

# New Jersey Genealogy Research

## Native American Inhabitants



The indigenous peoples of the land now called New Jersey were the **Lenape**. They occupied the entire basin of the Delaware River in east Pennsylvania and south New York, together with most of New Jersey and Delaware. This was the home territory of the Algonquin peoples, the place from whom most of the tribes originated. Their name means "original people" or "genuine people."

They spoke an Algonquian dialect.

Though they were considered one tribe, the Lenape were a confederacy. They lived in small communities made up mostly of extended family members. The men would hunt or fish during the day. Depending on the season they might search for clams off the Jersey shore or hunt in the woods. The women worked in the gardens. They grew squash, beans, sweet potatoes, and corn.

By priority of political rank and because they occupied the central home territory, the Lenape were accorded the respectful title of "grandfather" by all the Algonquian tribes and by the Huron people.

The **Nanticoke, Conoy, Shawnee, and Mahican** claimed close connection with the Lenape and preserved the tradition of a common origin.

The English called them the **Delaware**, from the name of their principal river; the French called them **Loups**, 'wolves,' a term probably applied originally to the Mahican on the Hudson River, afterward extended to the Munsee division and to the whole group.

## European Settlement



**Around 1524, Giovanni de Verrazano** became the first European to explore New Jersey. He sailed along the coast and anchored off Sandy Hook.

**In 1609, Henry Hudson sailed through Newark Bay.** Hudson called the land **New Netherlands**, because he worked for the Dutch. Small trading colonies sprang up where the present towns of Hoboken and Jersey City are located.

**1638 – 1655:** The Dutch, Swedes, and Finns formed settlements, calling them **New Sweden**.

**By 1639, the Dutch had formed six boweries, or plantations,** on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River across from Manhattan. However,

confrontations with native tribes destroyed all the Dutch settlements in northern New Jersey by 1655.

**In 1660, Bergen was founded by the Dutch** along the Hudson River; it became the first permanent European settlement between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers. It was the genesis of the present Jersey City.

**In 1664, the British took control of the land and added it to their colonies. They divided the land in half and gave control to two proprietors:** Sir George Carteret (who was in charge of the east side) and Lord John Berkley (who was in charge of the west side). **The land was officially named New Jersey** after the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel. Carteret had been governor of the Isle of Jersey. Berkeley and Carteret sold the land at low prices and allowed the settlers to have political and religious freedom. As a result, New Jersey was more ethnically diverse than many other colonies. Primarily a rural society, the colony grew to have about 100,000 people. A large influx of English from New England and Long Island settled the East Jersey towns of Elizabethtown, Middletown, Piscataway, Shrewsbury, and Woodbridge. A year later, migrants from Connecticut founded Newark.

**For a brief period, from 1673 to 1674, the Dutch regained control** of New Jersey and New York. Eventually, **governing power was transferred back to England.** For many years, New Jersey shared a royal governor with New York.

**In 1738, the British gave New Jersey its own governor, Lewis Morris.**

**In the years before the revolution,** anti-British feelings spread throughout New Jersey. About one-third of the people supported the rebels, one-third supported England, and one-third remained neutral.

**In 1776, New Jersey declared itself an independent state and joined the colonial side** in the Revolutionary War. More battles were fought in New Jersey than in any other state because of its location near the center of the thirteen colonies and between New York City and Philadelphia. The Battle of Trenton was considered a turning point in the war.

### Statehood

**In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution and the first state to sign the Bill of Rights.**

**In 1790**, Trenton officially became the state capital of New Jersey. William Livingston became New Jersey's first state governor.

**In the early 1800's**, New Jersey grew. New factories in northern New Jersey produced textiles, clay, steel, iron, trains. Canals and railroads were built to transport people and products. Southern New Jersey remained mostly rural.

**Civil War:** New Jersey provided 31 regiments for the Union cause. Over 25,000 New Jersey soldiers participated in almost every major Eastern battle.

**Post-Civil War:** Industries grew as more immigrants came from Europe to work in the expanded factories. As cities grew, the rural area shrank.

**Early 1900's:** Issues such as child labor and worker protection brought Woodrow Wilson to the governorship. He continued to fight for protection of workers as President. Another famous New Jersey native was Thomas Edison. He helped develop the motion picture, and Fort Lee, NJ, became a center of movie production in the early 1900's. Air travel became part of New Jersey history on May 3, 1919, when the first passenger flight in American history was flown from New York City to Atlantic City.

### Unique genealogical features of New Jersey:

- Many 1702-1738 New Jersey wills are filed in New York City, or Albany, New York
- Early New Jersey records include records of New Sweden and New Netherland.
  - The Wiki on *FamilySearch.org* has information about these colonies and their records

### New Jersey Vital Records

Among the Mid-Atlantic States, New Jersey has the earliest statewide registration of births, marriages, and deaths, which began in May 1848.

### New Jersey Birth Records

#### Online Indexes of New Jersey Births

- Indexes of New Jersey birth records spanning various years between 1660 and 1931 are on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org.

#### Microfilm Indexes of New Jersey Births at the State Archives

- Statewide birth indexes, 1 June 1878 to 30 June 1890; 1 July 1890 to 31 December 1900
- Annual indexes to births, 1901 to 1903

### New Jersey Births Before 1848

Births in the 1600's may be included in the Colonial records of New Netherlands and New Sweden. See *Unique Genealogical Features* above.

View some baptismal records of Bergen, New Jersey from 1666 to 1788 on

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycoloni/nntchhist.html>.

**Town Clerk Records** (vital records, elected officials, lists of freeholders, petitions, deeds, cattle earmarks)

The first laws requiring town clerks to register vital records were made in 1675 and 1682, but few clerks complied with the laws. The births that were recorded were listed under the name of the town.

**Note:** New Jersey towns are like western townships, so several populated places are in each town.

**Repositories of New Jersey Town Records** include the **State Archives** in Trenton, **Rutgers University Library**, and the **New Jersey Historical Society Library**.

### **Births Occurring from 1848 to 100 Years Ago**

**Order a Copy of a Birth between 1848 and 100 years ago** from the **local Vital Records Registrar**

**Order a copy of a birth from 1848 to 1914** from the **State**

If you don't know the exact date of birth, the State Archives will search for a birth record in a two year time span for a fee.

### **Birth Records less than 100 Years Old**

**Order a Copy** of a Birth that occurred less than 100 years ago from **The New Jersey Department of Health.**

**The County Clerk** also may have records of births that occurred less than 100 years ago.

**Restrictions for obtaining a Genealogical Copy of a birth certificate created less than 100 years ago:**

- The person on the certificate must be DECEASED.
- The birth must have occurred more than 80 years ago.

### **New Jersey Marriage Records**

#### **Online Indexes:**

FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com - New Jersey marriages between 1665 and 1985

New Jersey State archives - Colonial marriage bonds between 1666 and 1799; marriages from 1848 to 1878:

[https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

#### **Marriages before 1665**

Check records available for New Netherlands and New Sweden.

Some Bergen, New Jersey colonial marriages between 1664 and 1801 are listed on

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycoloni/nntchhist.html>

View marriage records of some early New Jersey churches and lists of marriage licenses beginning in 1664 in the book *Marriage Records, 1665-1800* by William Nelson.

Read this book online at Archive.org: <https://archive.org/details/marriagerecords101nls>

#### **Marriages from 1848 to 1912**

- Statewide registration of marriages began in 1848
- Records before 1912 are kept at the New Jersey State Archives
- Records from 1848 to the present are also kept by the County Registrars; however, many local pre-1910 records have not survived
- Online marriage indexes - FamilySearch.org.

**Order a copy** of a marriage record for a fee from the **County Registrar** or the **New Jersey State Archives.**

**Restrictions on obtaining a copy of a Marriage Record for Genealogical Purposes:**

- The marriage must have occurred more than 50 years ago.
- Both parties must be deceased.
- If one or both parties are still alive, proof of relationship is required to obtain the record.
- Look for the marriage records of eloping New Jersey couples in:
  - New York City, NY
  - Kings County, NY
  - Philadelphia
  - Delaware
  - Cecil County, MD
  - Niagara Falls, Ontario

## New Jersey Death Records

### Indexes:

*New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988* – FamilySearch.org

*New Jersey, Deaths and Burials Index, 1798-1971* - Ancestry.com

*Death Records, June 1878 - June 1896* are indexed online at the New Jersey Department of State website -

[https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

*New Jersey Death Index* – search a database of deaths from 2001 to 2017 – browse images of the state indexes of deaths from 1901 to 1903, 1920 to 1929, 1949 to 1967, and 1968 to 2000 – records of more years are coming

- <https://www.newjerseydeathindex.com/>

Microfilm images of death indexes from 1848 to 1878 are available at the Salt Lake City Family History Library.

**Obtain a copy** of a death record from May 1848 to December 1916 for a fee from the **State Archives**. Ordering information is online at [https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

**Requests for death records less than 100 years old** should be directed to: **Office of Vital Statistics and Registry**, NJ Department of Health - <http://www.state.nj.us/health/vital/index.shtml>

### Other Records containing Birth/Marriage/Death Information

- Family Bibles
- Church records
- Military records
- Censuses
- Newspaper articles
- Cemetery/Funeral Home records
- Wills/Probate Records

### New Jersey Historical/Genealogical Repositories

New Jersey State Archives

New Jersey State Library

New Jersey Historical Society Library

Alexander Library; Rutgers University

Camden County Historical Society

Gloucester County Historical Society Library

Jewish Historical Society of Central Jersey

Morristown and Morris Township Library

Newark Public Library

Firestone Library; Princeton University

Campbell Library; Rowan University

Seton Hall University Libraries

### New Jersey Land Records

The earliest land records made were made by boards of proprietors who sold land to individuals.

**The New Jersey State Archives** has the **proprietor land records** for both East Jersey and West Jersey. Search the archives' **growing online index** of early land records, 1650-1801 –

[https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx#legal](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx#legal)

From 1664 to 1785, land sales between individuals were recorded as deeds in either the East Jersey capital of Perth Amboy or in the West Jersey capital of Burlington.

In 1795 deeds were transferred to Trenton, where they became known as the Secretary of State's deeds.

**Maps of New Jersey** – website with antique NJ atlases and maps, interactive map of NJ county formation, current D.O.T. County Road and Highway Maps of NJ - <http://www.mapofus.org/newjersey/>

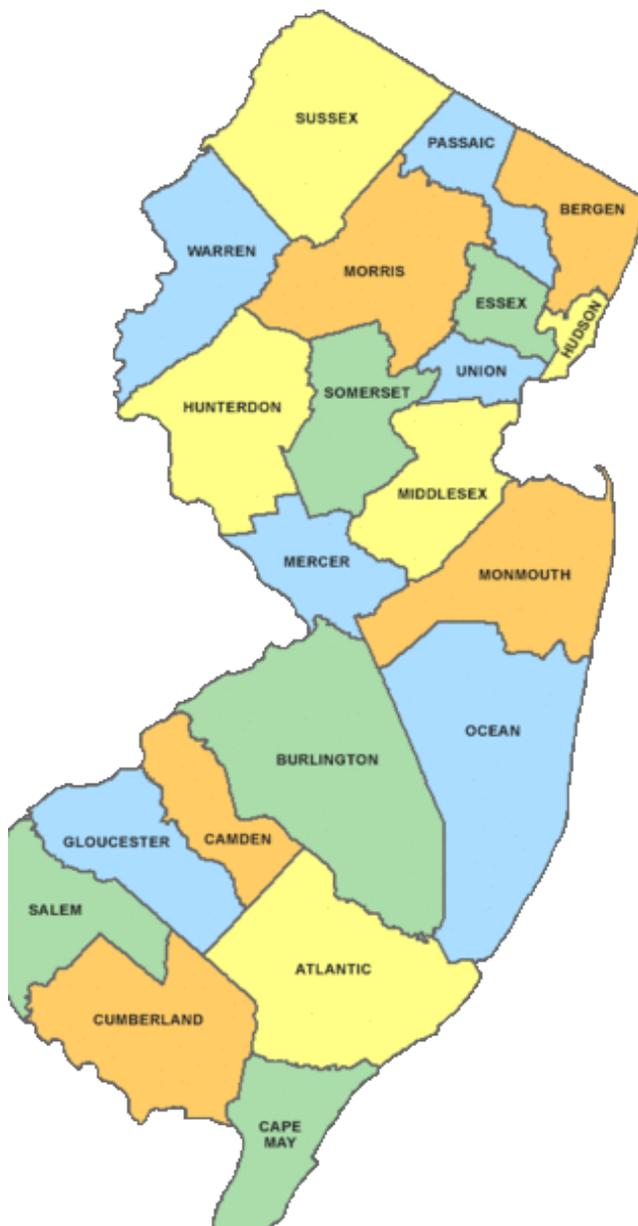
### **New Jersey Migration Routes**

Ellis Island · Atlantic Coast Ports · Delaware Indian Path or King's Highway · Delaware River · Passaic River · Raritan River · Great Shamokin Path · King's Highway or Delaware Indian Path · Lincoln Highway · Delaware and Raritan Canal · Morris Canal

**The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries** – Interactive maps and text covering the historical boundaries, names, organization, and attachments of every county, extinct county and unsuccessful county proposal from the creation of the first county through December 31, 2000. -

<http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html>

*New Jersey Genealogy*, in the Wiki on [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) gives a list of New Jersey county creation dates and parent counties



### **New Jersey Counties**

#### **New Jersey Genealogy Research Websites**

Check online for the *GenWeb* and *Genealogy Trails* of the county in which your ancestor lived.

Find links to genealogical websites for many states and counties on *Ancestor Hunt* and *Cyndi's List*

**"Cyclopedia of New Jersey"** - free eBook digitized by Internet Archive – index and images

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t8mc94r1s;view=1up;seq=13>

**Death Records, June 1878 to June 1896** - indexed online at the New Jersey Department of State website -

[https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

**"Extracts from American Newspapers, Relating to New Jersey, 1704-1775"** – free eBook -

<https://books.google.com/>

**I Dream of Genealogy** – links to online burial listings of cemeteries in some counties -

<http://www.idreamof.com/cemetery/nj.html>

**"Marriage Records, 1665 – 1800, Documents relating to the Colonial History of New Jersey"** – eBook -

<https://books.google.com>

**Matawan, New Jersey, Yearbooks** – search Matawan high school yearbooks (1953-2007)-

<http://www.digifind-it.com/matawan/home.php>

**Milburn Township Genealogy and Local History** – local newspapers, city directories, town and church histories -

<http://millburnlibrary.org/archives>

**National Archives, New York City** - permanent records created by Federal agencies and courts in New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands - not digitized -

<https://www.archives.gov/nyc>

**Newark Public Library** – digital collections include photos, newspapers, maps, and city directories -

<https://cdm17229.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/>

**New Brunswick Local History and Genealogy** – oral histories of 14 city residents; Willow Grove Cemetery database; self-guided tour map of Elmwood Cemetery lists soldiers killed in action in the Civil War, WWII and beyond; New Brunswick Sanborn maps, links to other city maps -

<https://www.nbfpl.org/archives/local-history-genealogy>

**New Jersey Death Index** – search a database of deaths from 2001 to 2017 – browse images of the state indexes of deaths from 1901 to 1903, 1920 to 1929, 1949 to 1967, and 1968 to 2000 – indexes of more years are coming -

<https://www.newjerseydeathindex.com/>

**New Jersey Digital Highway** - biographies, books, immigration and naturalization records, local histories, and photographs -

<https://njdigitalhighway.org/>

**New Jersey Genealogy Trails** - transcribed genealogical data for the state of New Jersey -

<http://genealogytrails.com/njer/>

**“New Jersey’s First Citizens and State Guide”** – free eBook digitized by Google -

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101057779488;view=1up;seq=9>

**New Jersey State Archives** – indexes of vital records, early land and probate records, military records; documents and photographs, forms to order copies -

[https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

**Plainfield City Directories** - Plainfield City Directories 1870 to 1982 - [http://www.digifind-it.com/plainfield/city\\_directories.php](http://www.digifind-it.com/plainfield/city_directories.php)

**Online County Histories** - <http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/countyhistories1.htm#il>

**“The early Germans of New Jersey: Their History, Churches, and Genealogies”** – free eBook by Theodore Frelinghuysen Chambers - <https://archive.org/details/earlygermansofne00cham>

### **New Jersey African American Research**

**Access Genealogy** – links by state to websites of African American genealogy, cemeteries, and censuses

**AfricaMap** – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data -

<http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/>

**African Ancestry** - DNA testing of maternal and paternal lineages of African descent - results are specific countries and specific ethnic groups of origin - uses database of over 30,000 indigenous African DNA samples - <https://africanancestry.com/>

**International African American Museum** - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories – military records of the U.S. Colored Troops are currently being digitized - <https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/>

**Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery** - search thousands of “Information Wanted” advertisements taken out by former slaves in all states searching for family members lost by sale, flight, or enlistment – the collection currently includes newspapers from 1853 to 1911 - <http://www.informationwanted.org/>

**Slave Voyages** - the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* documents vessels along the Atlantic slave routes from 1514 to 1866; *Intra-American Slave Trade Database* documents vessels traveling between the Atlantic and Pacific ports ranging from the United States to Brazil; the *African Names Database* gives names, ages, possible origins of slaves liberated from captured slave ships between 1808 and 1862 - <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>

### **New Jersey Cemetery Research**

**UNION COUNTY, NJ: Connecticut Farms Cemetery** – Click *Search* for a name search of the burial list; click *Epitaph* for transcriptions of gravestone epitaphs - <http://www.ctfarmscemetery.org/search.html>

### **New Jersey Military Research**

**New Jersey Soldiers** – search records of New Jersey soldiers, Rev War through WW1 and National Guard photographs - [https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS\\_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx](https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx)

**Grand Army of the Republic Records Project** – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - <http://suvchw.org/garrecords/>

## New Jersey Native American Research

**First People** - Links to State Recognized Tribes, sorted by state - <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Links/state-recognized-tribes-in-usa-by-state.html>

**Native American Tribes of New Jersey** - <http://www.native-languages.org/jersey.htm>

**Personal Names of Indians of New Jersey: Being a List of Six Hundred and Fifty Such Names** – Free eBook digitized by Internet Archive - <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t00z70w93>

## New Jersey Newspaper Research

**Belvidere Obituaries and Death Notices** – index of obits & death notices in the Belvidere Apollo newspaper 1826 through 1953 - <http://warrenlib.org/content/obituary-indexes#.WdfNqjtryUJ>

**Matawan, New Jersey Newspapers** – search articles of 3 local newspapers published 1869 – 1998: <http://www.digifind-it.com/matawan/home.php>

**New Brunswick Newspapers** – search New Brunswick Daily Times issues from 1871-1916 and the Daily Home News issues 1887, 1889, and 1903-1918 - <http://nbfpl.org/local.html>

**Plainfield, New Jersey Newspapers** – databases of seven early Plainfield newspapers - [http://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/Departments/LH/LH\\_digitizednewspapers.html](http://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/Departments/LH/LH_digitizednewspapers.html)

**Summit, New Jersey Historical Newspapers** – search or browse articles of 6 area newspapers published between 1883 and 2016 - <https://www.summitlibrary.org/historical-summit/>

Above pages compiled from the following information:

- Jersey City, Past and Present - [http://www.state.nj.us/nj/about/history/short\\_history.html](http://www.state.nj.us/nj/about/history/short_history.html)
- New Jersey State Research Guides: *Ancestry.com* Learning Center and *FamilySearch.org* Wiki
- New Jersey Department of Health - <http://www.state.nj.us/health/vital/index.shtml>
- Family Tree Magazine
- *The Weekly Genealogist*, *NEHGS*; *Dick Eastman Genealogy Newsletter*; *Genealogy Gems*
- *Online Military Indexes and Records* - <http://www.militaryindexes.com/index.html>