

## START WITH THE BASICS

Approach tracing your Native American ancestors the same way you would approach any other relative. Use the same information, documents, and techniques you use in all genealogical research:

- Vital Records
- Federal and State Census
- Personal Records
- Probate/Court Records
- Church Records
- Interview family members

**Note:** It helps to begin by pinpointing your ancestor's location in the federal or state census. *Indian Territory* was enumerated in 1860 Census, but not again until 1900. Some reservations are identified starting in 1870 as the township or institution at the top of the page. Prior to 1870, "Indian" was not an official option for the race or color column. Native Americans who assimilated and passed as white may have been enumerated that way on the census.

## FACT OR FICTION?

Be cautious when searching for an ancestor who, according to a family story, was Native American, especially when the evidence is anecdotal. You can't always take it as self-evident that great-great grandma "was an Indian because she had darker skin and high cheekbones."

Just as with basic genealogical research, use solid research methodology and find hard evidence to support your family story.



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400 EAST MECHANIC ST.

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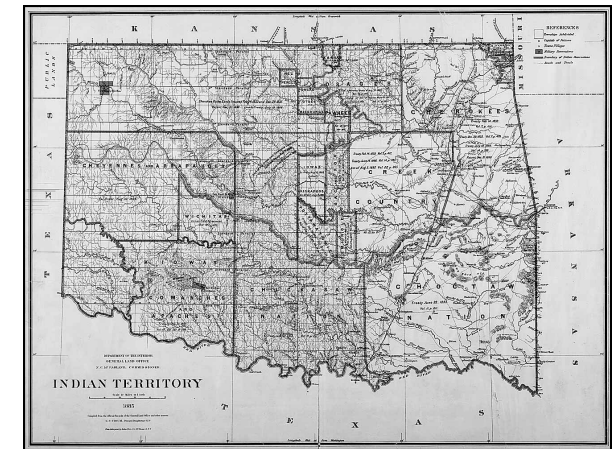
#### Research Inquiries:

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 CCPL Genealogy's Guide To:

## NATIVE AMERICAN ANCESTRY



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Cass County Public Library System

## BASIC RECORDS

There are a few records that are good for beginners to Native American genealogy:

- Federal Censuses
- Federal Census Indian Schedules
- Indian Census Rolls
- Allotment and Treaty Rolls
- Indian School Records

## DAWES ROLLS

*The Final Rolls of Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes*, known as the "Dawes Rolls," allowed members of these five tribes (*Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, and Creek*) to apply for an allotment of land in Indian Territory. Over 250,000 individuals applied between 1898 and 1907. Many who applied were rejected, either because they did not meet the residency requirements or could not prove tribal citizenship. In the instance of Cherokee Freedmen, the sworn interviews may provide the names of parents and former master(s) for the emancipated slave. Indexes for the Rolls are available online and several databases have digitized application packets. Other rolls include the *Guion-Miller Roll*, the *Chapman Roll*, and the *Wallace Freedmen Roll*.

### Application Packets

These packets include sworn interviews, supplementary forms and documents from corroborating witnesses. Information provided here includes: *name, age (circa 1902), sex, tribe affiliation, blood quantum, family members, reservation census card number and page and enrollment number.*

## INDIAN CENSUS ROLLS, 1851-1940

These reservation censuses were enumerated by agent of Bureau of Indian Affairs, usually the reservation superintendent. Only those who maintained a formal affiliation with a federally-recognized tribe, typically by living on the reservation, were enumerated. Intermarried non-Indians often were not included, though the children were. Families of mixed tribal affiliation were enumerated together, but you can check the "at another jurisdiction" column to determine any other censuses where those individuals appear.

INDIAN NAME	ENGLISH NAME	RELATIONSHIP	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX
Fah hu soah	Tom Big Chief	Head	1860	M
Ma to op pe		Wife	1873	F
Heh kah mon kah	Louise Big Chief	Daughter	1899	F
Gra to me	Ruby Big Chief	Daughter	1903	F
A non to op pe	Lillie Big Chief	Daughter	1911	F
	Richard Busk	Head	1882	M
Wah shah lah me	Elsie Big Eagle	Wife	1890	F

## INDIAN SCHEDULES, 1900-1910

These schedules, like other Special Schedules of the Federal Census, were additional questions specific to a particular population. The top half of the sheet asked the same questions asked by the Federal Census that year, only shortened. The bottom half asked "Special Inquiries Relating to Indians."

Information provided here includes: *tribe, mother and father's tribe(s), blood quantum, marital status, education, whether taxed, and the type of house in which they live.*

If "Ration Indian" was listed as the occupation, that meant the individual was unemployed and financially dependent on the government.

## USING THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The majority of the National Archives' Native American records are held at the Ft. Worth location including Indian school records, records of non-Indians in Indian Territory, and any records pertaining to specific tribes.

[www.archives.gov/research/native-americans](http://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans)

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) records that are held by the Archives can be viewed in-person or you can submit an inquiry or copy request.

[www.doi.gov/tribes/research.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/tribes/research.cfm)

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Ancestry Library Edition (library use only)

Use the Card Catalog feature with "Indian or "Native American" as the keywords to view all relevant collections. Examples include:

*Indian Census Rolls, 1851-1940*

*Special Census of Indians, 1880*

*Dawes Rolls Applications & Rejections*

*U.S., Indian Wills, 1910-1921*

*Indian Land Allotment Sales, 1908-1927*

FamilySearch (free)

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

Collections here include:

*Native American Birth and Death Records*

*Eastern Cherokee Indian Reservation Rolls*

*Eastern Cherokee Enrollment Records*

*Native American, Census Rolls, 1885-1940*

Access Genealogy (free)

[www.accessgenealogy.com/native-american](http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native-american)

Indian Census Rolls, research guides, and more Resource List by Tribe: <https://bit.ly/2Mh05jw>

Carlisle Indian School Digital Records

<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu>