

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

Class 2: Revolutionary War Patriots

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There are many resources for researching Revolutionary War soldiers and their families. It is the purpose of this lecture to introduce and review as many resources as possible to aid in reviewing the life of a soldier during the war for independence.

Step #1 – Determine if he fought

- Age range of typical soldier, 18-35
- Average birth year 1735-1760
- Extremes early 1700s & late 1760s
- Use Vital records and other primary and secondary sources to compile what you already know

Step # 2 - Research

1. Start with Eric Grundset's state-by-state source guide compilations (see bibliography)
2. Review go-to sources:
 - Muster Rolls
 - Quartermaster Rolls
 - Pension Files
 - Journals & Diaries
 - 1840 Census of Pensioners
 - Correspondence
 - Published genealogies and town histories
 - State Compilations
 - Newspapers
 - Maps
3. Going from Published Accounts to Primary Sources
 - Published Accounts to Muster Rolls
 - Going beyond abstracts and dissecting Pension Files
 - State Compilations

TIP: Consider using the steps we have discussed to examine pension files, journals, and diaries of men who fought with your ancestor. The details in the letters, journals, diaries and pension files may add more detail to the story you already know from researching records.

Step #3 - Learn About the Pensions

1. Pension timeline
 - 1776: Half pay for officers and men disabled in the service and incapable of earning a living.
 - 1780: Half pay for 7 yrs. To widows and orphans of officers.
 - 1806: Pensions allowed to veterans of State troops and militia for the first time.
 - 1818: Pensions for life based on a period of 9 mos. or until the end of the war.
 - 1820: Certified inventories of pensioner's estate and income were required.
 - 1832: Pensions granted to those with service less than 6 mos.
 - 1838: Widows were authorized pensions for 5 yrs. if they had married the veteran before 1794.
 - 1848: Widows were authorized pensions for life if they had married the veteran before 1800.
 - 1853: All widows restrictions were eliminated.
 - 1869: Daniel F. Bakeman last pensioner dies.
 - 1878: Widows authorized pensions for life if the veteran only served 2 weeks.
 - 1906: Esther (Sumner) Damon the last widow to collect a pension dies in Vermont.
2. Review pension abstracts, online pension files (fold3.com), and final payment vouchers
3. 1840 Census of Pensioners

TIP: Look for Diaries of fellow veterans at local repositories or online through Archive Grid:
<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>

Bibliography of Revolutionary War Websites:

American Ancestors: www.americanancestors.org

Revolutionary War Muster Rolls and Pension Files Online: www.fold3.com

Revolutionary War Maps at the Library of Congress:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/armhtml/armhome.html>

Valley Forge Muster Roll Project: <http://valleyforgemusterroll.org/>

1840 Pension Index from Census: <http://www.us-roots.org/colonialamerica/census/1840/>

Various websites for Revolutionary War History: <http://www.americanrevolution.org>

Revolutionary War Records on Microfilm from the Family History Library:

<https://familysearch.org/catalog/search>

Revolutionary War Manuscripts at American Ancestors

<https://digital.americanancestors.org/digital/collection/p15869coll22>

Bibliography of Books:

Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History* (New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt and Company, 1903).

Francis Bernard Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution, April 1775 to December 1783* (Washington, D.C.: Rare Book Shop Publishing Co., 1914).

Eric Grundset's source guides set, including:

- *Connecticut in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2016.
- *Georgia in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2013.
- *Massachusetts and Maine in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2015.
- *New York in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2012.
- *North Carolina in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2016.
- *Rhode Island in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2014.
- *South Carolina in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2013.
- *Virginia in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2016.
- *Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Patriots in the Revolutionary War*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2008.
- *America's Women in the Revolutionary Era: A History Through Bibliography*, Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the Revolution, 2011.

Charles H. Lewis, *Cut Off: Colonel Jedediah Huntington's 17th Continental (Conn.) Regiment at the Battle of Long Island August 27, 1776* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2009)

Henry Phelps Johnston, *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the I. War of the Revolution, II. War of 1812, III. Mexican War* (Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Adjutant-General's Office, Connecticut General Assembly, 1889).

Henry Phelps Johnston, *Yale and Her Honor Roll in the American Revolution* (New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1888).

J. Michael Phelps, Ed., *Biographies of Original Members and Qualifying Officers: Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Connecticut, 3 Volumes* (Boston, Mass.: Newbury Street Press, 2023).

Clifford K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Vol. SIV, 1756-1760, Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes of 1756-1760* (Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1968).

Revolutionary War Lineage Societies:

National Society Daughters of the American Revolution <https://www.dar.org/discover>

National Society Sons of the American Revolution <https://www.sar.org/>

Sons of the Revolution <https://sr1776.org/>

Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge <https://www.valleyforgesociety.com/>

The Society of the Cincinnati <https://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/>

Order of Founders and Patriots of America <https://ofpa.org/>