



## Begin Researching Your Mi'kmaq Ancestry

Are you researching your Mi'kmaq ancestry in Nova Scotia? Here are some recommended steps and resources to start researching your Aboriginal family history.

\*\* A note about language: terms found in older records reflect the period and culture of the time. For example, the Mi'kmaq were often referred to as "NS Indian," "Micmac," or simply "Indian." Occupation may be listed as "Indian." Racial identity will sometimes be referred to as "yellow," especially in early 20<sup>th</sup> C. records.

### 1. Read a good "how to" genealogy handbook:

[\*Finding your Acadian Ancestors...\*](#), by Lea Normandeau-Jones (Toronto: Heritage Productions, 2001).

[\*Genealogical Research in Nova Scotia\*](#), by Terrence Punch (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1998).

"Mi'kmaq Genealogy", by Gillian Allen. [\*The Nova Scotia Genealogist\*](#) (Vol XX, No. 3, Fall, 2002:167-174).

[\*Records of the Department of Indian Affairs at Library and Archives Canada: A Source for Genealogical Research\*](#), by Bill Russell (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 2004).

[\*Researching Your Aboriginal Ancestry at Library and Archives Canada\*](#), by Richard Collins (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2008).

### 2. Become familiar with common Mi'kmaq surnames:

Brooks, Christmas, Cope, Denys, Glode, Marshall, Morris, Pictou, Sylliboy - these are only a few of the most common surnames found within Mi'kmaq communities. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management has an excellent guide to [Mi'kmaq surnames](#) and their spelling variations.

Gillian Allen's article (cited above) also provides a list of the most common Mi'kmaq surnames.

### 3. Locate your ancestor's community:

If your ancestor was born or lived in a community with strong Mi'kmaq ties, it may be a clue to his/her heritage. Check vital statistics (birth, marriage and death), church and census records to find out where your ancestor lived. Many of these records are available on [Ancestry Library Edition](#), available at the Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library.

Published community histories also mention local Mi'kmaq individuals or families, such as:

[L'sitkuk: The Story of Bear River Mi'kmaw Community](#), by Darlene A. Ricker (Lockeport: Roseway Publishing, 1997).

[Métis/Acadian Heritage 1604 to 2004](#), by Roland F. Surette (Lower Wedgeport: Roland F. Surette, 2004).

[Mikwite'Imanej Mikmaqi'k: Let Us Remember the Old Mi'kmaq](#), by Frederick Johnson (Halifax: Nimbus, 2001).

[The Old Man Told Us, Excerpts from Micmac History 1500 -1900](#), by Ruth Holmes Whitehead (Halifax: Nimbus, 1991).

### 4. Search birth, marriage and death records:

[Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics](#) has birth, marriage and death records that may identify family members, religious faith, occupation, residency, place of burial, and racial identity. Records available online are:

Births: 1864-1877, 1908-1909, including delayed registrations, 1830-1909

Marriages: Bonds 1763-1864 and Registrations 1864-1934

Deaths: 1864-1877, 1908-1959, including City of Halifax 1890-1908

For birth, marriages and deaths after the above dates, please visit [Nova Scotia Vital Statistics](#).

When government vital statistics are not available, search [church registers](#) held at the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, or online transcriptions such as:

[The Registers of St. Jean-Baptiste, Annapolis Royal, 1702-1755.](#)

[University of New Brunswick - Maliseet and Micmac Vital Statistics from New Brunswick Church Records](#)

## 5. Search newspaper obituary notices:

Obituary notices from Nova Scotia newspapers may identify parents, siblings, cousins, community and place of burial. Use the [Ask a Librarian](#) service to request up to three individual surname searches in local Halifax newspapers, or transcribed Nova Scotia obituary indexes. Please provide approximate date of death, full name (including maiden name or husband's name), and residence, if known.

Two Mi'kmaq community newspapers, [Micmac News](#) (1970-1992) and [Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News](#) (1996-present) also publish obituaries; however, there are no indexes available.

## 6. Search census records:

Along with place of residence, religious faith and occupation, certain federal census years (1871-1881; 1901-1911) asked questions regarding nationality, racial or tribal origins. Use [Ancestry Library Edition](#) or these online Mi'kmaq census community transcriptions:

[Cape Breton University - Mi'kmaq Resource Centre - Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia Census of 1871, 1881, 1891.](#)

## 7. Search federal and provincial government records:

Provincial government and private sector records, both pre- and post-confederation (1867), recorded Mi'kmaq individuals or communities. These records include treaties, Indian Affairs administration records (1751-1866), health records, special census records, petitions to the House of Assembly, land grants, communications from the Colonial Office, relief lists, Royal Commissions, and private citizens records. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management has an online [resource guide](#) about how to research these types of records.

Federal government records, often referred to as the Department of Indian Affairs Records or "RG10," comprise special "Indian" censuses, registers, vital statistics, paylists, membership status, and economic, education, social, land, legal or military records. Library and Archives Canada has an online guide, [Aboriginal Peoples-Guide to the Records of the Government of Canada](#). You will need to consult with [Library and Archives Canada](#) to decide which records to search. Microfilm copies of these records are available through the Halifax Public Libraries' [Interlibrary Loan service](#).

## 8. Local history and genealogical magazines:

Do not overlook historical and genealogical magazines for articles on specific communities or transcribed records mentioning Mi'kmaq individuals. For example:

"Mi'kmaq in Whitbourne Roman Catholic Parish Registers (1891-1921), by Dwayne Pike. *The Newfoundland Ancestor* (Volume 26, No.2, 2010: 84-89).

"Schedule of Micmac Indians and Their Families Making the County of Yarmouth Their Residence, March-1866", by L. H. Harvie. [\*The Nova Scotia Genealogist\*](#) (Volume X, No. 2, Summer, 1992: 72).

## 9. Other Research Centres:

Check other Mi'kmaq-related resources at any of the following archives or web sites:

[Acadia University - Silas T. Rand Collection](#)

[Canadian Genealogy Centre: Ethno-Cultural and Aboriginal Groups](#)

[Cape Breton University - Mi'kmaq Resource Centre](#)

[Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management - Mi'kmaq Holdings Resource Guide](#)

[Provincial Archives of New Brunswick](#)

[Public Archives and Records Office, Prince Edward Island](#)

[The Rooms, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada - Aboriginal Ancestry](#)

Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre of Nova Scotia  
586b Church Street  
Shubenacadie, NS B0N 2H0  
Canada  
902-758-1953

10. Contact First Nation's communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland:

[Federation of Newfoundland Indians](#)

[Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island](#)

[Mi'kmaq Nova Scotia First Net](#)

[New Brunswick First Nation Directory](#)

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