

# Cultural Division - Gaa Bi Zhiwabag (Historical Preservation & Outreach) - Aniishinabe Genealogy

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## Aniishinabe Genealogy

### Tracing your Sault Tribe Native American Ancestry

We receive many calls and e-mails regarding Genealogy. People ask us to help them trace their Native American ancestry. Unfortunately we do not have anyone who can assist you a lot in answering your genealogy questions. You can contact enrollment but their assistance is limited. Genealogy is something that takes a lot of research; one person cannot answer a question about anyone's family off the top of their head. They have to conduct extensive research. Genealogy is something that one must learn to find your answers or be able to afford someone who can.

The purpose of this area is to help you or at least get you started. Genealogy is a time consuming process. If you are the person who is seeking the information please plan on learning how to do genealogy. The rewards are great, the information you will find is your family will appreciate. The connection you make to your own identity will put good feelings inside you.

Please be respectful of people who you ask for help. Most of them volunteer and are very busy researching. Most will help you to a point.

Please view our web link genealogy section here.

Frequently Asked questions:

How can I find my clan?

There are many teachings on this subject. After spending years of genealogy research and listening to different Anishinaabe cultural teachings here are my conclusions (and my own personal opinion).

There are at least three ways you can find your clan:

1. By asking an elder in your family if they know.
2. By conducting genealogy research. If there are books about your family, see if your clan is mentioned. If you descended from a chief, you can find a treaty they signed. Usually their clan symbol next to their name.
3. By finding in a spiritual way. This is asking a medicine man. Most of you will find your clan using this method.

### Asking an elder in your family

It is traditional for us to offer tobacco to someone when ask something of them. When you ask your elder this question, you should offer them tobacco. Some of your elders may not know the answer, but they may be able to point you in the right direction. Elders in your family should also be the first step in tracing your genealogy. Genealogy Research

This will take the most time. You can sometimes find clan information in books. If you are descended from a chief, you may be able to find your clan from a treaty.

Generally the way this works is once you find your clan, let's say through a chief who signed a treaty. You would follow the father's side down to you. Example, if a mother was a bear clan, and the father was a crane clan, the child would be crane. Now in many cases you will not be able to trace through men.

Many Indian women married men of European ancestry. So how can you find out your clan? I would follow the woman's clan to you. So if a crane clan woman married a man of European ancestry, their child would be crane. This would continue down with each generation. But always try to follow the father when possible.

There are many opinions on this, what I offer here is from my own teachings. If all genealogy research does not help you find your clan go to the next method of finding your clan in a spiritual way.

### Finding your clan in a spiritual way

Prior to the Sault Tribe pow wow held up here in Sault Ste. Marie, MI every July, there are many spiritual gatherings that take place. At these spiritual events are medicine men whom you can offer tobacco (using your left hand) and ask them to help you. They may redirect you to another person. This is perhaps the best time to find a medicine man who will help you find your clan if you don't know of one already.

Because medicine men are spiritual people they are able to connect to "spirit helpers" who tell them what your clan is.

I have been in situations where I traced my own clan and found it was crane. I also asked a medicine man and had this confirmed. But I have other members of my family we were told by medicine men they were bear or eagle. Some even told me the identified with the eagle. This is okay. The creator has different reasons for doing things..even if they don't make sense to us when we are thinking with European values and not Annishinabe way of thinking. When searching for your clan, the best thing is to go by is what your heart feels is right for you. This is a very personally thing, our instincts tell us what is right when we open ourselves up to listen to them, this means living our lives in a good way. Removing anything that takes us away from our natural state. This includes eating good. Avoiding bad things and thoughts. We are most connected when we are our true selves. The creator is always guiding us, but we are not always listening when we should.

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