

Canadian Genealogy - New Brunswick Research Resources



If you are researching genealogies from New Brunswick during time periods before 1840 you will need to be aware of the following:

1. Prior to 1845 the area we know as New Brunswick existed as part of Nova Scotia during some time periods and often its boundaries included parts of Maine. So, if possible, locate the village where your ancestor lived and the time period they lived there so you will be able to find the jurisdiction in which you should look for the records.
2. Changes in the shipbuilding and logging industries caused large numbers of people to leave New Brunswick to find work elsewhere. So you might find your ancestors in the United States or in other parts of Canada. Their occupation can often help you find them more easily.
3. People immigrating by ship would have landed in Newfoundland or Nova Scotia first before coming to New Brunswick. Ships lists prior to 1865 are almost non-existent. As a substitute use city directories from the port cities.



The area we know as New Brunswick was occupied by native tribes prior to 1534 which is when the first recorded French exploration occurred. Then sometime after 1604 the whole region of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and parts of Maine were claimed as part of the Royal French Colony of Acadia.

In 1621 the British Crown laid claim to the same region. After a series of wars between the French and British a treaty was created in 1713 which surrendered the peninsula of Nova Scotia to the British Crown. However, the areas of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Cape Breton remained under French control.

Conflicts between the French and British continued until, ultimately, by 1760 France had lost control of all of its Canadian territories. The British then incorporated what is now New Brunswick, including parts of what is now Maine, into Sunbury County, Nova Scotia colony.

In 1783 at the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War, 14,000 British Loyalist refugees from New England immigrated to New Brunswick because they were given free land. This significantly increased the population but also caused some conflict, since the British Loyalist expected that their loyalty deserved special compensation and leadership positions and the inhabitants of Nova Scotia resented this arrogance. Thus, in 1784 the colony of New Brunswick was created out of the Nova Scotia colony.

The "*Treaty of Paris*" in 1783 ended the American Revolution; however, it did not clearly define the borders between Maine and the New Brunswick colony. It wasn't until the "*Webster-Ashburton Treaty*" was written in 1842 that the boundary was finally delineated.

Also, during the time period after the war of 1812, the British Crown offered cheap land to anyone willing to settle along the Canadian border with the United States.

Many immigrants settled in the Newfoundland colony prior to their immigration to New Brunswick. Also around 1845, as a result of the potato famine, a large number of Irish immigrated to the New Brunswick colony.

New Brunswick actually has several miles of seacoast but the seacoast is sheltered from the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore the climate differs from other coastal areas and tends more toward a calmer continental climate with larger forested areas.

Since New Brunswick has few port cities and a vast timber resource, the shipbuilding and logging industries have dominated the New Brunswick economy. So it is no surprise that the decline of the wooden shipbuilding industry in the late 19th Century caused many skilled workers to move to other parts of Canada or to the United States to seek employment.



New Brunswick Joined the Confederation of Canada in 1867. Civil registrations were required from about 1888 but were incomplete until about 1920. The [Provincial Archives of New Brunswick](#) has online searchable indexes for these records and time periods. Often the digitized images of the record are also available for viewing.

[This "What's New" page at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick](#) contains a list of the titles to the extractions that have been done and a description of each. The databases included on this page are too numerous to name, but here is a sampling:

- Index to Late Registration of Births 1810-1916
- Index to Late Registration of Births: County Series 1869-1901
- Index to County Birth Registers 1800-1913
- Index to Provincial Registrations of Births 1898-1916
- Index to New Brunswick Marriages 1847-1960

- Index to County Death Registers 1885-1921
- Provincial Returns of Deaths 1815-1919
- Index to Death Certificates 1920-1961
- Land Grants
- Early Wills and Probate Records

The first nominal census for New Brunswick was taken in 1851 and can be viewed with the images online at [Library and Archives Canada](#).

A partial index to this census may be found at [Automated Genealogy](#)

Other census returns also can be found online at [Library and Archives Canada](#).

FamilySearch.org has several [searchable collections for New Brunswick](#) vital records, as well as Canada in general.

These are the databases for which FamilySearch has searchable indexes:

- New Brunswick Provincial Deaths, 1815-1938
- New Brunswick, Provincial Returns of Births and Late Registrations, 1810-1906
- New Brunswick Births and Baptisms, 1819-1899

These are the databases for which images can be viewed online at FamilySearch.org but may not have surname searchable indexes yet:

- New Brunswick, County Deed Registry Books, 1780-1941 (Browse Images)
- New Brunswick, Death Certificates, 1920-1934 (Browse Images)
- New Brunswick, Death Certificates, 1935-1938 (Browse Images)
- New Brunswick, Late Registration of Births, 1810-1899 (Browse Images)
- New Brunswick, Provincial Returns of Deaths, 1815-1919 (Browse Images)

Links to these databases are found at [FamilySearch.org](#).



New Brunswick genealogy resources online are numerous and as you can see from this article they extend farther back than many of the resources for other provinces. As families native to New Brunswick have been researched, it is surprising to see how often these families migrated back and forth between the United States and New Brunswick.

The states to which they migrated were usually Maine and New Hampshire, the two states closest to the New Brunswick border. However any U.S./Canadian border state could have been the destination. Prior to 1895 people were able to cross the U.S./Canadian border freely and no immigration record would have been taken for those individuals.

Much of the English Canadian population of New Brunswick today are descended from Loyalists who fled the American Revolution. New Brunswick has grown from 193,800 in 1851 to 751,171 by 2011.

A majority of the population is English-speaking; about 33% of the population speak French and claim ancestry from the Acadians that occupied the region in the 1750's.



Source: MyTrees.com