

How to Learn About My Civil War Ancestors: Part 2 Handout

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Draft Registration Cards

A draft registration doesn't mean that they served in the Civil War.

Confederate Draft Records: limited number of draft registration records available. Some are at the National Archives and some in the state archives.

Union Draft Records: conscription began in the Union in 1863. Every male citizen, and immigrant who had applied for citizenship, between the ages of 20-45 and unmarried men 35-45 had to register for the draft. It was called the Enrollment Act of 1863. The federal government paid a bounty of \$300 for 3 year recruits. Soldiers were paid monthly, abt. \$8.33.

How to Determine Your Soldier's Regiment and Company

Begin by searching the National Park Service: Soldiers and Sailors Database (free) [nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm](https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm)

This database contains information about the men who served in both Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. You may also find histories of regiments, links to descriptions of significant battles and some prisoner of war and cemetery records.

Paid sites like My Heritage and Ancestry also have indexes to Civil War Records. FamilySearch.org also has the United States Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861-1865 for free.

What are the Compiled Military Service Records?

Once you find your Civil War ancestor's information on an index in the databases mentioned above, search for the Compiled Military Service Records.

Compiled Military Service Records began in the 1880s as a way for the Dept. of the Army to identify which soldiers were eligible for a pension. The information of a soldier from a muster roll, or prison of war record, or hospital record, etc. was compiled onto a card that was put into a jacket identifying that individual soldier.

Typically a muster roll card will have the name, date of enlistment, period of service, residence at time of enlistment, personal description, and age of the soldier.

All the Compiled Service Records are on Fold3.

Research the Regiment

Determine the regiment/regiments your Civil War ancestor served in. Then research the history of the regiment. Compare the service records against the regimental history to determine what battles your ancestor may have been a participant.

- Google the regiment
- Wikipedia
- Search for regimental books: Google Books, HathiTrust, FamilySearch Catalog (use WorldCat to determine if a regimental history book is in a library nearby.
- Journal articles in JSTOR

Historical Societies, Archives, Local Libraries

Search for county libraries and local libraries, archives, and historical societies where your ancestor lived by Googling FamilySearch Research Wiki. In the search bar enter the county and state.

Pension Records

Confederate Pension Records: The National Archives does not have pension files for Confederate soldiers. Pensions were granted by the STATE to Confederate veterans, their widows, and minor children.

Some of the state archives may have posted pensions online. Contact the state archives to find out. Remember that the Confederate veteran was eligible to apply for a pension to the **state in which he lived, even if he served in a unit from a different state.**

The National Archives site provides links to where you can locate Confederate records: www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate-pension-records

Union Pension Records:

If a veteran survived the war, he applied for a pension based on what was allowed by law at the time of his application, which might be loss of limb or eye, disabilities from wounds or disease incurred in the service.

Union pension files were indexed by the National Archives.

Find the Union Civil War Pension Index Cards. They contain application and certificate numbers that will lead you to your ancestor's pension file.

Union Civil War Pension Index Cards are online at Ancestry, Fold3 and FamilySearch.

NAME OF SOLDIER:					<i>Tipton, David M. C.</i>				
SERVICE:					<i>Late rank, Co. D, 3 Reg't 76 Mtd Inf,</i>				
TERM OF SERVICE:					<i>Enlisted, 1 Discharged, 1</i>				
DATE OF FILING.	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	LAW.	CERTIFICATE NO.					
<i>1882 June 14</i>	<i>Invalid,</i>	<i>452,536</i>	<i>2,</i>	<i>486,542</i>					
	<i>Widow,</i>	<i>815,803</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>591372</i>					
	<i>Minor,</i>								
ADDITIONAL SERVICES:									

www.Fold3.com

Invalid pension (pronounced **IN**valid) means that the soldier applied for the pension. See the application number in the example above.

The certificate number signifies that the soldier received a pension. If a soldier does not have a certificate number, there will still be a pension file with lots of information trying to prove that the soldier deserved the pension.

Widow's pension: If a soldier died, his widow could receive a widow's pension. She would have to make an application and prove her marriage to the veteran. If she remarried, her claim for a pension ended.

A mother, who had been dependent solely upon a son who died in the war, could receive a pension.

Minor pension: A minor child of a soldier could receive a pension until they were 16 years old. The application would be made by the surviving parent or guardian. They had to prove the marriage of the parents and the minor's relationship to them.

Only 5-10% of all Union Civil War pension records are online.

The Union Civil War pensions are at the National Archives in Washington D.C.
Most pension files are 50-100 pages long.

Order a pension in one of three ways:

- Visit the National Archives
- Order from the National Archives (The cost is \$80.00 and wait time is several months).
- **Order from CivilWarRecords.com** (Brian Rhinehart is cheaper, faster, and easier. Your file comes as an email attachment easily dragged into a computer file).

Besides Union Army Pension Files you can also get copies of the following:

- Union Army Compiled Military Service Records
- Union Army Carded Medical Records
- Union and Confederate Company's Record of Events