

For Those Who Served: Military Research from Colonial Conflicts to World War II

Class 4: Soldiers of the Civil War

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How did the Civil War affect your ancestors?

- Economy
- Employment
- Divided the allegiance of their family.
- Destroyed their livelihoods, destruction on the battlefield of their farms, or troops raiding their property or occupying their homes.
- Loss of family members and friends who fought on both sides of the war.

Step # 1 – Determine if he fought for the Union or Confederacy

- Search the 1860 U.S. Census on Ancestry.com, to determine where your ancestors were living the year before the Civil War started.
- Does your ancestor “fit the description”?
 - Male, in good health
 - Draft registration
 - How old was he in 1861?
 - Average age 18-30
 - Most soldiers born 1790 to 1850
 - Good teeth for the infantry?
 - If on the young side, did his father enlist?
- Treasures in the attic
 - Letters, diaries, and photographs
 - Military ephemera from the battlefield
 - Does this family treasure help verify oral tradition?
- Graveside Hints
 - G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) or C.S.A. veteran (Confederate States of America) flags marker or military headstone
 - Veteran plots on a national or local level
 - Search for gravestones of Civil War veterans on websites Findagrave.com and BillionGraves.com
- Search Probate and Deed Records for your Civil War soldier and his spouse.

- City Directories
 - Listing the veteran at a residence in 1860 and not present 1861-1865 may indicate service.
 - Veterans are occasionally listed in a separate appendix in the city directory.
 - Abbreviations denoting service in the Army or Navy.
 - The date of death of the veteran listed in the directory occasionally.
- Local State Sources
 - State Archives holdings
 - Published compilations of veterans
 - State Adjutant General reports
 - Veteran Membership list (G.A.R. and C.S.A. veterans)
- Federal and State Census Clues
 - U.S. Federal census
 - 1890: special schedule
 - 1910: veteran question
 - 1930: veteran question
 - State census (depends on state)
 - Three enumerated in 1865 (New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts)

Step # 2 – Learn about your Ancestor’s service

- Search the **National Park Service “Soldiers and Sailors Database”** for Union and Confederate veterans online: <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>
 - The NPS database also allows you to search for small regimental histories of the unit, battles the regiment was involved in as well as some federal cemeteries.
- What details does the database contain for Civil War veterans?
 - Regiment or battalion
 - Whether Confederate or Union
 - Company (Letter of his company example: Co. A, Co. F.)
 - Soldier’s rank in and rank out
 - Alternate name(s)
 - National Archives source microfilm number
- Ordering Records from the National Archives
 - To order Military Compiled Military Service Records go the NARA website: <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline>
 - For some Union states **Compiled Military Service Records** (CMSR) are available online from Fold3.com <https://www.fold3.com/collection/us-civil-war-union>

- Typical details on a CMSR (Compiled Military Service Record) Union or Confederate
 - Soldier's name
 - Age
 - Rank
 - Military unit(s) served in
 - If he was imprisoned, where and when captured
 - If he deserted, when received and when discharged and by whom one was discharged
 - If died where and when death occurred

- **U.S. Army Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914** is available from Ancestry.com
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1198/>
 - These U.S. Army registers record the following details:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| ▪ Name | ▪ Regiment |
| ▪ Date of Enlistment (when, where, length) | ▪ Company |
| ▪ Where born and age | ▪ Number of enlistments |
| ▪ Occupation | ▪ And additional remarks field |
| ▪ Physical Description | |

- U.S. Navy and Marines database of **United States Naval Enlistment Rendezvous 1855-1891** is available from FamilySearch.org
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1825347>

- **U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1959** is available on Ancestry.com
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1089/>

- **Other Resources to consider for obtaining details on your Union or Confederate veteran:**
 - Town histories
 - County histories
 - College year books or alumni registers

- **Tip:** Consider other family members who served (*brothers, fathers, uncles, cousins, etc.*)

Confederate Service Records Online

- Confederate Compiled Military Service Records on Fold3.com
 - <https://www.fold3.com/publication/29>
- Confederate Compiled Military Service Records on Ancestry.com
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1106>
- Confederate Naval and Marine Personnel Records on FamilySearch.org
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/103087>

- Statewide Online Resources for Confederate Service Records
 - Alabama: <https://archives.alabama.gov/research/CivilWarService.aspx>
 - Georgia: <https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/confed/search>
 - Virginia: <https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/confederate-rosters>

Step # 3 – Determine whether your ancestor was killed or wounded

- Sources to examine to determine whether your ancestor was killed or wounded
 - Published sources
 - Regimental histories. Search Archive.org or HathiTrust.org to locate regimental histories for Union and Confederate service.
 - Roll of Honor (Union veterans)
 - Newspapers
 - Death registers
- Search for published regimental histories on Archive.org or Hathitrust.org
- **U.S. Civil War Roll of Honor, 1861-1865** is a database of Union veterans buried in National cemeteries around the United States available Ancestry.com
 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61388/>
- Use **Newspapers** to locate death notices, obituary or article reporting that your veteran was wounded during the Civil War. Examine newspaper databases that have coverage for the communities your ancestor resided in. [Example: Newspapers.com, GenealogyBank.com].
- **Death Registers.** Some town, city and county clerks would record the deaths of veterans who died during the Civil War in their annual records. In Massachusetts between 1861-1865 the deaths of veterans are often found in the town and city vital records with residents who died locally.

Step # 4 – Pensions for the Union and the Confederacy

Union Pension Files

- 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
- 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) 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.

Confederate Pension Records

- Not located at the National Archives.
- Located 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>

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