



GEN-FIND RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.

Notes on New Brunswick Records and Searching Them

For general enquiries, it is a difficult task to institute an in-depth search without knowing a place-name for your ancestor when researching the Brunswick. Most records are locations. In some minor few limited province-wide give us a distribution of the these constitute pre-1900 pioneer ancestor might be priority, to locate the family, covered by the minimum

If you do know a place-name, and additional research information you've supplied. retainer covers evaluation of preliminary research plan, research strategies and evaluation of those research results in the Report.



Figure 1 - Map of Canada

Canadian province of New arranged by town, or county circumstances we have a indexes that at the least will family name and most of information; at best, a located. This is always first and these index searches are retainer.

you'll receive some research suggestions based on In this case, the minimum your information, a implementation of some basic

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

“The original First Nations inhabitants of New Brunswick were members of three distinct tribes. The largest tribe was the Mi'kmaq, and they occupied the eastern and coastal areas of the province.

French Colonial Era

Although it is possible that Vikings may have reached as far south as New Brunswick, the first known European exploration of New Brunswick was that of French explorer Jacques Cartier in 1534, who discovered and named the Bay of Chaleur. The next French contact was in 1604, when a party led by Pierre du Gua de Monts and Samuel de

Champlain set up camp for the winter on St. Croix Island, between New Brunswick and Maine. The colony relocated the following year across the Bay of Fundy to Port Royal, Nova Scotia. Over the next 150 years, a number of other French settlements and seigneuries were founded in the area occupied by present-day New Brunswick, including along the St. John River, the upper Bay of Fundy region, in the Tantramar Marshes at Beaubassin, and finally at St. Pierre (site of present day Bathurst). The whole maritime region (as well as parts of Maine) was at that time claimed by France and was designated as the colony of Acadia.

One of the provisions of the *Treaty of Utrecht* of 1713 was the surrender of peninsular Nova Scotia to the British. The bulk of the French-speaking Acadian population thus found themselves residing in the new British colony of



Figure 2 - New Brunswick within
Canada

Nova Scotia. The remainder of Acadia (including the New Brunswick region) was only lightly populated and poorly defended. In 1750, in order to protect their territorial interests in what remained of Acadia, France built two forts (Fort Beauséjour and Fort Gaspareaux) along the frontier with Nova Scotia at either end of the Isthmus of Chignecto. A major French fortification (Fortress of Louisbourg) was also built on Île Royale (now Cape Breton Island), but the function of this fort was mostly to defend the approaches to the colony of Canada, not Acadia.

During the *Seven Years' War* (1756–63), the British completed their conquest of Acadia and extended their control to include all of New Brunswick. Both Fort Beauséjour (near Sackville), and Fort Gaspareaux were captured by a British force commanded by Lt. Col. Robert Monckton in 1755. Inside Fort Beauséjour, the British forces found not only French regular troops, but also Acadian irregulars. Governor Charles Lawrence of Nova Scotia used the discovery of Acadian civilians helping in the defence of the fort as a pretext to order the expulsion of the Acadian population from Nova Scotia. The Acadians of the recently captured Beaubassin and Petitcodiac regions were included in the expulsion order. Some of the Acadians in the Petitcodiac and Memramcook region escaped, and under the leadership of Joseph Broussard continued to conduct guerrilla action against the British forces for a couple of years. Other actions in the war included British expeditions up the St. John River in the St. John River Campaign. Fort Anne (Fredericton) fell during the 1759 campaign, and following this, all of present-day New Brunswick came under British control.

British Colonial Era

After the Seven Years' War, most of present day New Brunswick (and parts of Maine) were absorbed into the colony of Nova Scotia and designated as Sunbury County. New Brunswick's relatively isolated location on the Bay of Fundy, away from the Atlantic coastline proper tended to discourage settlement during the postwar period. There were exceptions however, such as the coming of New England Planters to the Sackville region and the arrival of Pennsylvania Dutch settlers in Moncton in 1766. In both these cases, many of the new settlers took up land that had originally belonged to displaced Acadians before the deportation.

The *American Revolutionary War* had little direct effect on the New Brunswick region, aside from an attack on Fort Cumberland (the renamed Fort Beauséjour) by rebel sympathizers led by Jonathan Eddy. Significant population growth in the area finally came when 14,000 refugee Loyalists from the United States arrived on the Saint John River in 1783. Influential Loyalists such as Harvard-educated Edward Winslow saw themselves as the natural leaders of their community and that they should be recognized for their rank and that their loyalty deserved special compensation. However, they were not appreciated by the pre-loyalist population in Nova Scotia. As Colonel Thomas Dundas wrote from Saint John, "*They [the loyalists] have experienced every possible injury from the old inhabitants of Nova Scotia.*" Therefore 55 prominent merchants and professionals petitioned for 5,000-acre (20 km²) grants each. Winslow pressed for the creation of a "Loyalist colony" — an asylum that could become "the envy of the American states". Nova Scotia was therefore partitioned, and the colony of New Brunswick was created on

August 16, 1784; Sir Thomas Carleton was appointed as Lieutenant-Governor in 1784, and in 1785 a new assembly was established with the first elections.

Even though the bulk of the Loyalist population was located in Parrtown (Saint John), the decision was made by the colonial authorities to place the new colonial capital at St. Anne's Point (Fredericton), about 150 km up the Saint John River as it was felt that by placing the capital inland, it would be less vulnerable to American attack. The University of New Brunswick was founded at Fredericton at the same time (1785), making it the oldest English-language university in Canada and the first public university in North America.

Initially, Loyalist population growth in the new colony extended along the Fundy coastline from Saint Andrews to Saint Martins and up the Kennebecasis and lower Saint John River valleys.

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, some of the deported Acadians from Nova Scotia found their way back to "Acadie," where they settled mostly along the eastern and northern shores of the new colony of New Brunswick. Here, they lived in relative (and in many ways, self-imposed) isolation.

Additional immigration to New Brunswick in the early part of the 19th century was from Scotland; western England; and Waterford, Ireland, often after first having come through (or having lived in) Newfoundland. A large influx of settlers arrived in New Brunswick after 1845 from Ireland as a result of the Potato Famine; many of these people settled in Saint John or Chatham. Both Saint John and the Miramichi region remain largely Irish today.

The northwestern border between Maine and New Brunswick had not been clearly defined by the *Treaty of Paris* (1783) that had ended the *American Revolution*. By the late 1830s, population growth and competing lumber interests in the upper Saint John River valley created the need for a definite boundary in the area. During the winter of 1838–39, the situation quickly deteriorated, with both Maine and New Brunswick calling out their respective militias. The "*Aroostook War*" was bloodless (but politically very tense), and the boundary was subsequently settled by the *Webster-Ashburton Treaty* of 1842.

Throughout the mid 19th century, shipbuilding, on the Bay of Fundy shore and also on the Petitcodiac River and rivers on the east coast became a dominant industry in New Brunswick. The Marco Polo, the fastest clipper ship ever built, was launched from Saint John in 1851. Resource-based industries such as logging and farming were also important components of the New Brunswick economy during this time.

Confederation

New Brunswick, one of the four original provinces of Canada, entered the Canadian Confederation on July 1, 1867. The Charlottetown Conference of 1864, which ultimately led to the confederation movement, originally had been intended to discuss only a Maritime Union, but concerns over the American Civil War as well as Fenian activity along the border led to an interest in expanding the scope of the proposed union. This interest in an expanded union arose from the Province of Canada (formerly Upper and Lower Canada, later Ontario and Quebec), and a request was made by the Canadian political leaders to the organizers of the Maritime conference to have the meeting agenda altered.

Although the Maritime leaders were swayed by the arguments of the Canadians, many ordinary residents of the Maritimes wanted no part of this larger confederation for fear that their interests and concerns would be ignored in a wider national union. Many politicians who supported confederation, such as Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley (New Brunswick's best-known Father of Confederation), found themselves without a seat after the next election; nevertheless, backers of the wider confederation eventually prevailed.

Following confederation, the fears of the anti-confederates were proven correct as new national policies and trade barriers were soon adopted by the central government, thus disrupting the historic trading relationship between the Maritime Provinces and New England. The situation in New Brunswick was exacerbated by both the Great Fire of 1877 in Saint John and the decline of the wooden shipbuilding industry; skilled workers were thus forced to move to other parts of Canada or to the United States to seek employment.”¹

MAJOR RESOURCE COLLECTIONS:

Vital Statistics, the civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths have been collected in the province officially since 1888, but these records are not necessarily complete for these early years as people often failed to comply with the *Vital Statistics Act*. Early record collection and maintenance practices were not uniform until the 1920s, consequently, there are numerous omissions and errors for the late 19th and 20th centuries. An online index of these records the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick is available for the period from 1800 to 1960 of births/baptisms, marriages & deaths. All of these early entries have been microfilmed and are available at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (Fredericton) or through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Libraries. For birth records 1900-present, and marriage & death records 1920-present, you will need to contact the Service New Brunswick Vital Statistics, PO Box #1998, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5G4. The provinces extracts can be very informative if successful in locating the correct entry. Remember that there are regulations on who can access copies of these documents and these are strictly followed.

There is also an excellent compilation of pre-1888 birth, marriage & burial records, the first being the "*Late Registration of Births Register*" (1810-1887); secondly, the "*County Marriage Registers*" (1792-1888) which are transcriptions of original church records submitted by various church denominations; and lastly, the "*Death Registrations of Soldiers of WWII*" (1941-1947). Lastly, if your family is from Saint John County there is the 20,000 "*Burial Permits Issued by the St. John County Board of Health*" (1889-1919) and the "*Brenan's Funeral Home Records of Burial*" (1901-1971).

Before 1920, **church registers** may be the only source for baptisms, marriages and burials. Like other provinces, finding church registers in New Brunswick is not a straight-forward task: A) religious affiliation must be determined, B) then the name of a local church the family may have attended, C) next whether the church still exists, and D) where its registers are now located. Registers may remain at the original church, they may have been lost, or they may have been sent to another local church or to a church archives. It takes some historical research to reach a likely objective. In some cases the records we want may only be at a distant archive. Some historical church records have been housed at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick while others may be found at Library and Archives Canada though this is not a comprehensive collection for any of the ecclesiastical bodies. Consider investigating the archives of the various ecclesiastical bodies for the area first in your search. Some of the church registers date as early as 1759 but there are many gaps and most do not start until the mid-1800s. Be aware as well that other major church records, specific to New Brunswick, may only be found outside of the provincial boundaries. It should be noted as well, that the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick also has a collection of marriage bonds for various townships and counties for the years 1810-1932.

The first totally complete (or as complete as possible) **census** for the province was 1851/52 which was a fully nominal census and these federal returns were compiled decennially until 1911 which is the latest release. All of these enumerations for the province are now microfilmed and fully indexed. There are also some early census returns taken by local communities prior to this date as well as one during the last half of the 19th century (Fredericton Census of 1871) to supplement these records. Some of parish records are missing in the decennial

¹'New Brunswick' in *Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Brunswick extracted 19th April 2011.

collections. Also, remember that the returns are by county, so be sure you know where your ancestor lived. Not all counties of today existed at the time of the census.

The early New Brunswick censuses which list names are basically of Acadian-French. For the most part, they provide relationships, ages, and names. These were taken in 1671, 1686, 1693, 1695, 1698, and 1701. The censuses of 1703 and 1707 provide only the names of heads of household for the entire Acadian-French community. Further locale-specific heads of household returns were done in 1714, 1731, 1737, 1739, 1770, 1781, 1783, 1803, 1820, 1821, 1843, 1848. There were also censuses taken in 1824, 1834, and 1840, however, unfortunately, these were only "aggregate censuses" and thus no names were recorded. For the period 1861-1901 there also exists a compiled indexed listing of Jews in the Maritime Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

No further federal census returns exist currently past 1911 other than a 1940 War Registration Census which provides excellent detail information on those enumerated however it is not open for public inspection. Should you know place of residence where the subject was at the time of the enumeration in 1940, Statistics Canada (Ottawa) will search the return for you for fee and provide you with an abstract of that entry. Some of the major communities also have listings of civic censuses' taken for their areas and these should be investigated in local archives or at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. In addition, you will find various census substitutes such as voters' lists, tax records, hospital records, assessment rolls, statute labour rolls, fire insurance plans, minutes of council records, and school records that may prove helpful in the absence of other information.

Never forget as well the importance of **will and probate records**. For the most part one will need to know the applicable Surrogate Court District where the documents would have been filed, however assistance on this can be obtained through the Office of the Registrar of Probate in Fredericton. The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick has much material on-hand and those more current must be consulted through the Probate Registrar at the applicable county seat capital. Many counties have both probate files and probate books for one to consult, with varying dates. As well, a compiled index by name of the deceased for many of the counties exists. Early probate records (1785-1835) for the entire province have been published with a comprehensive name index. Although there are a few probate records dated from as early as 1785 in about half of the counties, most begin around 1830-1860. The General Files and Books have all been microfilmed to 1885 for the most part and some to as current as 1979 in the case of some counties. The last archival dates vary from county to county and indexes exist for most probate files.

When searching for a will, keep in mind that the odds are your ancestor did not make a will, for a variety of reasons - he or she had no property, he or she died unexpectedly, or it was already known within the family who was to get what! If you do find a will, however, it may give you information on death date & place, family relationship's & their locations, possible places of birth &/or origin, guardianship papers, and the social standing of the family in question at the time of the death.

Further, an important collection of compiled databases, is a series of records involving the Irish who were main settlers of New Brunswick.

Firstly, the **Saint John Almshouse Records** which are admission records to the Saint John workhouse, the Emigrant Infirmary and the St. John Emigrant Orphan Asylum, involving admission registers (1843-1897).

Secondly, the **Fitzwilliam Estate (Co. Wicklow, Ireland) Emigration Books**, covering the period 1847 to 1856, which resulted from reaction to the Potato Famine in which many landlords in Ireland evicted impoverished tenants, enabling them to be rid of the encumbrance these people could become on their already struggling estates. Some landlords, hoping for a more humane way to ease the burden looked to assisted emigration, sending surplus tenants overseas with incentives. The estate was over 85,000 acres, covering one-fifth of the entire county of Wicklow and had more than 20,000 tenants. Some 383 of these

tenants were sent to St. Andrews, New Brunswick on the *Star*, their voyage funded by their landlord. They had been promised three months' work on railroad construction in New Brunswick, after which they might be kept on. In comparison to the vast majority of famine emigrants, they appear to have been in an enviable position. However, they were received by an ill equipped emigrant welfare system and a railway company unprepared for their numbers. The experience of these emigrants highlights the inadequacies and conditions they met with upon starting a new life in New Brunswick, including periods of continued destitution and reliance on the province for support. Yet, despite these issues a large number of *Star* immigrants remained in and contributed to St. Andrews and the surrounding area with lasting results. This database contains the records of those families who left the Fitzwilliam Estate on the *Star* during these clearances.

Third, of great use to Irish research is a database of **Irish Immigrants in the New Brunswick Census of 1851 and 1861**, which is an important tool for establishing many Irish origins. In the years following 1845 New Brunswick experienced an influx of Irish immigrants due to the failed potato crop in Ireland. The wave abated by 1851 but is commonly remembered as the sole contribution of Irish to New Brunswick. Yet thousands of Irish were living in New Brunswick prior to these events.

Irish immigrants in New Brunswick taught in one-third of New Brunswick schools by the mid nineteenth century, the majority quickly becoming licensed teachers shortly after their arrival and remaining in the profession. From 1784-1837 the Governor-in-Council (Lieutenant Governor in Council after 1786) oversaw matters of education, including making provision to pay teachers. In 1837 county school boards were established and made responsible for recommending applicants for parish school licenses to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Government approved or denied applicants salaries based on a petition provided by local officials. **Teachers' petitions from Irish immigrants** requesting a license or payment for teaching services contain biographical information including names, country of birth, education, teaching experience, church affiliation, samples of handwriting and certificates from local school trustees or clergymen verifying the character and abilities of the petitioner. The records gathered here comprise 509 of these petitions and copies of licenses or certifications from 1816-1858 declaring the petitioner's country of birth to be Ireland. These Irish records represent a small portion of the 6645 teachers' petitions which exist in RS655 Teachers' Petitions and Licenses, 1812-1882. Researchers should be aware that documentation on other Irish teachers no doubt exist in RS655 but only those records which state that the individual originated from Ireland are included in this database.

Fifth, is a database of **New Brunswick Customs House Records** which comprised port returns and passenger lists. In 1832, a provincial statute (2 William IV Chapter 36) was enacted by the General Assembly of New Brunswick entitled "*An Act to Regulate Vessels Arriving from the United Kingdom with Passengers and Emigrants*". It imposed a duty of five shillings for each passenger landed which was to be paid by the ship's master. The Treasurer or any Deputy Treasurer was to receive such monies and the funds collected were to be directed towards the relief from the burdens of caring for diseased and destitute immigrants. In this manner passenger lists, which were simply manifests of cargo, became part of Custom House records retained in the Province. In 1835, the provincial Secretary was given responsibility for all Custom House returns (5 William IV Chapter 49). Some manifests include details on the passenger, such as age, occupation, sex, county or point of origin, reason for leaving, etc. (These were indexed and digitized.) Some manifests, however, give only the number of passengers on board and the duty due. (These could not be indexed nor digitized.) The Imperial Government in London passed, repealed, and re-enacted a series of acts relating to the carrying of passengers; acts which emphasized the conditions under which passengers were to be conveyed. No mention could be found of a tax or duty as out-lined in the New Brunswick Statutes. The creation and filing of lists of passengers was required under various shipping acts of the United Kingdom but those lists were retained at British and Irish ports. This might help to explain the paucity of passenger lists in provincial records before 1832. Disasters like the Great Fire of Saint John in

1877, the vagaries of time, and the lack of a provincial archive in New Brunswick before 1967, might also explain the lack of documentation of the great wave of immigration which hit North America in the Nineteenth Century. All extant passenger lists located at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick have been indexed and digitized for this project. The database of immigrants contains 10,412 entries. Sadly, this represents only about 135 lists. As can be seen from the attached table for statistical information on emigration from the British Isles, 1815-1865, this is a very small portion of all immigrants to New Brunswick. All passengers are indexed, as are all crew members because immigrants may have worked their passage as seamen.

Lastly, of great importance, there are thousands of small cemeteries in the province many of which have had their **monumental inscriptions** (including headstones) transcribed. The local/regional/provincial genealogical societies have conducted the majority of this work and they should be consulted for more details on possible inscription recordings. A great number of the city cemeteries have not been recorded, however, and in both cases you should consult the local government body for interment register details on the subjects of interest. Remember, that most records of this nature of less than 25 years are generally not released to the public and it is at the discretion of the cemetery board to do so or not.

Besides these records, there are a host of other important sources that are available to the public which should be consulted further. The most important of these are the following, though the list is certainly not exhaustive:

- 1). Land Records (Crown Grants, Petitions, Property Abstracts, Deeds as early as c. 1783)
- 2). County Birth, Marriage & Death Registers
- 3). Cemetery Records/Headstone Transcriptions
- 4). Funeral Home Records
- 5). Local Directories, Atlases, & Histories (c. 1865 and later)
- 6). Municipal Records
- 7). District Papers (Pre-1940's)
- 8). Ships' Passenger Lists from 1865 (Chronological, not Indexed)
- 9). British Navy (from 1806) and Army/Militia Lists (from 1789)
- 10). Mercantile Navy Lists & Maritime Directories (1857-1957)
- 11). Canadian Expeditionary Forces Battalion Lists (1914-1918)
- 12). Newspaper Collections & Manuscript Material (from c. 1878)
- 13). Education and School Records
- 14). Divorce Records (ca. 1867 - present)
- 15). Health and Social Service Records
- 16). Immigration and Naturalization Records
- 17). Loyalist Records
- 18). Border Entry Lists (1908-1918)
- 19). Employment Records
- 20). Association and Union Records
- 21). Business and Trades Licensing Record Collections
- 22). Election Records
- 23). Legal & Court Documents (1849's-1980's)
- 24). Railway Records and Related Collections
- 25). Non-Textual/Photographic Collections
- 26). Family Histories and Biographies

Information concerning New Brunswick preferred known to start a search:

- A). Approximate Date of Immigration into Canada & Arrival into the Region
- B). Name of Subject
- C). Name of Subject's Parents or Children (or both, if known)
- D). Approximate Dates of Birth, Marriage, & Death of either Subject, Parents or Children
- E). Place of Residency and Periods of Occupation
- F). Forms of Employment or Occupation (if known)

SUMMATION:

Pre-1850 information in New Brunswick will sometimes be difficult to obtain but is always worth trying for. There is a wealth of information on New Brunswick that precedes this and can extend you back into the mid-1700's in many cases should your ancestor been in province that early. Further extensions can be made by consulting Nova Scotia records, which the province was a part until 1784. Of course, much of your success in any genealogical research will depend upon how prolific your ancestors were in documenting their existence from locality to locality and New Brunswick is certainly no different.

For a more in-depth discussion of the available Alberta source records, please obtain a copy of the article by Brian W. Hutchison, CG, FSA Scot, titled "How to Begin Your Research in Canada - Part IX – New Brunswick" printed as part of a series for the now-defunct magazine "Family History Newsletter" (Oshawa: Parr's Publishing, 1998). A copy of this publication may be purchased online from GEN-FIND Research Associates, Inc. by consulting our online GEN-Store site. Also, please consult GEN-Store for other wonderful publications for sale that we feel are exceptionally relevant to your search in this area. They will provide more background information on many of the resources and repositories covered herein as well as many others not addressed in these notes.

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