

Genealogy Basic: How to find Vitals for Newfoundland Ancestors

By Joe Petrie

Background:

There are six Newfoundland ancestors that I am trying to locate descendants for. They are: Cummings, Hogan, Jordan, Mackey, Maher and Tobin.

For my other ancestors, I usually start with Census records. I collect information as much information as possible for as many censuses as possible. I try to collect at least: Surname, Given Name, Location, and Age. Next, I try to collect data from official records: Birth, Marriage, Death and Wills. Then I try to collect Church records, Obituaries, Cemetery and gravestone information. Finally, I try to collect information from published genealogies, Ancestry's Public Trees, FamilySearch Trees, directories and "oral" histories.

Newfoundland gathering is challenging. While there are some local censuses, there were no censuses until 1921. Official records for most communities were not kept. For example, Birth records were not recorded. Christening records are available and often serve as approximate birth records. There are some obituaries. I have found 2 obituary substitutes in the 40 thousand plus records in Gertrude Crosbie's Births, Deaths and Marriages in Newfoundland Newspapers, 1810 – 1890. Rather than continue pointing out the difficulties, the remainder of this document covers free and subscription web sites that I gather Newfoundland information from.

List of Free Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogy Web Sites:

[FamilySearch](http://Familysearch.org/) <http://Familysearch.org/> - FamilySearch has identified the following 12 Historical Collections that contain Newfoundland and Labrador records. Seven of the 12 were updated this year including the last 5 that were added this year. Please note that I always recommend that users sign up for a Free Account which is required to see the image of the source document (when an image is available). Also, please note that currently, I am using the last two collections to update missing and incorrect Vitals in my six Newfoundland families: Cummings, Hogan; Jordan; Mackey; Maher; and Tobin. I started with the Hogan ancestors.

Title	Recordss	Last Updated
BillionGraves Index	426	24-Jun-15
Canada Births and Baptisms, 1661-1959	1,994	26-Nov-14
Canada Census, 1891	177	25-Feb-13
Canada Deaths and Burials, 1664-1955	57	9-Apr-10
Canada Marriages, 1661-1949	1,246	26-Nov-14
Canadian Headstones	2,087	20-Feb-15
Find A Grave Index	30,237	16-Nov-14
Newfoundland Census, 1921	218,865	20-Mar-15
Newfoundland Census, 1935	296,231	22-Apr-15
Newfoundland Census, 1945	328,362	22-Apr-15
Newfoundland, Vital Records, 1840-1949	363,845	10-Jun-15
Newfoundland, Vital Statistics, 1753-1893	191,573	8-May-15

[FamilySearch Family Trees](https://familysearch.org/family-trees/) <https://familysearch.org/family-trees/> I caution everyone on using information from Family Trees because the information may not be verifiable.

[FamilySearch Learn](#)

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Newfoundland_and_Labrador_Online_Genealogy_Records - This link is dated. It contains a lot of sites that are free.

[Newfoundland's Grand Banks Genealogy Site](http://ngb.chebucto.org/) <http://ngb.chebucto.org/> - This is the largest collection on the web of transcribed original source material relating to the Newfoundland. The site has more than 16,000 separate files of information. The web site content is amazing. I usually click on two tabs: (1) B, D, M, W and (2) Official Lists. Because Census records and vital records were not collected until the 20th Century, Census substitutes, like parish records, directories (nearly 20), planters lists, lists of fishing rooms, and cemetery records are available.. I have gathered a lot of records from the site. It is updated frequently and is searchable. I am amazed at the lists of Church records, business directories, planters lists and cemetery records. There are indices for the Newfoundland Regiment in WW I and WW II. There is also a World War II Index of all Newfoundlanders who served.

[Ancestry Library](#) - There is no hyperlink because I use my local library to access the database. My library is one of over 40 libraries in Eastern Massachusetts that access Ancestry Library through the Minuteman Network. In addition, I have counted over 40 other Massachusetts communities' libraries which offer Ancestry Library. Ancestry Library is free to all library users. It is not available 24/7. It is available on-site at the library during normal working hours. I use it to search US and Canadian Censuses, US Immigration, US Naturalizations, US Border Crossings etc. In addition, I read Ancestry Library Public Trees and occasionally I cautiously gather vitals from them. When I gather records and before I add them, I attempt to validate the information. Too often people who contribute make an error and it is picked as valid by others. Join any Massachusetts library with Ancestry Library for researching its collections for \$1.

[WikiTree](http://www.wikitree.com/) <http://www.wikitree.com/> - This is a free database. I have my Pedigree Chart in it with the hope that I will find relatives who are also looking for a connection. Once I found a record for a relative, I used WikiTree to contact the individual without success.

[StonePics - Cemeteries of Newfoundland](http://www.stonepics.com/) <http://www.stonepics.com/> - StonePics is a project to photograph and index every cemetery, headstone, and monument in Newfoundland. The completion of this project makes Newfoundland the first state or province in North America to have a comprehensive database for finding cemeteries and headstones. About a quarter of a million people and 1,700 cemeteries are included. The index is free and downloadable. The index contains the Town Code and the Cemetery Code. The Index for example contains over 450 records for Tobin headstones in Newfoundland and Labrador. (My mother's Maiden Name was Tobin – her Northern Bay, Newfoundland ancestors were from Gowran, Kilkenny, Ireland.) To see the photo of a gravestone, the user must buy a CD for the town and cemetery.

[Newfoundland and Labrador GenWeb](http://nl.canadagenweb.org/) <http://nl.canadagenweb.org/> - This is the Newfoundland Provincial home page of the Canadian GenWeb Project.

[Periodical Article Bibliography](http://www.library.mun.ca/qeii/cns/pab.php) <http://www.library.mun.ca/qeii/cns/pab.php> - This is a database of more than 70,000 entries since the 1600s.

[Newfoundland Great War Heritage Project](http://www.nfarchives.net/) <http://www.nfarchives.net/> - This website is intended to assist family, schools, and other researchers conducting Newfoundland and Labrador genealogical, and cultural heritage research by providing a searchable database of the Newfoundland Regiment (1914-1918) nominal roll index.

[Maritime History Archive](http://www.mun.ca/mha/) <http://www.mun.ca/mha/> - The Archive collects and preserves original documents and copies of documents relating to the history of sea based activities in the North

Atlantic region. The two Maritime History Archive databases are available in Ancestry.com, Ancestry.ca, and Ancestry Library.

[Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives](http://www.anla.nf.ca/) <http://www.anla.nf.ca/> - Directory of archival holdings, membership and product information, links and a listing of events.

[Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogy on Canadian Genealogy](http://www.CanGenealogy.com) <http://www.CanGenealogy.com> - This site has vital records. The FamilySearch web site hosts the Census records. Because Newfoundland joined the confederation on March 31, 1949, the Census records and many of the early Canadian genealogy records do not apply to this province.

[Newfoundland & Labrador Genealogy Records Online](http://www.genealogysearch.org/canada/newfoundland.html) <http://www.genealogysearch.org/canada/newfoundland.html> - This site is essentially a collection of links, Some are links to The Newfoundland Grand Banks site.

[Bay St. George Genealogical Society](http://www.bsggs.ca/) <http://www.bsggs.ca/> - The society collects historical and genealogy records pertaining to the Bay St. George region of western Newfoundland.

[Newfoundland Regiment in the Great War](http://www.therooms.ca/regiment/part3_database.asp) http://www.therooms.ca/regiment/part3_database.asp
The user can select to search for a soldier or a community. I searched the Hogan surname and the search returned the record for Aiden Hogan of St. Mary's. (I have never been able to link St. Mary's Hogans and the Northern Bay Hogans, my direct line.)

List of Newfoundland and Labrador Subscription Genealogy Web Sites

[Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) [http://www.Ancestry.com/](http://www.Ancestry.com) – Wiki describes Ancestry as the largest online subscription-based genealogy database service. Two of the databases that are interesting to Newfoundland and Labrador researchers are: Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, Crew Lists, 1864-1942 with over 41000 records and Newfoundland, Canada, Index of Birth, Marriage & Death Notices from Newspapers, 1810–1890 with 42,000 records. The latter Index of Birth, Marriage and Death Notices appears to be the Maritime Archive History collection compiled by Gertrude Crosbie that is available from Memorial University Library's Maritime Archive for about \$50.

The following are the approximate cost per annum for the US, International and World: \$120, \$300, and \$480.

Most of the genealogy volunteers at the Friends of Irish Research have subscriptions and use the software when they consult with clients at our Friday evening meetings. All of the consultations are free. Free consultations can be arranged at the following web site:

<http://www.friendsofirishresearch.org/>

[Ancestry.ca](http://home.Ancestry.ca/) <http://home.Ancestry.ca/> – LivingSocial describes Ancestry.ca as the leading family history website available in Canada. Partnered with Ancestry's global network of family history services, with countries like Australia, Germany, Sweden, France, and the United Kingdom, Ancestry.ca offers users unprecedented access to multicultural heritage documents. Ranging from censuses (including English, Scottish, and Welsh data) and passenger lists, to death and marriage records, Ancestry.ca has it all. Ancestry.ca helps customers find their own discoveries and family trees by providing these high-quality services at reasonable prices. The per annum cost is approximately \$120 for Canada and 300 for the World.

[Stonepics](http://www.stonepics.com/) <http://www.stonepics.com/> – The Alphabetical listing is free. I used the Newfoundland Grand Banks web site to search the database. Earlier, I indicated that I have 6 Newfoundland direct line families that I am researching: Cummings, Hogan, Jordan, Mackey, Maher and Tobin

The Hogan family has been in Newfoundland longest (since 1785). There are 245 Hogan StonePic Records in about 40 cemeteries. To see all the Hogan headstone photos, I'd need to spend about \$1600 (assuming that each cemetery costs about \$40). There are over 450 Tobin photos.

[Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador](http://www.fhsl.ca/) <http://www.fhsl.ca/> - The Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL) is a not-for-profit organization that was established in 1984, incorporated in 1987, and in 2013 became a registered charity. The main objectives of the society are:

- To help researchers locate and access genealogical information.
- To foster education and interest in genealogical research through symposia, discussion groups, and lectures.
- To give members opportunities to connect with one another and share their research interests.
- To encourage the production and dissemination of genealogical and historical materials relating especially to Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador website has a growing collection of information that can assist with family history research, including interactive forums as well as various materials that can be downloaded from the website (such as back issues of The Newfoundland Ancestor and audio recordings of lectures). Also, the cemetery records are available on-line to members. It is described as beta test version. There are over 100000 records. In addition, there is a searchable Vital Stats Pre-1892 Births Database with over 47000 entries in it as of June 2015. Finally, there is a forum for members to post and comment on queries.

FHSNL publishes a quarterly journal called The Newfoundland Ancestor that includes a variety of articles. It includes a section in which members are encouraged submit their own research queries. I have published a number of articles in the Newfoundland Ancestor. (All my articles are available on www.friendsofirishresearch.org/publications).

FHSNL's Annual membership is currently \$42.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com

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