

Civil War Research: Tracing Union & Confederate Ancestors

Class 4: Union and Confederate Pension Files: A Genealogist's Gold Mine

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Step # 1 – Understanding and Locating Union Pension Files

- Pension File Indexes to Union Pension files at the National Archives
 - T288: Alphabetical Index on Ancestry.com
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/4654/>
 - T289: Organizational Index on Fold3.com
 - <https://www.fold3.com/publication/57/us-civil-war-pensions-index-1861-1900>
- Variety of Pension Files
 - Invalid Pension

NAME	DATE OF FILING	CLASS	APPLICATION NO.	CLAIM	CERTIFICATE NO.
Warren Alphonso F.	June 25	Invalid	516,276		300,268
ADDITIONAL SERVICES					
REMARKS					

- Widows Pension
- Mother or Father's Pension
- Remarried Widows Pension
- Invalid, Widow, and Minor Pension (combined on one index)
- Requesting Union pensions from the National Archives using the NATF-85 Form online:
 - <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=eservices.archives.gov>
 - Email: Request a NATF-85 or questions to: Inquire@arch2.nara.gov
- **Tip:** Visit the archives and use a digital camera for Free!

- Typical Pension File Papers
 - Declaration for pension and pension application
 - Certificate of disability
 - Surgeon's certificate with disability description (form and sketch)
 - Includes a form and sketch describing disability
 - Date of examination
 - Name and rank of claimant
 - Claimant's post office address
 - Cause of disability
 - If a pensioner, the amount of pension
 - Claimant's statement
 - Full description of disabilities
 - Questionnaire (Form 3-447 used before 1902)
 - Includes a form and sketch describing disability
 - Form provides:
 - Date of examination
 - Name and rank of claimant
 - Claimant's post office address
 - Cause of disability
 - If a pensioner, the amount of pension
 - Claimant's statement
 - Full description of disabilities
 - When were you born?
 - Where were you born?
 - When did you enlist?
 - Where did you enlist?
 - Where had you lived before you enlisted?
 - What was your post office address at enlistment?
 - What was your occupation at enlistment?
 - When were you discharged?
 - Where were you discharged?
 - Where have you lived since discharge?
 - Give dates, as nearly as possible, of any changes of residence.
 - Questionnaire (Form 3-389)
 - Date and Place of Birth; The name of organization in which you served?
 - What was your post office at enlistment?
 - State your wife's full name and her maiden name.
 - When, where and by whom were you married?

- Is there any official or church record of your marriage? If so, where?
 - Were you previously married? If so, state the name of your former wife, the date of the marriage, and the date and place of her death or divorce. If there was more than one previous marriage, let your answer include all former wives.
 - If your present wife was married before her marriage to you, state the name of her former husband, the date of such marriage and the date and place of his death or divorce, and state whether he ever rendered any military or naval service, and if so, give name of the organization in when he served. If she was married more than once before her marriage, to you, let your answer include all former husbands.
 - Are you now living with your wife, or has there been a separation?
 - State the names and dates of birth of all your children, living or dead.
- Widow's Pension – After September 8, 1916, the Pension office requested the age, birthdate and birthplace of each Civil War widow to be returned to the office.
- Affidavits (for and against the pensioner)
 - Sworn statements regarding the legitimacy of the veteran's claim; expressing the need for a pension; or details regarding the veteran's disability.
 - Provided by fellow soldiers, doctors, state & federal soldiers' home, or neighbors.
 - Guardian declaration for minor child pension.
 - Letters from a veteran or his family regarding application for pension.
- Correspondence
- Bills and receipts
- Tips when visiting the National Archives in Washington, D.C. when copying pension files.
 - Copy all application and certificate numbers carefully on your slips.
 - Turn in slips on a regular basis if you have many requests.
 - Copy the entire file and sort the paperwork later.
 - Don't forget the Wrappers sheets that were the original covers of the pension file.
 - Sort copies out in chronological order.
 - Make sure front and back is together.
 - Make another set of your copies and work with the original set only when needed.

Step # 2 – Understanding and Locating Confederate Pension Files

- Confederate Pension Records
 - Not located at the National Archives.
 - Local repositories maintain the original records.
- Confederate Pension resources by State supplied by the National Archives website
 - <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html>
- Confederate pensions were first granted by various states starting on a specific year
 - Alabama (1867)
 - Arkansas (1891)
 - Florida (1885)
 - Georgia (1870)
 - Kentucky (1912)
 - Louisiana (1898)
 - Mississippi (1888)
 - Missouri (1911)
 - North Carolina (1867)
 - Oklahoma (1915)
 - South Carolina (1887)
 - Tennessee (1891)
 - Texas (1881)
 - Virginia (1888)

Confederate Pensions online

- **Ancestry.com**
 - Alabama: Pension & Service, 1862-1947:
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1593/>
 - Georgia: Pension Applications, 1879-1960
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1560/>
 - Tennessee: Pension Application Index
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7875/>
- **FamilySearch.org**
 - Arkansas: Veteran Pensions, 1901-1929
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1837922>
 - Florida: Veteran and Widows Pensions, 1885-1955
https://www.floridamemory.com/discover/historical_records/pensionfiles/

- Kentucky: Veteran Pensions, 1912-1950
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916017>
- Louisiana: Veteran Pensions, 1898-1950
<https://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/ResearchHistoricalRecords/LocateHistoricalRecords/Pages/ConfederatePensionDatabase.aspx>
- Mississippi: Veteran and Widows Pensions, 1900-1974
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1936413>
- Missouri: Veteran Pensions, 1911-1938
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1865475>
- North Carolina: Veteran and Widows Pensions, 1885-1953
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1911763>
- Confederate Pensions from State Archives and State Libraries
 - Georgia: <http://vault.georgiaarchives.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/TestApps>
 - Oklahoma: <https://digitalprairie.ok.gov/digital/collection/pensions>
 - South Carolina: <https://scdah.sc.gov/research-and-genealogy/online-research/digital-collections>
 - Tennessee: <https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/guides/tennessee-confederate-pension-applications-soldiers-widows>
 - Texas: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/pensions/introcpi.html>
 - Virginia: <https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/confederate-pensions>
- Confederate Army Payrolls for Enslaved Labor, 1840-1883
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62196/>

Step # 3 – Adopt the Regiment

- Adopt the Regiment Checklist
 - ✓ Determine who the other soldiers in the same vessel, company, and or regiment are.
 - ✓ Create a spreadsheet of names and dates.
 - ✓ Repeat the steps as you would for your own ancestor.
 - ✓ Locate where they resides to search for diaries and letters they may have left.
 - ✓ Search Pension files for mutual "affidavits".
 - ✓ Create a Social Media page for descendants.