

Researching American Indian Ancestors  
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## Introduction

### Preliminary steps - same as any family history

1. Obtain documents for parent, grandparent, great-parent in the line of interest
  - a. Vital records such as birth, death, marriage
  - b. Newspaper articles such as obituaries
  - c. Examples
2. Find family members in U.S. census
  - a. Ages or approximate birth year
  - b. Birthplaces
  - c. Examples: 1880, 1900-1930
3. Interview family members, including old photos
  - a. Name variations, locations, etc.
4. Learn local history of the area where ancestor lived
5. Find out what tribes lived in the area and research history of the tribes
  - a. Some tribes were moved elsewhere such as 'Trail of Tears;' Indian schools

### Opening Exercises

#### Some resource information

1. *AccessGenealogy*
  - a. 'Indian Tribes of North America,' Swanton, Bureau of American Ethnology  
<https://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/the-indian-tribes-of-north-america.htm>

#### Some background

1. Federally Recognized Tribes and several State Recognized Tribes (some may be both)  
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/state-tribal-institute/list-of-federal-and-state-recognized-tribes.aspx>
2. Indian reservations in continental United States, downloadable Map (pdf) and index  
<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/DOCUMENTS/ResMAP.HTM>

#### About lists

1. Generally, each tribe manages their own tribal rolls and enrollment rules, not the government
  - a. Tribal rolls are confidential
2. Some tribes used various government lists as basis for enrollment, some did not
  - a. Example: To be eligible, ancestor's name must appear on a specific list
3. Some lists were created for specific purposes such as for a one-time payment
4. Not just 'one list' or 'roll,' examples
  - a. Dawes Roll, applicable to Five Civilized Tribes
    - Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole
  - b. Durant Roll, census 1907-1910, payments in Mackinac area
  - c. Indian Census Schedules 1885-1940
    - Not all tribes, not all years

#### Dawes Roll, Five Civilized Tribes, examples

1. *AccessGenealogy* (free) > 'Search the Final Rolls'  
<https://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/final-rolls.htm> (links to images on *Fold3.com*)
2. *Fold3.com* > Non-military records > search or browse <https://www.fold3.com/>  
Free at Family History Center, part of 'All Access' subscription *Ancestry.com*, or subscribe
3. *FamilySearch.org* (free) > 'Search Historical Records'  
<https://familysearch.org/search> (links to images on *Fold3.com*)
4. *Ancestry.com* > Search tab > Card Catalog > 'civilized tribes' (in keyword) > 'Search'  
<http://search.ancestry.com/search/cardcatalog.aspx>  
Free 'Library Edition' at library or Family History Center, or subscribe

## Researching American Indian Ancestors, continued

### Durant Roll, example

1. [http://www.mifamilyhistory.org/mimack/native\\_american/miller/durant.asp](http://www.mifamilyhistory.org/mimack/native_american/miller/durant.asp)

### Indian Census Schedules 1885-1940 - Jurisdictions and categories

1. National Archives list, M595: <http://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m595.pdf>
2. Areas managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) 'agencies' changed over time
3. Multiple tribes grouped together, but not the same people
  - Examples: Government categorized people in areas such as 'pueblo' or 'fish eating people'
4. Alphabetical listing by Tribe
5. Alphabetical listing by Agency/Film #
6. Indian 'census' not the same as U.S. census
  - a. Listings varied:
    - Alphabetical
    - By camps, villages
    - 'Roll calls'
    - Non-residents
  - b. Taken every year or frequent intervals
  - c. Numbers:
    - Census number
      - Current year and previous
      - Relationships, such as S123 means 'son of 123'
    - Allocation numbers, receiving payments
    - Allotment number
      - after 1912 for those with land allotments
      - also relationships, per above
      - Info also BLM website (link next page): names and locations of original allottees
  - d. Note: information not the same for all lists

### Case Studies

1. Documenting family of an Indian Chief
  - a. 1900 U.S. census, 'Special Inquiries' - Indian names, tribal information
  - b. 1925 Indian census, Allotment numbers
2. 'Was my grandmother American Indian?'
  - a. No family tradition of Native American heritage
  - b. Name variation, found on Indian census and other records
  - c. National Archives archival collection/study of social history
  - d. Not 'enrolled' (died before establishment of the tribal roll)
3. 'Was my father Penobscot?'
  - a. Family tradition of Native American heritage
  - b. Tribe had early European contact, i.e. tribal members on city directories
  - c. Not on Indian Schedules (not under BIA jurisdiction)
  - d. Exhaustive search of records including census
  - e. Study of local history
  - f. DNA test results negative for Native American ancestry
4. 'Were my ancestors Apache?'
  - a. Based on facial features, photos looked Native American
  - b. Paper trail leads to Pueblo Indians
  - c. Study of local history
  - d. Possibly Apache adopted by Pueblo

### Session Exercises

## Some Helpful Websites

5 First Steps to Finding Your Roots (reference article)

[http://genealogy.about.com/od/basics/a/first\\_steps.htm](http://genealogy.about.com/od/basics/a/first_steps.htm)

*AccessGenealogy*, free databases, some 'streaming' microfilm rolls

<https://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/free-us-indian-census-rolls.htm>

*Ancestry.com*, databases (free @ Library or Family History Center, or subscribe)

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/cardcatalog.aspx> enter 'Indian schedules' or keyword focus

Bureau of Land Management, 'General Land Office Records,' free database (allotments)

<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>

*FamilySearch.org*, 'Catalog,' free databases, microfilm orders and some digital images

<https://familysearch.org/catalog-search> > search by keyword/location > 'Indian census,' tribe name

Example: 'Oklahoma Applications for Enrollment to the Five Civilized Tribes, 1898-1914'

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1852353>, searchable index, images on *Fold3.com*

*Fold3.com*, non-military records, database/digital images (free @ Family History Center or subscribe)

<https://www.fold3.com/>

'Genealogies of Cherokee Indians' (text)

<https://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/genealogies-of-the-chokeee-indians.htm>

*InternetArchive* (Allen Co. Public Library), Indian Census Rolls 1885-1940 (by reel number)

[https://archive.org/details/indian\\_census](https://archive.org/details/indian_census) (downloadable) see roll numbers on M595 below

National Archives, 'American Indians in the Federal Decennial Census, 1790-1930' (reference article)

<http://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1790-1930.html>

National Archives, 'Final Rolls' Five Civilized Tribes, reference article

<http://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/dawes/index.html>

National Archives, List of Microfilm of Indian Census Rolls 1885-1940, M595 (tribe or agency/reel)

<https://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m595.pdf>

National Archives, Regional Centers (textual record collections)

<https://www.archives.gov/locations/>

National Archives, 'Researching American Indians and Alaska Natives' (reference article)

<http://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/research-individual.html>

National Park Service, 'Indian Reservations in Continental United States,' downloadable map & index

<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/DOCUMENTS/ResMAP.HTM>

## Some Locality Specific Resources

National Archives, Regional Center at San Bruno, archived collections, finding aids, textual records

<https://www.archives.gov/san-francisco/finding-aids/holdings-guide-03.html>

New York State Archives, 'Digital Collections,' free, digital images

<http://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/>

University of Oklahoma, 'Western History Collections, Indian-Pioneer Papers,' interviews, database

<https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/>

University of Washington, 'Digital Collections' includes photos

<http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/index.html>

## Movies/Documentaries

*Black Robe*, 1991 (set in 1600s, Quebec)

*Geronimo and the Apache resistance*, 2007 (available at Central library)

*We Shall Remain*, PBS 2008-9 (available at Central library)

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/the\\_films/index](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/the_films/index)