

1. U.S. Federal Census Records (Starting in 1790)

The first U.S. census was conducted in 1790. However, American Indians / Native Americans living in their own tribal communities were not counted in early censuses.

Census Timeline:

- 1790–1840: No — Only counted American Indians/Natives living among the general population.
- 1850 Census: Partial — First census listing individual names; American Indians/Natives listed only if living off tribal lands.
- 1860 Census: Partial — Same as above.
- 1870 Census: Partial — Off-reservation Indians only.
- 1880 Census: Partial — More effort, but incomplete.
- 1890 Census: No — Mostly destroyed; unreliable.
- 1900 Census: Yes — First major census to include American Indians on and off reservations with detailed questions.
- 1910 Census: Yes — Detailed Indian schedules.
- 1920 & 1930 Censuses: Yes — Increasing accuracy.
- 1940 Census onward: Yes — Full inclusion.

2. Special Indian Census Rolls (1885–1940)

These are separate from the U.S. Census and include:

- Indian name
- English name
- Tribe or band
- Family relationships
- Age
- Reservation location

Official name: Indian Census Rolls, 1885–1940 (NARA Record Group 75).

3. Major Native American Rolls (Tribal Rolls & Enrollment Lists)

These rolls are used to trace American Indian / Native American ancestry.

Most Famous Rolls:

- Dawes Rolls (1898–1906): Five Civilized Tribes.
- Guion Miller Roll (1906–1910): Eastern Cherokee.
- Henderson Roll (1835): Cherokee.
- Baker Roll (1924): Eastern Band Cherokee.
- Final Rolls of the Citizens and Freedmen: Used for CDIB cards.
- McKennon Roll (1899): Choctaw.
- Keetoowah Roll: Cherokee.
- Churchill Roll: Cherokee.
- Mullan Roll (1848): Post-removal Cherokee.
- Siler Roll: Cherokee audit.

Other Useful Rolls:

- Blackfeet Census Rolls
- Sioux Agency Rolls (Standing Rock, Rosebud, Pine Ridge)
- Kiowa, Comanche, Apache Rolls
- Navajo Census Rolls
- Nez Perce Rolls
- Ute Rolls
- Pueblo Agency Rolls

4. Military Service Databases

American Indians / Native Americans served in all U.S. military branches.

Army Records:

- Army Enlistment Records
- WWI Draft Cards
- WWII Draft Cards ("Old Man's Draft")
- Indian Scouts Enlistment Records (RG 94)

Navy Records:

- Navy Muster Rolls
- Navy Personnel Records (WWI & WWII)

Air Force Records:

- Air Force Personnel Files (after 1947)

Marine Corps Records:

- Marine Corps Muster Rolls (1860s–1950s)

Buffalo Soldiers & Indian Scouts:

- Army Indian Scouts (1866–1947)

5. Indian Agency Records (BIA)

Every reservation had a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agency. Records include:

- Birth registers
- Death registers
- School rosters

- Ration lists
- Allotment records
- Marriage records
- Correspondence

Examples:

- Pine Ridge Agency
- Standing Rock Agency
- Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency
- Fort Peck Agency
- Crow Agency
- Sac & Fox Agency
- Choctaw Agency
- Cherokee Agency
- Kiowa Agency

Stored in NARA Record Group 75.

6. Where to Search (Databases)

Major Databases for American Indian / Native American genealogy:

- NARA (National Archives) — Indian Records
- Ancestry.com — U.S. Indian Rolls & Census
- FamilySearch.org — Native American Records (free)
- Fold3 — Military & Indian Scout Records
- Oklahoma Historical Society — Dawes Roll Search
- Cherokee Heritage Center — Guion Miller & Dawes Rolls

7. Boarding School Records

Many American Indian / Native American children were placed in federal boarding schools.

Major Schools:

- Carlisle Indian Industrial School
- Haskell Institute
- Chilocco Indian School
- Phoenix Indian School

Records include:

- Student files
- Parent names
- Tribal affiliation
- Photographs

TOP MAINSTREAM GENEALOGY DATABASES

These are the most commonly used by everyone researching family history:

1. Ancestry.com (Paid) Largest genealogy database in the world.

Includes: census, military, tribal rolls, DNA, maps, photos.

2. FamilySearch.org (FREE — run by LDS Church) Best free database.

Includes: censuses, BIA records, Indian rolls, military, probate, etc.

3. MyHeritage.com (Paid + some free) Good for family trees, photos, DNA, European records.

4. FindMyPast.com (Paid) Strong for British records; helpful for colonial American ancestors.

5. HeritageQuest Online (FREE through libraries) Powered by Ancestry.

Great for census records, books, military files.

SPECIALTY DATABASES (HIGHLY USEFUL)

6. Fold3.com (Military Database — Paid) Best for:

U.S. military records

Indian Scouts

Buffalo Soldiers

WWII draft cards

Pensions

Reservation military units

7. Newspapers.com (Paid) Historic newspapers — obituaries, births, events, tribal news.

8. Chronicling America (Library of Congress) (FREE) Historic newspapers 1789–1963.

9. Find A Grave (FREE) Cemetery records, photos, grave markers.

10. BillionGraves (FREE) Cemetery indexing with GPS.

NATIVE AMERICAN / AMERICAN INDIAN–SPECIFIC DATABASES

11. National Archives – Native American Records (FREE) NARA Record Groups 75 and 94 include: Tribal rolls, Agency records, Treaties, Allotment files, Indian Census Rolls

12. Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) (FREE) Searchable:

Dawes Rolls. Guion Miller Rolls, Cherokee records, Maps & land allotments

13. Cherokee Heritage Center Database (FREE)

Search: Dawes Rolls, Guion Miller Roll, Cherokee censuses

14. AccessGenealogy.com – Native American Records (FREE) A huge index of:

Tribal rolls, Agency reports, Removal records, Allotments, Treaties

15. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Records Available through:

National Archives, Regional archives, Tribal enrollment offices

Includes: Birth registers, School rosters, Ration lists, Allotments

16. Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (FREE)

Amazing for: Boarding school photos, Student files, Tribal identification

17. National Museum of the American Indian – Archive Center, Photos, letters, tribal histories.

ADDITIONAL DATABASES WITH FAMILY RECORDS

18. USGenWeb Project (FREE) Volunteer-run county-by-county genealogy.

19. WikiTree (FREE) Collaborative family tree building.

20. Geni.com (Paid + free features) Large global family tree.

21. GenealogyBank.com (Paid) Historic U.S. newspapers & obituaries.

22. RootsWeb (FREE — owned by Ancestry) User-submitted family records, forums.