

## Overview of INAC's Genealogical and Archival Research Unit

What is the Genealogical and Archival Research Unit?

The Genealogical and Archival Research Unit, located within the Individual Affairs Branch of the Lands and Trust Services sector, is the custodian of the main collection of treaty/status Indian membership records within Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The major holdings found in the research unit include all of the treaty and interest distribution paylists for the years commencing in 1850 up to approximately 1980, various Indian Agent Census and the manual version of the Indian Register covering the period from 1951 to 1984.

What is available from the Unit?

Subject to the federal *Access to Information and Privacy Acts*, the release of some material, such as treaty and interest distribution paylists, which may be relevant to First Nations land claims and also for the verification of past chiefs and councillors who have signed historical documents. The paylists and Indian Agent Census may also be used for the identification of bands and their members.

The Unit develops and delivers training to INAC employees either on site or at other locations within Canada. The training is available to those working in the areas of Indian Registration, Litigation Management and Claims. It is also available for other government departments or agencies such as the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the Indian Claims Commission; and, to First Nations. It includes components on the research methodology pertaining to the identification of band membership, the interpretation of the treaty and interest distribution paylists and the manual Indian Register, past policies and practices on payment distributions, as well as alternate sources of information/research pertaining to genealogy, band membership, and land claims.

The Unit is responsible for two types of electronic data systems. The first system tracks the history of band names, divisions, amalgamations and extinguishments and can be found under the Bands module of the Indian Registration System (IRS). The second is a web-based system comprised of the digitized treaty paylists covering the years from 1850 to 1955.

The Genealogical and Archival Research Unit is responsible for searching and responding to all requests from the public pertaining to genealogy for the following purposes:

- to determine a date of birth in order to obtain an individual's birth certificate or pension;
- to determine the next of kin for the distribution of the assets of an estate;
- to provide information to support various court cases (e.g. establish that the individual is a treaty Indian and that his ancestors were signatories to a certain treaty - in order to prove entitlement to rights such as hunting, fishing or tax exemption) and certification of source documents in support of legal research; and,
- to prove an individual's ancestral ties to Indians in Canada to meet the Indian blood quantum requirements of the USA for benefits such as educational grants, immigration, work permits, etc.

What is the process for obtaining access to the records of the Unit?
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*Personal visit* to the Genealogical and Archival Research Unit - Room 1860, 10 Wellington St.,  
 Gatineau, PQ - by appointment only.