

# **Researching Your Aboriginal Ancestry at Library and Archives Canada**



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## **PREFACE**

The rich and diversified aboriginal cultures in Canada have brought a unique quality to the lives of many Canadians. It is with pride that more and more Canadians are doing research to trace their aboriginal roots in records found in various archives across Canada. Uncovering your ties with your aboriginal ancestry can help to define your own identity.

With the help of those who use archival records, we have developed this guide to help Canadians undertaking aboriginal genealogical research in the archival documentation at Library and Archives Canada. This guide is not meant to be an exhaustive overview of all sources and research strategies; rather, it is one of the tools you can use. Further resources are listed at the end of this guide, and the specialized staff at Library and Archives Canada and other research institutions will be able to assist you in conducting research into your aboriginal ancestry.

## INTRODUCTION

Genealogical research can be a complex and lengthy process. Records from many private, provincial and federal sources must be used, and they are often scattered throughout the country. Researchers may therefore have to travel to where the records are located. In addition, records that contain personal information—the very records most wanted by the researcher—may be subject to access and privacy legislation or to restrictions placed on them by the donors. Other possible difficulties are many:

- the changing meanings of words and expressions over time
- historical information rewritten from the perspective of the present
- a lack of contextual knowledge about the creation of the records
- assumptions about the types of records that might contain information
- inconsistent information within the same series of records
- a lack of research guides or finding aids

These difficulties are compounded in aboriginal genealogical research. Locating records can be challenging, and once found, records can be hard to interpret. For example, records based on aboriginal perspectives of oral traditions and spiritual concepts can be difficult to understand for researchers of European origin. Equally, any exploration of records based on non-aboriginal perspectives must bear those views in mind. Overall, records of aboriginal ancestry are of notoriously complex nature and organization, with records from different sources contradicting each other and all reflecting the perspectives of their creators. Often, a complete picture emerges only after consulting many types of records from many sources.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Part I of this guide provides background information on how to research aboriginal ancestry in records located at Library and Archives Canada. Several series of relevant records are described; the utility of each series will vary according to the individual researcher's needs. References for complementary sources of information are also provided, along with suggested readings to provide additional historical or sociological context.

Part II of this guide offers step-by-step strategies for using the Library and Archives Canada Internet site for doing aboriginal genealogical research. *ArchiviaNet* provides access to a variety of archival holdings, which can be searched by theme or type of document.

A bibliography of suggested readings and Internet addresses for sources in other institutions are included at the end of the guide.

Publications mentioned throughout this guide may be available at Library and Archives Canada for on-site consultation or, through inter-institutional loan, at your local library. Copying from publications is subject to copyright legislation. As the archival holdings grow or the Web site

changes, this guide will be revised as required.

Databases and Web pages mentioned in this guide are underlined. Web site addresses are hyperlinks.

## **PART I: RESEARCHING YOUR ABORIGINAL GENEALOGY AT LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA**

### **BEFORE STARTING**

Before coming to Library and Archives Canada or going online, write down as much information as you can about every generation, starting with yourself and working back in time. As much as possible, include the names, dates of birth, marriage and death, and places of residence of your ancestors. Much of this information might be known to your family or be in old family documents. Use a standard genealogical handbook as a guide on what steps to follow and how to look up further details in the reference materials at your local library. Document your work carefully as you go along, keeping notes not just of the information you find but also of where you found it.

**Note:** Researchers interested in proving aboriginal ancestry for legal purposes should contact their local Indian and Northern Affairs Canada office or consult the section called "Status—Most often asked questions" on the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Web site at [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ywtk/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ywtk/index_e.html).

### **ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADIAN RECORDS**

During the very early French colonial period (1534–1760), explorers, the military, the colonial government and the clergy maintained accounts of their respective operations in New France. Unfortunately, the documents for that period in the custody of Library and Archives Canada contain very little information of genealogical significance.

A few series of records at Library and Archives Canada contain references to aboriginal individuals in the British military and their family members during the British colonial period (1760–1867). Specifically, these series include the Lower Canada Land Records (Record Group [RG] 1 L3L), the Upper Canada Land Records (RG 1 L3), the British Military and Naval Records (RG 8 series "T") and the Haldimand Papers (Manuscript Group [MG] 21 Great Britain, add. mss 21661–21892). Although not standard genealogical sources, these may provide ties to ancestors in the military and other family members of aboriginal origin. The above series are indexed and on microfilm.

There may be information relating to aboriginal people in other records from the time of the British colonial period, but the indexing practices of earlier decades have left any such references unmarked. Whether such non-indexed information would be of value to the genealogical researcher is unknown. Certainly, the researcher should consult the Hudson's Bay Company Archives at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, as these records do include additional indexes relating to aboriginal ancestry. For more information see the Web site of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA) at [www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html).

In 1850, with the passage of the *Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada*, the first definition of "Indian" was given, with Indian status linked to band membership. This fairly loose definition was found inadequate after Confederation in 1867, when the *Constitution Act, 1867* (formerly known as the *British North America Act*), gave responsibility for "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians" to the new Canadian government. Unfortunately, the Act did not define "Indian", leaving it up to the federal government to determine whether "constitutional Indians" included Indians, Inuit and the Métis. As a result, over time, constitutional jurisdiction has been exercised in different ways for the different groups that make up the aboriginal population of Canada.

Nonetheless, records on Aboriginal Peoples did improve after 1867, as the federal government began documenting the many aspects of relations between aboriginal groups and various government departments. Many of these records are located at Library and Archives Canada, the official depository for historical records of the federal government.

The archival records relating to Aboriginal Peoples are grouped into those for Indians, Métis and Inuit. These categories are not related to the cultural reality of the lives of status Indians, non-status Indians, Inuit and Métis individuals and families, but rather to the administrative organization of the records. It must be remembered that the records were almost all created by non-aboriginal people, primarily federal government clerks and officials, and that the manner of their organization is based on how those people recognized the status of the aboriginal person during his or her lifetime.

Further information on federal government records related to Aboriginal Peoples is available at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200109\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200109_e.html).

## STATUS INDIANS

Under the *Indian Act*, an Indian is "a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian". The rules for eligibility for registration have changed often over the years.

Jurisdiction for status Indians has been exercised under the *Indian Act* through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and its predecessor agencies. Therefore, most information on status Indians is in the archival records of this department. These records are called the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds, and include the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program sous-fonds or Record Group (RG) 10. A brief description of the contents of RG 10 is available online at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200111\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200111_e.html) and in a paper copy at Library and Archives Canada. (See Part II of this guide for detailed instructions on searching the RG 10 inventory on the Library and Archives Canada Web site.) Transcripts or digitized images of the actual documents in the RG 10 holdings are not yet available on the Library and Archives Canada Web site.

**Note:** The names that appear in RG 10 include only individuals defined as status Indians under the *Indian Act*. Normally, names of non-status Indians will not appear in RG 10.



## Record Organization in RG 10

The documents in RG 10 take many forms, including files, letter books, ledgers, registers, lists and more. Detailed descriptions of these documents are available in research tools called finding aids. Finding aids are numbered and are available in many formats; some are electronic and can be found in the Government of Canada Files database on the Library and Archives Canada Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105_e.html). Others may simply be handwritten or typed lists, which can be used at Library and Archives Canada, in Ottawa.

The General Inventory at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020123\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020123_e.html) is an online database that offers a constantly updated overview of all Library and Archives Canada holdings. This database usually mentions what finding aids are available for each group of holdings and in what format.

Many archival documents have access restrictions. (See "Restricted Information" in Part II of this guide for instructions on how to review access restrictions.) These restrictions may be lifted in accordance with the provisions of the Access to Information and Privacy acts.

**Note:** Most files in RG 10 that contain information useful to the genealogist are arranged by band, agency or district. This hierarchy of information, together with the time period of interest, is critical to locating relevant files. Knowing the band of an ancestor is the single most important piece of information the genealogical researcher can have. Knowledge of whether a band signed a treaty, and when, might also help narrow down a search.

### ***Indian Tribes and Bands***

A tribe or nation is a large group of aboriginal people, generally composed of more than one band, who follow the same traditional way of life and who speak basically the same language; the tribe is sometimes politically arranged in a federation. Researchers interested in the names of tribes and nations native to Canada and the northern United States can consult *Indians of Canada, Cultural Dynamics*, by John Price. A copy of the book's map showing the general geographic location of the tribes and nations is available for onsite consultation at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Few RG 10 documents were created at the tribe or nation level, as the federal government has mostly dealt with aboriginal people at the level of the band.

Specialists today recognize two meanings for the term "band". Administratively, the band is the basic unit of organization that the federal government created to group aboriginal people for purposes of managing services to them. Socially, it is a group of people following a traditional way of life (hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, family structure, etc.). Members of bands are recognized by the government by a band number or ticket, a government-issued identification number given to a family or an adult living alone in a band.

A band is sometimes referred to by the name recognized by its own members, such as Chippewas of Nawash, Algonquins of Barriere Lake, etc., but generally the band name does not contain the name of the tribe or nation to which it belongs. Researchers must bear in mind that, over the years, many

bands were amalgamated, surrendered their treaty rights or changed their names. It is therefore important to know the dates of interest when searching for band information.

In the absence of the name of the band to which an ancestor is believed to have belonged, the place of residence might make it possible to identify the appropriate band or reserve. Here are three resources that may help:

- The *Canada Gazetteer Atlas*, available at most local libraries, identifies reserves as pink areas; smaller settlements show as a red dot. The researcher can try to locate an Indian reserve in the area surrounding the place of residence of an ancestor.

- The Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's publication *Schedule of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements* gives the names of the reserves in each province and territory and the names of the bands in each reserve. The *Atlas of Indian Reserves and Settlements of Canada* contains similar information, but with slightly more detailed maps.

- The *Historical Atlas of Canada II* lists Native reserves to 1900 and treaty areas to 1899.

Once the band name is known, a variety of resources exist for the researcher of aboriginal ancestry:

- Binders containing band history cards are available in the Genealogy Unit at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. These cards contain such band information as name of agencies, treaty numbers, dates and the name changes. Because access to the band history cards is restricted, the cards must be consulted by archival staff on behalf of the researcher.

- Reference files maintained in the Researcher Services Division at Library and Archives Canada contain limited information about various Indian bands. Again, access is restricted, and these files must be consulted by archival staff on behalf of the researcher.

- A number of finding aids provide information about the relationship between bands and the field offices that administered them. If the name of a band is known, the finding aid provides the name of its agency; if the name of an agency is known, the aid provides the names of the bands under its responsibility. The responsibility for bands moved from one agency to another over time as agencies were created, restructured or abolished. In addition, some bands may have surrendered their land to the government, and the band members were then incorporated into other bands.

In many cases, a search of the online databases described in Part II of this guide provides adequate information about the relationships between bands and their agencies. When such searches are not conclusive, the following finding aids (FAs) can be consulted at Library and Archives Canada:

- FA 10-12: a guide to Western Canadian field offices identifying the bands for which each was responsible, 1871-1959
- FA 10-145: a guide to Nova Scotia field offices, 1871-1997
- FA 10-157: a guide to Ontario field offices identifying the bands for which each was responsible, 1845-1990
- FA 10-202: a guide to Indian bands and agencies in British Columbia
- FA 10-249: a guide to Quebec field offices identifying the bands for which each field office was responsible, c. 1763-1995
- FA 10-475: a guide to New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland field offices, 1871-1972

### ***Agencies, Districts, Superintendencies and Regional Offices***

After Confederation, to help administer its affairs in the regions, the Department of Indian Affairs created field offices variously called agencies, districts and superintendencies. Regardless of the name initially given to these administrative units, they basically fulfilled the same mandate: looking after departmental affairs at the band level and reporting to headquarters. After the Second World War (earlier in British Columbia), the department created a mid-level administration called regional offices. From then on, the agencies and districts offices created many of the records in triplicate, keeping one copy in their own files, sending one copy to the regional office and sending the other copy to headquarters in Ottawa. The information contained in each copy might differ slightly, as annotations were added to some documents by staff at each level of administration.

The regional offices also retain some early records of now defunct agencies and districts that were created before the establishment of their respective regional offices. Because of the government policy of retaining records in the region where they were created, many of the regional office records are not kept in Ottawa but in the various record centres of Library and Archives Canada located across the country. Most of the finding aids relating to these records are kept at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa and have not been made available electronically.

### ***Treaties***

An Indian treaty is a formally concluded and ratified agreement between the government and an Indian band or bands that outlines terms by which both sides are to abide. Members of the band were listed on treaty annuity pay lists to receive annual payments from the Crown. Most of these pay lists are listed in the related finding aids according to treaty number. It might be possible to identify the treaty to which a band belongs to by initiating a search in the databases on the Library and Archives Canada Web site as described in Part II of this guide.

Most Indian bands residing in treaty areas signed treaties; however, many joined treaties at various

dates after the initial signing. It is therefore possible that the name of an ancestor might not appear in early pay lists.

## **RG 10 Records of Particular Interest**

Although genealogical information can be found in almost every series of RG 10, some subjects and series are more likely than others to produce fruitful results in a search for information on aboriginal ancestors. These are described below.

### ***The Indian Registers, 1951-1984***

In 1951, the federal government created the first national register of every known individual entitled to Indian status under the *Indian Act*. This register is currently maintained in a computerized format by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

From the date of its establishment, this register has been the single most comprehensive record of status Indians. If your aboriginal ancestor was alive in 1951 and had Indian status then, or was born since 1951 with Indian status, or acquired Indian status since 1951, then this register will include him or her.

A paper copy of the *Indian Registers, 1951-1984* is located at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. The registers record the names of all status Indians and contain information on vital events, membership, familial relationships (parents, marriages and children), date of birth, religion, band number and, occasionally, occupation. Finding aid (FA) 10-94 is a computerized file list of the Indian registers that can be searched by band at Library and Archives Canada in the Government of Canada Files database as explained in Part II of this guide. The file descriptions often refer to the registers as books, which are arranged in the alphabetical order of the names of the band and band members (e.g., Book 242 - Saugeen Band 123 (A-J), Book 243 - Saugeen Band 123 (K-P), etc.).

These documents have access restrictions. Because the registers constitute an operational record currently maintained by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the general public should direct their inquiries there. Researchers from that department are advised to contact their records managers.

### ***Membership Registers and Lists***

Band membership lists before 1951 are scattered throughout RG 10, mostly in agency, district, superintendency and regional office records. A few of these lists can also be found in the General Headquarters Administration Records.

Descriptions of membership lists can be obtained from the General Inventory database, and file information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files database using keywords such as the names of bands or agencies as explained in Part II of this guide. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

*Posted lists:* The posted lists consist of band membership lists for all of Canada posted in 1951. These lists were posted in communities to permit the protest of individuals included or excluded before the establishment of the first centralized Indian register. The files are arranged alphabetically by the names of bands and are described in FA 10-100. File information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files database using keywords such as the names of bands and agencies as explained in Part II of this guide. These documents have access restrictions.

The posted lists are a record of relatively minor use compared to the register, providing a snapshot only. There are few instances in which you would consult the posted lists rather than the registers themselves.

*The treaty annuity pay lists, 1850–1982, and the interest distribution pay lists, 1856–1982:* A treaty annuity was an annual payment made by the Crown to band members whose band had entered into a treaty. Interest money was paid to band members whose band had money in the care of the federal government. These payments were documented in the pay lists by the Indian agent at the time of each payment.

The treaty annuity pay lists and the interest distribution pay lists are sources of primary interest to the genealogist whose ancestor died before 1951. Originally, these pay lists were created to record payments of money made to selected members of a band (generally the heads of families) and contained only those names. Later, however, around 1893, and until the creation of the Indian Register of 1951, the pay lists contained also the names of the other members of a band and the government used these pay lists as band membership lists. They can be used today to obtain individual information about family relationships and Indian status. However, researchers should note that these records do not exist for all bands country-wide. Treaty annuity pay lists exist only for those bands that were signatories to a treaty. Interest distribution pay lists exist only for those bands that distributed interest monies to their membership.

The genealogical information in these lists varies (e.g., from a simple name and band number to details such as date of birth). The lists also provide information such as the name of the band, the place and date of payment, the name of the agent and the amounts of money involved.

The bulk of these records are in RG 10 files at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Most of the pay lists found in the field office records and in the agency records are duplicates; however, some contain additional annotations by the agent, and some show other kinds of information. Lists in the RG 10 files can be located through finding aids (FAs) 10-91, 10-109 and 10-116.

*FA 10-91* is a computer-generated list sorted by the order of the volume number in which the original records are organized. This order is neither alphabetical nor chronological. The volume number, reel number, file description and outside date are listed. The file descriptions are somewhat scattered and are intermixed with descriptions pertaining to census, membership and other subjects.

Most treaty annuity pay lists in FA 10-91 are listed by treaty number; therefore, a band's pay list can be found by referencing the treaty to which a band belongs. Few band names can be referenced directly.

Conversely, most of the interest distribution pay lists in FA 10-91 are listed by band name. In some cases they are listed by the name of the agency to which a group of bands belonged.

*FA 10-109* is a computer-generated list sorted by the order of the volume number in which the original records are organized. The finding aid covers the period of 1946 to 1987 for the treaty annuity pay lists and the period of 1938 to 1964 for the interest distribution pay lists. The volume numbers, file descriptions and outside dates are listed. The file descriptions give the band names and their location. They are roughly grouped by provinces and the Northwest Territories.

Although the Province of Quebec is not a treaty area, two bands in this province, the Abitibi Dominion Band and the Abitiwinni, are listed with the bands that obtained annuity payments. For more information on records related to aboriginal peoples in Quebec, see Pistard, the online research tool of the Archives nationales du Québec, at [www.anq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.anq.gouv.qc.ca). (Information is available in French only.)

FA 10-91 and FA 10-109 can be searched using the Government of Canada Files database as explained in Part II of this guide.

*FA 10-116* is a microfiche finding aid that provides a page reference for locating treaty annuities for the bands in treaties 4, 6 and 7 for the years 1874 to 1884. For the years from 1884 to 1955, the microfiches were cut and organized alphabetically within each year. This finding aid also contains the microfilm shelf list for the annuity pay lists.

FA 10-116 has not been computerized and must be used at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa.

Treaty annuity pay lists and interest distribution pay lists dated after 1909 are almost invariably restricted and subject to review under the Privacy Act before information on individuals can be released.

### ***Census Returns***

Only a few census returns for a limited number of bands can be found in RG 10. Early "Indian censuses" were not nominal censuses in the way we know them today. Most were statistical in nature only and did not identify each and every individual in the Indian population. Some were just lists of Indian heads of families that were created for various purposes.

Starting in 1871, Indian agents began to produce aggregate censuses for each band in their jurisdiction to enable the Department of Indian Affairs to include statistics on the band population in its published annual reports. Digitized versions of the *Indian Affairs Annual Reports 1864-1990* can be consulted on the Library and Archives Canada Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs). In 1917, the aggregate census began to be compiled every

five years. During this time the agencies were not required to submit nominal returns to headquarters.

**Note:** The federal census returns are particularly useful because they list the ethnic origin of every individual enumerated in the census. However, according to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), entry of the term "Indian" in the federal census returns **does not** in itself constitute legal proof of an individual's origin. It is therefore incumbent upon the researcher to furnish the proof of origin for the person concerned. To do this, it is necessary to conduct additional research using the files in the RG 10 records held at Library and Archives Canada. Once the research is completed, all documentation must be submitted to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the department responsible for evaluating it and determining the status of the person in question.

In 1939, the Department of Indian Affairs began instructing departmental agents to systematically record not just the names but also the sex, age, civil status and band number of every Indian and to keep that information on site. After 1951, the Indian register became the means of recording this information.

Unfortunately, not all Indian censuses created by the Department of Indian Affairs and its agents found their way into RG 10. Some did not survive; others have yet to be transferred to Library and Archives Canada.

Inventory descriptions of censuses in RG 10 can be obtained from the General Inventory database, and file information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files database using keywords such as the names of bands or agencies as explained in Part II of this guide. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

### ***Registers and Records of Births, Deaths and Marriages***

Registration of vital statistics (birth, marriage and death) in Canada is a provincial responsibility. Although many federal Indian agents also acted as agents of provincial governments for the registration of vital statistics for the Indian population in their jurisdictions, very few of these records have found their way into the records of the Department of Indian Affairs. In many cases, the records have not survived or have not been transferred to Library and Archives Canada.

Inventory descriptions relating to vital statistics can be obtained from the General Inventory ([www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020123\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020123_e.html)) database using the keywords "vital statistics" at the series and government records levels. File information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files ([www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105_e.html)) database using keywords such as birth, death or marriage. Researchers are advised to consult church authorities and provincial government sources for this type of information.

### ***School Records***

School files may contain such useful information as a pupil's name, age, gender, band number, parents' names, religion, agent's recommendation, medical examinations, grade of enrolment, level achieved and even police report in the cases of truants and runaways. Individual information is

documented in many file blocks.

File information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files database using a combination of keywords such as the name of the school (for residential schools) or agency (for day schools) along with words such as school, admission, discharge, returns, report or application. General information on school records can be obtained from the General Inventory database using the above keywords at the series and government records levels. Unfortunately, there are few individual student files in RG 10. In the cases of residential schools, the name of the school must be known for a search. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

### ***Land Records***

Library and Archives Canada holds registers of location tickets (documents attesting to the right of an Indian to occupy and use a section of reserve land) for some reserves. Location tickets are a subset of the extensive records in RG 10 dealing with individual land holdings within reserve lands. There are many other records throughout the record group that document the occupation of parcels of reserve land by individual Indians. In 1951, location tickets were replaced by certificates of possession or notices of entitlement.

Records on location tickets are arranged in file blocks for which finding aids (FAs) 10-97, 10-20 and 10-32 can be searched using the names of reserves, agencies, bands or the keyword phrase "location tickets" in the Government of Canada Files database. General information relating to land records in RG 10 can be searched in the General Inventory database using the keywords "Indian" and "land" at the series and government records levels. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

Because the land holdings files are in the custody of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and because the Indian Land Registry is public, it is advisable to start a search about Indian lands with that department's Registrar of Indian Lands Section. Please contact your local Indian and Northern Affairs Canada office for additional information.

### ***Membership and Commutation Files***

The membership files document all aspects of membership including acceptance, re-entry, refusal, transfer, loss of status by marriage and so on. A commutation is a legal action provided for in the *Indian Act* by which an Indian woman who married a non-Indian relinquished her right to annuities or any other regular cash payments by accepting a lump sum payment, ending in this way her financial connections to a band. Most of these records are arranged by the name of the agency; the names of bands are also mentioned in some descriptions.

Inventory descriptions relating to membership and commutation can be obtained from the General Inventory database using the keywords "membership" or "commutation" at the series and government records levels, and file information can be obtained from the Government of Canada Files database using keywords such as the names of bands or agencies as explained in Part II of this guide.



### ***Enfranchisement Files***

Enfranchisement was the voluntary or involuntary loss of Indian status. Very few enfranchisements took place before the First World War. After that war, many individuals decided to enfranchise to gain certain benefits, which varied over time according to changes in the *Indian Act*. Early major benefits were full Canadian citizenship and ownership of a parcel of reserve land. A later benefit was the one-time payment of the individual's shares of band funds and annuities.

The enfranchisement clause was taken out of the *Indian Act* in 1985. Most files on this subject take the form of individual case files that can be searched by the names of individuals in the Government of Canada Files database. Inventory descriptions relating to enfranchisement can also be obtained from the General Inventory database using the keyword "enfranchisement" at the series and government records levels. Many of these documents have access restrictions.

### ***Headquarters Case Files***

The headquarters case files series (also known by the descriptive title in the General Inventory as the modified duplex numeric system sub-series) consists of more than 27,000 individual case files arranged according to the geographically based system of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's responsibility centres. Although most information in these files covers the core period of 1920 to 1950, some files include information from as far back as 1871 or as late as 1967. The case files deal with such matters as estates, band loans, enfranchisement, guardianship, revolving fund loans, the Veterans Land Act, veterans' disability pensions, pensions for descendants of deceased veterans and soldier settlers. Miscellaneous case files are included, as are protest files, the latter arranged by the name of the band. These records exist in microform only, the original paper records having been destroyed after the filming. The files can be found on microfilm reels M-2521 to M-2777.

The following notes are not exhaustive; rather, they provide samples of the typical information that can be found in the case files. Case files vary according to the particular circumstances of the individual. Moreover, their content is determined by the regulations and policies in force at the time the files were written. Some examples of case files (with file classification numbers in parentheses) are as follows:

- estates (37-2)
- Veterans Land Act (39-6)
- revolving fund loans (19-7)
- enfranchisements (37-3)
- loans (37-1)
- protests (no designation)

*Estates:* Under the *Indian Act*, the Department of Indian Affairs has jurisdiction over the administration of the estates of deceased Indians who resided on reserves or Crown land. To facilitate land transfers, the Department may also assume jurisdiction over the administration of the estates of Indians who resided off-reserve but whose estates include reserve land interests.

The contents of estate files vary, but many include a notice to creditors, an application for administration or probate, an application for appointment of an administrator and approval of the will, a succession duties statement and investigators' progress reports. These forms record vital information on the deceased, summaries of land and personal assets, summaries of debts and vital information on heirs and next of kin.

Numerous other types of forms and documents that might be of value to the genealogical researcher can be found in estate files.

*Veterans Land Act:* The Veterans Land Act, 1942, provided that grants could be made to eligible Indian veterans to settle on Indian reserve lands. The typical file contains the grant application form, which identifies and describes the applicant (name, band, ticket number, regimental number and rank, address, enlistment and discharge dates, pension status, age, marital status, the number, age and sex of children, health and any previous benefits under the Act) and indicates the requested amount of the grant and its purpose. The form is usually accompanied by copies of the person's service record (which includes date and place of birth, date of enlistment and discharge, overseas service, medals, rank, reason for discharge and physical description) and discharge certificate.

Other documents commonly found in the files include forms on the amount granted, the delivery of goods purchased and correspondence about the benefit.

*Revolving fund loans:* Files on revolving fund loans usually contain the loan application, a form describing the applicant (name, band, ticket number, reserve, agency, age, marital status, dependents, annual income, previous loans and general reputation), the approval form (including amount and repayment schedule) and a lien note signed by the recipient.

Other documents that may be included are a chattel mortgage form, a form giving authority to deduct repayment amounts from earnings at source, statements of monies owed, notices of arrears and reports on non-payment, documents attesting to payment in full and covering memos.

*Enfranchisements:* Enfranchisement meant that an individual ceased to be a status Indian within the meaning of the *Indian Act*. These files take two forms, depending on the sub-section of the Act being applied.

Most enfranchisement files relate to Indian women who married non-Indians. Typical documents in the files include a statement of marriage to a non-Indian (including the woman's name, ticket number, band, agency, date and place of marriage, husband's name, address, particulars of minor children and details of band funds payable), a form on the particulars of enfranchisement, a form detailing the lump sum payable on enfranchisement (based on the woman's share of band funds or federal annuities) and a form instructing the superintendent to remove the woman from the band membership list. Some files contain a statement about minor children, which gives the children's names, dates of birth and address and describes whether the parents want children over 16 to be enfranchised. The files may also contain correspondence and memos about the case.

Less common are the files of individuals who applied for enfranchisement. These files contain an application for enfranchisement, which has personal data on the applicant, his or her physical description, employment data, any debts and details about his dependents. The application includes a statement about whether the band approves of the application and the decision of the officer in charge of the agency.

*Loans:* Loan files are distinct from revolving fund loan files in the origin of the loan. These files document loans from band funds, not from the federal consolidated revenue fund. Documents might include memos, a band council resolution and a copy of the council minutes from the meeting during which the loan was discussed.

*Protests:* The sections of the *Indian Act* that relate to the definition of an Indian and registration also include a mechanism for protesting deletions and additions to the membership lists. The two standard documents in these files are an Indian membership protest form filed by the band and a membership questionnaire. The former identifies the person (name, band, ticket number) and gives a reason for protesting the omission, inclusion, addition or deletion of that person from the lists. The latter gives more detailed information on the person, including name, date and place of birth, marital status, Indian status, name and status of spouse, names and dates of birth of children, details of parents and details of maternal and paternal grandparents. Covering memos are usually included, and sometimes there is correspondence relating to the paternity of children.

Some files also contain a form detailing the case history of the individual and recommending a decision. A statement of the registrar's final decision may also be included.

FA 10-73 contains a file list for the Headquarters Case Files and is arranged first by regions and then by bands. However, an online version of this finding aid can be searched by subject, by band, and in most cases, by name, using the Government of Canada database as explained in Part II of this guide.

Please note that references to a few case files, such as unproven criminal accusations, have been severed from the online version of the finding aid. Both the case files and the paper copy of FA 10-73 currently have access restrictions. It is necessary to know the name of the band an ancestor might have belonged to, or the precise region where this ancestor resided, should there be a need to send an inquiry to Library and Archives Canada.

## INUIT

The Inuit are aboriginal people of Arctic Canada. The federal government did not exercise its constitutional responsibilities for the Inuit until the courts ruled in 1939 that "Eskimos" fell within the definition of Indians as written in the Constitution. Records in the Northern Affairs Program sous-fonds (RG 85) may be useful for genealogy research. A search in the Government of Canada Files database can be done using the keywords "Eskimo\$" or "Inuit\$" or the name of a person or a place.

## MÉTIS

The Métis are people of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-aboriginal people. In the 1870s, the federal government acknowledged *de facto* responsibility for the Métis by passing legislation affecting them and by creating a system for ending their "Indian title" by means of compensation with Métis scrip. Records and genealogical information relating to Métis people can be found in the Department of the Interior fonds (RG 15) and to some extent in the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program sous-fonds (in RG 10). Some records in the Department of Justice fonds (RG 13) provide accounts of the 1870s and 1880s in Manitoba and the unrest that prevailed between the Métis population and the Canadian government.

### RG 15 Records

Genealogical information about Métis people in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories (which then included parts of modern Saskatchewan and Alberta) can be found in the collection of applications for scrip (RG 15), which date from 1870 to 1901. You can search for specific names in that series in the Government of Canada Files database at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020105_e.html).

For more information about researching Métis ancestry, consult the section on Métis records in the thematic guide *Aboriginal Peoples—Guide to the Records of the Government of Canada* at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200112\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/0201200112_e.html).

An information sheet that lists microfilm reel numbers for the indexes of names and the actual applications is also available. Microfilm may be borrowed by any library or institution, within or outside Canada, that is equipped with a microfilm reader. Requests for loan must be submitted by the borrowing institution and should clearly identify the source and reel numbers required. Métis scrip records have been digitized and can be consulted at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/02010507\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/02010507_e.html).

### PARTICIPATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES

Many aboriginal people have participated in Canadian military forces through the years. For example, they were among the more than 600,000 Canadians who enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War (1914–1918). Although it is not current practice to mention the aboriginal origin of a soldier in his military personnel file, some do mention it. The Soldiers of the First World War (1914–1918) database ([www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020106\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020106_e.html)) at Library and Archives Canada contains military personnel files. It can be searched by the names of individuals. In addition, several hundred thousand images of the attestation (enlistment) papers from those files have been scanned and are available online. Scanning will continue until all are available online.

### Employees of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Federal Public Service since 1918

Library and Archives Canada holds records and personnel files of former employees of the Canadian Armed Forces and of the federal public service since the end of the First World War. These files are restricted in accordance with the Privacy Act, and access to personal information about a living individual requires that person's written consent.

If the individual has been dead for less than 20 years, limited information may be released; however, proof of death and relationship must be provided. A death certificate, newspaper obituary or funeral director's notice is accepted as proof of death. For proof of relationship, you must provide a document that clearly indicates the relationship between yourself and the person in the records. Both names must appear on the document. A newspaper obituary, baptismal certificate or full-form birth certificate is acceptable, but a wallet-sized birth certificate is not. Photocopies are acceptable.

There are no restrictions on access to information relating to an individual who has been dead for more than 20 years; however, proof of death is required if the individual did not die while serving with the Canadian Forces.

For further information, see the section of the Library and Archives Canada Web site related to military and civilian personnel records at [www.genealogy.gc.ca/10/1009\\_e.html](http://www.genealogy.gc.ca/10/1009_e.html) and [www.genealogy.gc.ca/10/101301\\_e.html](http://www.genealogy.gc.ca/10/101301_e.html).

## PART II: USING THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA WEB SITE

### ONLINE RECORDS AND DATABASES

On-site research at Library and Archives Canada can use all non-restricted search tools, such as on-site databases and written or typed finding aids and guides. In addition, limited searches can also be performed using the online databases and guides on the Library and Archives Canada Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca).

To determine which records to consult, researchers might find it useful to follow a line of self-questioning as in the following short example:

**Q:** Was my ancestor a status (registered) Indian?

**A:** If this person was alive in 1951, the Indian registers are the first place to look for information. If the person died before 1951, there are many other records to consult, including annuity pay lists (if the person lived in a treaty area), membership lists, Indian census lists and so on. See the various types of records described in Part I of this guide under "RG 10 records of particular interest".

**Q:** Where would I find a record of my Indian ancestor's will or other estate information?

**A:** The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds (RG 10) contains estate files and wills.

**Q:** Was my Indian ancestor a veteran of the First World War?

**A:** The Soldiers of the First World War 1914-1918 database ([www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/020106\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/020106_e.html)) can be searched by name. If information is located, RG 10 records can then also be searched to see if the Department of Indian Affairs created any other relevant records about this military service.

### Record Groups 10 and 15

Record group (RG) 10 comprises the records of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and includes records relating to status Indians. RG 15 comprises the records of the Department of the Interior and includes the collection of applications for Métis scrip. Researchers exploring in these two record groups must keep in mind that the records were almost all created by non-aboriginal people, primarily federal government clerks and officials, and that the manner of their organization is based on how those people recognized the status of the aboriginal person during his or her lifetime.

The thematic guide on Aboriginal Peoples in *ArchiviaNet* on the Library and Archives Canada Web

site offers some context for the creation of records in RG 10 and RG 15. (A print version of this thematic guide, *Aboriginal Peoples and Archives*, is also available.)

### ***To View the Online Thematic Guide***

1. Go to [www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html).
2. Click on [ArchiviaNet: Search Archival Materials](#).
3. In the menu in the centre of the screen, click on [Thematic Guides](#).
4. Under "Published Guides", click on [Aboriginal Peoples](#).

At this site, a variety of options are available for exploration, including

- An overview of Aboriginal History in Canada
- Record Group (RG) 10 (Indian Affairs) Inventory
- Métis Scrip Records
- Aboriginal Peoples—File and Item Descriptions
- Aboriginal Peoples—Accessions
- Government of Canada Records
- Indian Treaties, Surrenders and Agreements (not yet available)
- Bands and Agencies

The content of RG 10 is outlined in the [General Inventory](#) database in *ArchiviaNet*.

### ***To View the Outline of RG 10 Contents in the General Inventory Database***

1. Go to [www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html).
2. Click on [ArchiviaNet: Search Archival Materials](#).
3. In the menu in the centre of the screen, click on [General Inventory](#).  
(Note: It is recommended that researchers review the online help pages describing the features available in the [General Inventory](#) database before beginning a search. To view these help pages, click on the [Online Help](#) button on the right-hand side of the [General Inventory](#) box.)
4. Click on [Search the database](#) to obtain the database's search screen.
5. In the field labelled "Title", type "Indian and Inuit Affairs Program sous-fonds".
6. In the section labelled "To limit the search", click on the toggle buttons for "Fonds/collections" and "Government Records".
7. Click the "Submit query" button.
8. One reference will come up on the screen. Click on the button to the right of the number "1". The button looks like this:



The inventory description that then comes up on the screen gives the administrative history of RG 10, describes its scope and contents and provides the reference numbers and additional information. You can click on any of the items listed in the contents section for a description of that item and related finding aids. For example, clicking on Headquarters central registry system brings up a description of that series and a list of its contents. Clicking on the sub-series Black Series brings up a description of that series. Under "Finding Aid", electronic, paper and microform finding aids are described. The electronic finding aid is FA 10-13. You can use this type of information to initiate a search in the Government of Canada Files database.

#### ***To Initiate a Search in the Government of Canada Files Database***

1. Go to [www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html).
2. Click on ArchiviaNet: Search Archival Materials.
3. In the menu in the centre of the screen, click on Government of Canada Files.  
(Note: It is recommended that researchers review the online help pages describing the features available in the Government of Canada Files database before beginning a search. To view these help pages, click on the Online Help button on the right-hand side of the Government of Canada Files box.)
4. Click on Search the complete database to obtain the database's keyword search screen.
5. Click on Detailed Search to obtain the detailed search screen.
6. In the field labelled "Finding Aid Number", type whichever FA number you have identified through the General Inventory database search (e.g., for the Black Series of headquarters registers, you would type "10-13").
7. In the field labelled "Record Group Number", type the number "10".
8. Click the "Submit query" button.

The list of files that then comes up on the screen offers the volume number, microfilm reel number, file number, file title, keywords and dates for each record. You can use this information to identify the specific record you would like to review. See "Reviewing Records", later in this section.

#### ***Keyword Searches***

Keywords have been developed for many of the archival records that are in electronic format. Not all records in RG 10 have been assigned keywords, but for those that have, a keyword search can be useful. In particular, the keyword searches can help identify the Black Series and Red Series files created between 1872 and 1923 and transferred to Library and Archives Canada.

Keyword searches can be initiated in the Government of Canada Files database. Unfortunately, this database does not show when a record created in one classification system (such as the Black Series or Red Series files) was transferred to another classification system, transferred to another physical location or destroyed.

A great number of keywords can be used to identify RG 10 records of interest in *ArchiviaNet*. Useful



keywords include the names of individuals, bands, agencies, districts and treaties, as well as such generic search terms as “annuity pay list\$”, “interest distribution pay list\$”, “census”, “membership list\$”, “school file\$”, “enfranchisement”, “Metis”, “Inuit\$”, “Eskimo\$”, “soldier\$”, “war”, “military”, “grant\$”, “settlement\$”, “pension\$”, “allowance\$”, “land\$”, “veteran\$”, “VLA”, “enlistment\$” and so on. The symbol “\$” is a wildcard to replace zero, one or more letters (e.g., “grant\$” would identify “grant”, “grants”, “granted”, etc.). Combinations of keywords can be used to obtain more precise search results.

#### ***To Initiate a Keyword Search in the Government of Canada Files Database***

1. Go to [www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html).
2. Click on [ArchiviaNet: Search Archival Materials](#).
3. In the menu in the centre of the screen, click on [Government of Canada Files](#).  
(Note: It is recommended that researchers review the online help pages describing the features available in the [Government of Canada Files](#) database before beginning a search. To view these help pages, click on the [Online Help](#) button on the right-hand side of the [Government of Canada Files](#) box.)
4. Click on [Search the complete database](#) to obtain the database’s keyword search screen.
5. In the field labelled “Keywords”, type in your keyword or a combination of keywords. It does not matter whether you use uppercase or lowercase letters. You do not need to put commas between the keywords—just type a single space between them.
6. In the field labelled “Record Group Number”, type the number “10”.
7. Click the “Submit query” button.

**Example:** Follow the above steps, using the name “Bigstone” (for the Bigstone Cree Nation Band) as a keyword. Try the search again, this time using “Wabasca” (the band’s former name). Note the varying results because of the name change.

#### **REVIEWING RECORDS**

Once you have identified a record that you would like to review for your research, the next step is to determine whether you may have access to it.

#### **Restricted Records**

For many of the documents at the National Archives, access is restricted for a variety of reasons. These restrictions can be reviewed and may be lifted in accordance with the provisions of the Access to Information and Privacy acts.

To find out the access level of a document you wish to review, you can click on the access code in

your search result to obtain a definition of the code. For example, following the steps in the previous section to identify the "Wabasca" documents brings you a list of 51 items. Each item includes an access code. Item 18, for instance, titled "Lesser Slave Lake Agency—Correspondence regarding membership in the Bigstone or Wabasca band", shows access code 31. When you click on the access code, you are taken to a page describing what that code means. The definition for code 31 is as follows: "These records were originally restricted by the federal government's former access policy as defined in the Cabinet Access Directive (1977) and must be reviewed in accordance with the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act before being made available for research."

When access to information in government records at Library and Archives Canada is restricted by the Privacy Act, a review of the files can be performed by Library and Archives Canada's Access to Information and Privacy Division staff upon request. Your request should include the following information:

- the name of the person and period of interest
- the subject of interest
- each reference found, including record group, volume number, file number, file name or description, dates and access code when known (e.g., RG 10, vol 7114, file 777/3-3-17, part 1, Lesser Slave Lake Agency—Correspondence regarding membership in the Bigstone or Wabasca band, 1943–1947, access code 31)
- the reel number when given

For information on how the Access to Information and Privacy acts apply to Government of Canada records, view "Services" on our Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020210\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020210_e.html).

## **Non-restricted Records**

### ***Microfilm***

If the material you wish to consult is not restricted and is on microfilm, a copy of the microfilm reel can be borrowed on inter-library loan. Information about the loan of microfilm is available on our Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020207\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020207_e.html). Non-restricted microfilm on loan can be copied in part or entirely at the borrowing institution.

### ***Other Records***

Information about obtaining copies of non-microfilm records is available on our Web site at [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020206\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020206_e.html). The researcher must identify the record that she or he would like duplicated.

## **OTHER SERVICES**

A wide variety of other information is available on the Library and Archives Canada Web site under "Services" at [www.collectionscanada.ca/services/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/services/index-e.html). Topics include planning a visit to Library and Archives Canada sites, consulting records, hiring a freelance researcher, sending an inquiry by mail or electronically, finding military and civilian personnel records and using archives.

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## USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES

For other sites that might be of value in your genealogical research, please look under "Indian" on the Library and Archives Canada "Canadian Information by Subject" page at [www.collectionscanada.ca/caninfo/ecaninfo.htm](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/caninfo/ecaninfo.htm)

Aboriginal Canada Portal: [www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca)

Aboriginal Healing Foundation: <http://www.ahf.ca/>

Archives nationales du Québec online research tool PISTARD: [www.anq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.anq.gouv.qc.ca)  
(This site is in French only.)

Hudson's Bay Company Archives: [www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html)

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: [www.aic-inac.gc.ca](http://www.aic-inac.gc.ca)

Library and Archives Canada: [www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca)

Native Residential Schools In Canada: A Selective Bibliography:  
<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/2/35/index-e.html>

## Other sites of interest

### Glossaries

Legislation Manual, Glossary of Terms: [www.aic-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/glos\\_e.pdf](http://www.aic-inac.gc.ca/qc/csi/glos_e.pdf)

Aboriginal Affairs Glossary: [www.iaa.gov.sk.ca/aboriginal/html/common/glossary.htm](http://www.iaa.gov.sk.ca/aboriginal/html/common/glossary.htm)

### Maps

Bands-by-Provinces Map Index: [www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/canbandsbyprov.html](http://www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/canbandsbyprov.html)

Canadian First Nations Treaty Map Index: [www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/cantreat.html](http://www.kstrom.net/isk/maps/cantreat.html)

### Indian Act

Aboriginal Women in Canada and the Law: [www.usask.ca/nativelaw/awomen.html](http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/awomen.html)

Indian Act, [R.S. 1985, c. I-5]: [www.canlii.org/ca/sta/i-5/](http://www.canlii.org/ca/sta/i-5/)

Bill C-31: [www.ubcic.bc.ca/c\\_31.htm](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/c_31.htm)

### Indian status/band membership

Indian Status and Band Membership Issues (BP-410E):

[www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp410-e.htm)

## Adoption

Adoptees and the department of Indian and Northern Development:

[www.allmyrelations.ca/south/indian/indian.html](http://www.allmyrelations.ca/south/indian/indian.html)

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