 - Emigration Records/Muster Rolls
 - Removal
 - Annuity
 - Grazing Payments (part of Bureau of Land Management BLM and General Land Office GLO)
 - Membership
 - Indian Agency Records
 - Rations Issue
 - Allotment rolls for the ancestor in each agency that is being researched. If found, keep a copy
(explanations for all will be in the class)
- **Published Works**
 - Tribal Newspapers, periodicals, published genealogies, Journal of American Indian Family Research
 - **Military Records**
 - Indian Confederate Records and Union Muster Rolls
 - Indian Scouts, Indian Companies & regiments
 - **School Records**

Teachers Quarterly Report (show example in slide); OK School Records (show example); Indian Boarding Schools
 - **Oral Interviews**

Examples include the Federal Writer's Project [Indian-Pioneer Papers](#) and/or Tribal historians
 - **Manuscript collections**

- Quapaw tribal records (1891-1904)
- Letters (1903-1909) from C.A. Burdine to his wife describing life in Indian Territory, especially in the town of Tishomingo, and his work as a member of the Dawes Commission.
- Etc.

What about DNA

- Let's Talk DNA
- "But, my DNA says I'm 0.5% Native American?" Don't forget that Native American is a term that is widely used to describe the original inhabitants of the America's, i.e.-North America, South America, Central America. This is why it's important to have the documents and paper trail to see what region your ancestors originated from.
- Tribal entities do not accept DNA as proof of citizenship. You still need to find out what tribe.

Adoption

- Passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act 1978
- Tragically, many Native children were taken from their communities and placed in non-Native homes

Research is done! You've found your ancestor listed as a tribal citizen. Now what?

- The decision is up to the researcher
- You can contact the tribe to find out what the requirements are to become a citizen (some tribes no longer accept applicants unless they are minors of an enrolled member, some tribes you must interview to show not just a "blood" connection to a tribe)
- Complete more research/watch interviews/read up about the tribe(s) history and learn what it means to be a tribal citizen
- Join groups, in-person or virtual, to connect with other citizens

Research resources

Books:

"DNA for Native American Genealogy" by Roberta Estes*

"Laguna Genealogies" by Elsie Clews Parsons

"1932 Hopi and Navajo Native American Census: With Birth and Death Rolls" by Jeff Bowen*

"Our Native Americans and Their Records of Genealogical Value" by E. Kay Kirkham*

"Tracing Native American Family Roots" National Indian Law Library, 2018

"Finding your Native American Ancestors" by Guy Nixon*

"Beginning Native American Research-Finding your Indian Nation" by Rhonda Edwards (spoken word)*

"Native American Genealogical Sourcebook" by Paula K. Byers

*Available at MGC

Online Databases:

Public and University libraries, surname message boards...

Native American Rights Fund	narf.org
National Archives	www.archives.gov/research/native-americans
Library of Congress	loc.gov
Bureau of Indian Affairs	www.bia.gov/bia
USGenWebProject	usgenweb.org
National Indian Law Library	https://narf.org/nill
Oklahoma History	Okhistory.org
National Park Service	www.nps.gov/orgs/1015/index.htm
National Museum of the American Indian	americanindian.si.edu
Sealaska Heritage	www.sealaskaheritage.org
National Congress of American Indians	ncai.org
Various tribal resources and newspapers	nativeweb.org
Multiple maps	nationalatlas.gov/printable/fedlands.html