New Jersey Genealogy Research

Native American Inhabitants

The indigenous peoples of present-day 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.

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 would search for clams off the Jersey shore or hunt the woods. The women worked in the gardens, growing 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, and later extended to the Munsee division and to the whole group.

European Settlement

Around 1524, Giovanni de Verrazano explored 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: 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 and was the genesis of present-day 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 (in charge of the east side) and Lord John Berkley (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 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. After he helped develop the motion picture, 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.
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; several populated places are included 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 1923 from the **State Archives -** https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
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 occurring less than 100 years ago from **The New Jersey Department of Health** or from the **County Clerk**.

R**estrictions 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 – databases of Colonial marriage bonds between 1666 and 1799; marriages from 1848 to 1900: https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx

Marriages before 1665

Check records available for New Netherlands and New Sweden.

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*

Marriages from 1848 to 1912

- Statewide registration of marriages began in 1848
- Marriage records dated 1848 to 1940 are stored at the New Jersey State Archives
- Records from 1848 to the present are also kept by the County Registrars**;** many local pre-1910 records have not survived

Order a copy of a marriage record for a fee from the **County Registrar** or from 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.
- 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

Online Indexes:

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

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

Death Records, May 1848 to 1878 and Death Records June 1878 – December 1900 – online indexes, New Jersey State Archives website - 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/

Obtain a copy of a death record from May 1848 to December 1923 for a fee from the **State Archives.** Ordering information is online at https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx#VS

Obtain a copy of a death record less than 100 years old from the **Office of Vital Statistics and Registry**, NJ Department of Health - http://www.state.nj.us/health/vital/index.shtml

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 – 1900's at
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 the New Jersey State Archives, 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
Read more about Indian Paths, post roads, wagon trails and canal routes in the books "American Migration Routes, Part I and Part II", by William Dollarhide. The books are in the Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library.

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* gives a list of New Jersey county creation dates and parent counties.

New Jersey Counties

New Jersey Genealogy Research Websites

Search the *GenWeb* and *Genealogy Trails* of the county in which your ancestor lived

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

American Ancestors - $ - search large variety of genealogical records for Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, New Jersey and more - https://www.americanancestors.org/index.aspx

"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 Dec. 1900 - indexed online at the New Jersey Department of State website - 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 (1946-2018)- https://www.digifind-it.com/matawan/views/showYears.php?id=6

Milburn Township Genealogy and Local History – local yearbooks, 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'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 - Click *Search the Collections* and *Searchable Databases and Records Request Forms* to access indexes to marriage records (1666–1799, 1848–1900), indexes to death records (1848–1900), land and military records - 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
"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

AfricaMap – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data - http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/
African American Digital Bookshelf - a curated list of and links to free virtually accessible books that provide information on specific African American ancestors, historical context, and guidance to other resources - the list is organized geographically by the U.S. and state - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/African_American_Digital_Bookshelf
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/
Enslaved: Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade - a free search tool that links us to websites of projects or institutions with information and stories about **named** enslaved persons - some info is digitized and keyword searchable and some must be browsed - sources include plantation registries, runaway ads, probate inventories, sale receipts, baptisms, etc. - also information about some free people of color and slaveowners - https://enslaved.org/
International African American Museum Center for Family History - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories - https://iaamuseum.org/center-for-family-history/digital-archives/
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/
Patriots of Color – database of African Americans who served in the Revolutionary War - http://www.archives.com/patriots
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

FindaGrave and ***Billion Graves*** now have grave memorials of burials in many cemeteries in the U.S and in other countries.
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
Grand Army of the Republic Records Project – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - http://suvcw.org/garrecords/

New Jersey Native American Research

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 – information primarily from Indian Deeds of the 1600's - Free eBook digitized by Internet Archive - http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t00z70w93
Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction - the history and underlying principles of tribal governance - American Indian and Alaska Native people today – the relationship between local, state and U.S. federal government and tribal governments - https://archive.ncai.org/about-tribes

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#.WdfNqjtryUl
Matawan, New Jersey Newspapers – search articles of 3 local newspapers published 1869 – 2000: http://www.digifind-it.com/matawan/home.php
Newark Public Library Digitized Newspapers – search issues of 3 local newspapers 1883 – 1972 - https://newark.historyarchives.online/home
New Brunswick Newspapers – search New Brunswick Daily Times issues from 1871-1916 and the Daily Home News issues 1887, 1889, and 1903-1926 - https://www.nbfpl.org/local-history/digitized-newspapers
Plainfield, New Jersey Newspapers – databases of seven early Plainfield newspapers - http://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/Departments/LH/LH_digitizednewspapers.html
Summit, New Jersey Historical Newspapers – search or browse articles of 7 area newspapers, varying years of publication - https://www.digifind-it.com/Summit/views/home.php#

Above pages compiled from the following information:

- Jersey City, Past and Present - 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*