

The Three Canadian Territories - Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut



1889 Map of the North-West Territories of Canada

The North-Western Territory was a region of British North America until 1870. Named for where it lay in relation to Rupert's Land, the territory at its greatest extent covered what is now Yukon, mainland Northwest Territories, northwestern mainland Nunavut, northwestern Saskatchewan, northern Alberta and northern British Columbia. Some of this area was originally part of Rupert's Land due to inaccurate maps. The acquisition of Rupert's Land was the largest land purchase in Canada's history.

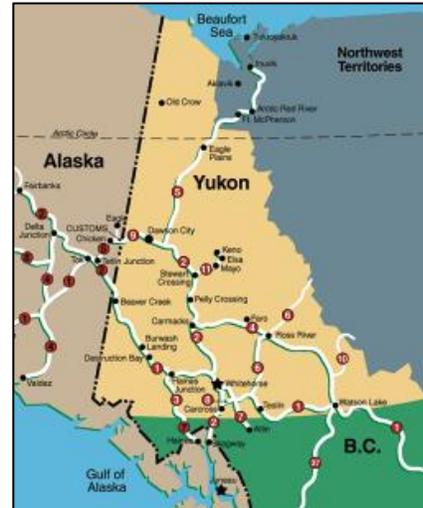
Yukon



Yukon (formerly the Yukon Territory) is one of Canada's three territories in the country's extreme northwest. Its history of human habitation dates back to the Ice Age, and the original inhabitants are believed to have arrived over 20,000 years ago by migrating over the land bridge from Asia. In the 18th century, Russian explorers began trade with the First Nations people along the Alaskan coast, beginning the establishment of trade relations throughout the region. The first non-native person to reach the Yukon was Sir John Franklin in 1825.

The famous Klondike Gold Rush began after gold was discovered near Dawson City in 1896. As a result of the influx of people looking for gold, it was made a separate territory in 1898, splitting off from the Northwest Territories. The second major event in the Yukon's history is the construction of the Alaska Highway during the Second World War, for the transportation of war supplies. Eventually Whitehorse became the largest city in the Yukon, and then the capital in 1953.

Although the Hudson's Bay Company kept contacts in the area, there really was not a large boom in population until the 1890's during the Gold Rush. Some civil registration records go back to this time period, but they are very scarce. Records did not become more complete until the 1930s and 1940s. All records are held by [Yukon Health and Social Services](#). Fees for documents are only \$10.00. Their access guidelines are:



Birth Certificates:

- The person named on the certificate
- The recorded parents
- Written authorization of one of the above
- Guardian of the person named (proof required)
- Executor of the Estate (copy of death certificate required)

Marriage Certificates:

- Either party of the marriage
- Written authorization of one of the above

Death Certificates:

- You must show valid reason for obtaining the certificate

Civil Registration

Searching for information in the civil registration records will require “out of the box” thinking as the records are just too new and incomplete to search using the same methods as you would for other areas of Canada.

- [Yukon Genealogy](#), including the .pdf download, “[Genealogical Research at the Yukon Archives](#)”
- Family Search [Yukon Civil Registration Wiki](#)
- Ancestry [Yukon BMD Collection](#)
- Cyndi’s List [BMD collection](#) (including all three territories).
- Census Records, Newspapers and other miscellaneous information can be found at [CanGenealogy](#).

- An officer of the Crown or government employee who needs it in the official duties

Marriage certificates:

- Either party of the marriage
- Legal representative of either party
- Parents or guardian if the party was under 18 at the time of marriage
- Children of the marriage, for legal purposes
- Written authorization of either party
- A person who needs it for legal purposes
- An officer of the Crown or government employee who needs it in the official duties

Death certificates:

- Member of the immediate family or next of kin
- A person who needs it for legal purposes
- An officer of the Crown or government employee who needs it in the official duties

The Northwest Territories seems to be another area where you will have to be creative for BMDs. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any genealogy information or links on any of the government websites. I would suggest looking at GenealogySearch.org for helpful links.

Another source for information may be church records.

The [United Church of Canada Archives](#) holds the local church records of the United Church and its uniting denominations (Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian (1925 union); and Evangelical United Brethren—joined in 1968).

The records of the churches which did not join at union but remained part of the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada after 1925 are held at the [Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives and Record Office](#)

Other helpful sites to search:

- [Alberta and Northwest Conference Archives](#)
- FamilySearch wiki on [civil registration of the Northwest Territories](#).
- [Ancestry links](#) for NWT Collections.
- Cyndi's List [territorial collection of BMD links](#) (as also noted in the Yukon information previously in this document).
- Several Northwest Territories links can be found at CanGenealogy.com

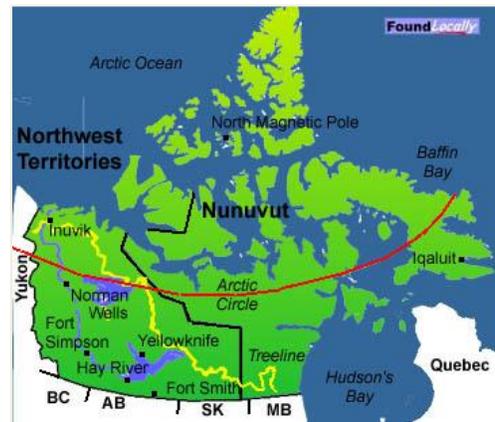
Nunavut



Vikings from Greenland may have been the first Europeans to venture into the eastern portion of the Northwest Territories, now Nunavut. The area that is now the Northwest Territories and Nunavut was part of the vast lands sold by the Hudson's Bay Company to the new Canadian confederation in 1870.

In 1992, a referendum was passed authorizing the separation of the eastern half of the Northwest Territories to create a new autonomous territory, to be called Nunavut, which is Inuktitut for "Our Land." However it wasn't until April 1, 1999 that Nunavut became the newest Canadian territory.

The creation of Nunavut was the outcome of the largest aboriginal land claims agreement between the Canadian government and the native Inuit people. It is both the least populous and the largest geographical unit of all the provinces and territories of Canada. Nunavut's Chief Executive is a Commissioner appointed by the Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.



For records prior to the separation, researchers will have to look at the Northwest Territories. Nunavut records are held by the Registrar General and can be found on the [Government of Nunavut](#) website. Fees are \$10.00. You may find it difficult to navigate, but their holdings birth and death certificates are:

Birth Certificates

- Person named on the certificate
- The recorded parents
- Written authorization of one of the above
- Legal representative of the person named
- Spouse of the named person
- A person requiring it for legal purposes
- An officer of the Crown or government employee needing it in their official duties
- Marriage certificates (fee is \$25.00):
- Either party of the marriage

- Legal representative of either party
- Parent or guardian of either party if they were under 18 at the time of marriage
- Children of the marriage if needed for legal purposes
- Written authorization of either party
- A person needing it for legal purposes
- An officer of the Crown or government employee requiring it in the official duties

Death Certificates

- Immediate family or next of kin
- A person needing it for legal purposes
- An officer of the Crown or government employee needing it in their official duties

Further information may be found at GenealogySearch.org for helpful links. There is no Wiki at present for Nunavut on FamilySearch nor are there unique Nunavut collections on Ancestry. Cyndi's List [territorial collection of BMD links](#) (as also noted in the Yukon information previously in this document). There are also a variety of links at Cangenealogy.com

Sources:

findingyourcanadianstory.blogspot.ca/
Wikipedia
FamilySearch.org Wiki
Cangenealogy.com