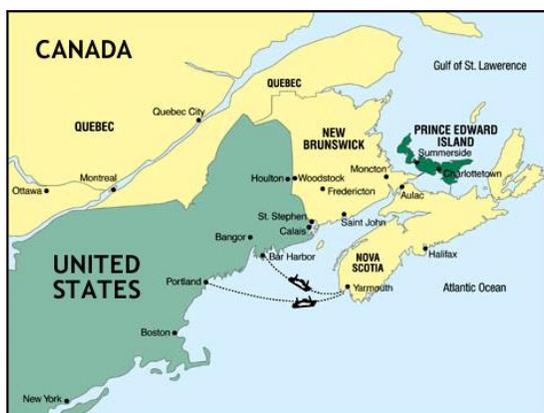


Canadian Genealogy – Prince Edward Island Research Resources



Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province, was first inhabited by the Mi'kmaq people. They named the island Epekwitk (the pronunciation of which was changed to Abegweit by the Europeans), meaning "cradle on the waves." They believed that the island was formed by the Great Spirit placing some dark red clay which was shaped as a crescent on the pink waters.

This Maritime province has had other names over the years – including Ile St-Jean when it was under French control, and Island of St. John when the English took control. It was given its present name in 1800, in honour of one of the sons of George III. Prince Edward Island was briefly part of Nova Scotia.

In September 1864, Prince Edward Island hosted the Charlottetown Conference, which was the first meeting in the process leading to the Articles of Confederation and the creation of Canada in 1867. Prince Edward Island did not find the terms of union favourable and balked at joining in 1867, choosing to remain part of the nation of Great Britain, Ireland and Germany. In the late 1860s, the colony examined various options, including the possibility of becoming a discrete dominion unto itself, as well as entertaining delegations from the United States, who were interested in Prince Edward Island joining the United States of America.

In the early 1870s, the colony began construction of a railway and frustrated by Great Britain's Colonial Office, began negotiations with the United States. In 1873, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, anxious to thwart American expansionism and facing the distraction of the Pacific Scandal, negotiated for Prince Edward Island to join Canada. The Federal Government of Canada assumed the colony's railway debts and agreed to finance a buy-out of the last of the colony's absentee landlords to free the island of leasehold tenure and from any new migrants entering the island. Prince Edward Island entered Confederation on July 1, 1873. The problem

of absentee landowners was subsequently addressed by the passage of the Land Purchase Act, 1875.

It may surprise you to know that according to the 2011 National Household Survey, Prince Edward Island is said to be the most Scottish province in Canada if not the most ethnically Scottish place in the world outside of Scotland, of course.

38% of Islanders claim Scottish ancestry, but many experts believe this number to be closer to 50%. When you add those who claim their ancestry to be Irish and Welsh to those who claim Scottish ancestry, the total percentage becomes about 80% of islanders that have some Celtic heritage.

Before 1759 the Scottish immigrants who came to Prince Edward Island were seeking political and religious asylum. After 1759 Scottish immigrants to Prince Edward Island were mainly Highland farmers who had been forced off their rented land due to the British Agricultural Revolution. Then during the years following 1849 a large migration of Scottish came to Prince Edward Island due to the Great Irish Potato Famine.

It would seem that Prince Edward Islanders would be mostly of French descent, since the island was first discovered and settled by the French. However, the same 2011 demographic study listed those who claimed French ancestry to be only 21%.



One positive aspect of both the French and the Scottish immigrants is that they were predominately Catholic, and this means early Catholic church records will be your best source for births, marriages, and deaths in Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island is the one province where significant genealogical research has already been professionally done and is posted online.

Individual Prince Edward Island genealogies going back to the early 1700's have been researched, documented and posted online just waiting for you to find. Several sites that have Prince Edward Island genealogy information are:

Familysearch.org sites specific to Prince Edward Island Research:

- Baptisms: [1721-1885 FamilySearch](#) | [1777-1923 Archives](#)
- Marriages: [1832-1888 FamilySearch](#)

- Deaths: [1721-1905 FamilySearch](#)

[Prince Edward Island Public Archives and Records Office](#) - An item-level database containing thousands of records from some of our most popular collections, including vital statistics, census records, and archival material such as photographs, maps, architectural plans, and textual items. Where available, a digital scan of the original can also be accessed through the database.

[P.E.I. Genealogy information](#) – Government of Prince Edward Island genealogy links.

[The Island Register](#) – A comprehensive on-line source for P.E.I. Genealogy, with over eleven hundred P.E.I. lineages and forty-five hundred documents.

[Churches and Cemeteries of Prince Edward Island](#) – a listing of cemeteries and churches in Prince Edward Island with links.

Sources: [Mytrees.com](#)
[Cangenealogy.com](#)