



UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR HISTORY & GENEALOGY RESEARCH

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TYPES OF MILITARY RECORDS

1) Service Records

- Records generated at time of actual service
- Created by each department, unit, or facility
- 19th Century War Department compiled files for each soldier

2) Benefits Records

- After the actual service
- For veteran or surviving family members
- Pensions
- Bounty Land

3) Miscellaneous Records

- Burial and Headstones
- Fiscal records of the Revolutionary War
- Aliens during the War of 1812
- Confederate civilians during the Civil War
- Japanese-Americans during World War II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE POLITICS, CAUSES, RESULTS LEADING TO THE WAR

- too detailed and controversial
- not necessarily significant to genealogy research
- possibly helpful for better understanding of ancestor

BATTLES AND LEADERS

- there is too much history to cover
- fun to research and learn once an ancestor's service is confirmed

WEAPONS AND TACTICS

- modernized weapons used with old-style military tactics
 - the primary cause of the large number of battle deaths in the war
- uniquely modern war, yet still a *Gentleman's War*
 - introduction of total and complete warfare
 - yet still a camaraderie between enemy soldiers

ENTIRE COUNTRY AFFECTED

- no person, no family was unaffected by the Civil War
 - every young man was in a hurry to enlist on both sides
 - older men used for home guard
 - women would be important as nurses, and spies; many wanted to enlist and fight; some did

- religious groups affected
 - Quakers and Mennonites – with a pacifist belief
 - used in support methods, ie. Nursing, transportation, etc.
- war fought in the south, destroying homes, farms, towns (records)
 - old men, women and children dying from disease and starvation; murder, rape, pillaging; bushwhacking
- slaves freed; many fought for north; with manpower shortage, the south took up the issue of freeing and arming the slaves
- War fought from coast to coast
 - southern California sympathetic to the South
 - Arizona was first recognized by the Confederacy
 - battles in New Mexico and Arizona
 - units from Colorado and California
 - invasion of Maine by Confederate units coming from Canada
 - Indian units from Oklahoma
 - Confederate General Stand Waite
 - Indians in far west renew their fight against the white settlers who now have no army to protect them

INTERNATIONAL PROPORTIONS

- naval battles off the coast of France and England; and in the far Pacific
- Confederacy seeking recognition and support from France and England
- international observers; and fighters
- King of Siam offered elephants to Lincoln
- Confederates escape to Mexico and Brazil

THE DIVIDED UNION

- Industrial North versus Rural South
- Northern Sympathy for the South
 - the non-New England northern states had southern roots
 - the Copperheads
 - anti-war politics in the north wanting peace at any price
- Southerners Loyal to the Union
 - Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, known as the border states were deeply divided, providing units to both sides
 - South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Arkansas had a number of Union Regiments

A HOUSE DIVIDED

- West Point Classmates and Friends
 - the army leaders were knew each other well, often very good friends
 - Robert E. Lee, considered one of the best generals of the war, was able to predict the actions of his Union counterparts because of his personal familiarity with them as personal friend or as their former instructor
 - Major Robert Anderson, commanding Ft. Sumter, had been the artillery mentor of P.G.T. Beauregard, who fired on the that Fort starting the war

- Union General Winfield Scott Hancock and Confederate General Lewis Armistead were best friends; they were wounded within yards of each other at the battle of Gettysburg
- Union and Confederate troops were taught military commands, training techniques and tactics from a book written by Confederate General W. J. Hardee
- Families Divided
 - Lincoln had 4 brothers-in-law in the Confederate Army
 - Henry Clay had 7 grandsons in the Civil War
 - 3 Union, 4 Confederate
 - Senator Geo. B. Crittenden of Kentucky had 3 sons in the War
 - 2 became Major Generals, 1 Union, 1 Confederate
 - Confederate Gen. Jeb Stuart's chief-of-staff was Major H. B. McClellan
 - he had four brothers in blue
 - his first cousin was Union General George B. McClellan
 - Commander of the Army of the Potomac
 - Union General Philip St. George Cooke
 - 3 daughters married to generals
 - 1 Union, 2 Confederate
 - one of the Confederate son-in-laws was General Jeb Stuart
 - his son was Confederate General John Rogers Cooke
 - the Hubbard brothers
 - Frederick, Confederate, Washington Artillery
 - Henry, Union, 1st Minnesota Infantry
 - hadn't seen each other in seven years, were placed beside each other in the hospital after the Battle of First Bull Run
 - Major A. M. Lea
 - led the Confederate forces who captured the USS Harriet Lane in Galveston, Texas
 - when he boarded, he found his wounded and dying son, a U.S. Lieutenant

OF NOTABLE AMERICAN ANCESTRY

- Robert E. Lee
 - great Confederate General
 - son of General "Lighthouse" Harry Lee
 - member of the Continental Congress
 - noted Revolutionary War hero
 - Virginia Governor
- Billings Steele
 - enlisted Confederate army at age 16
 - member of Mosby's Rangers
 - grandson of Francis Scott Key
 - author of Star Spangled Banner
- Confederate General Richard Taylor
 - son of President Zachary Taylor
- George Wythe Randolph
 - Confederate Secretary of War
 - grandson of President Thomas Jefferson

- Charles Francis Adams Sr.
 - appointed U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain by President A. Lincoln
 - son of President John Quincy Adams
 - grandson of President John Adams
- Daniel Smith Donelson
 - Major General in the Confederate Army
 - founder of Fort Donelson
 - site of major Civil War siege
 - nephew of President Andrew Jackson

Benjamin Harrison

- Union Brigadier General
- great-grandson of Benjamin Harrison
 - signer of the Declaration of Independence
- grandson of President William Henry Harrison
- himself would be 23rd President of the United States

THE ARMIES

COMMAND STRUCTURE

- Union and Confederate structure differed only slightly
- somewhat fluid (fluctuates)
 - each battle also affected the command structure
- Company
 - consisted of 100 men
 - usually all from the same community
 - usually identified by a Letter designation
 - there was no “J” Company in either army
 - commanded by a Captain
- Battalion
 - consisted of anything less than 10 Companies
 - commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel or Major
- Regiment (most common)
 - consisted of 10 or more Companies (1000 men)
 - Union Regiments had 12 companies
 - usually identified by a State and number designation
 - commanded by a Colonel
- Brigade
 - (on average) consisted of 4 or 5 Regiments
 - commanded by a Brigadier General
- Division
 - (on average) consisted of 4 or 5 Brigades, plus artillery unit
 - commanded by a Major General
- Corps
 - (on average) consisted of 3 Divisions, an added Brigade of artillery
 - commanded by a Major General or Lieutenant General
 - Lieutenant General was a unique confederate designation
- an Army usually consisted of 3 Corps
 - commanded by the General of the Army

NAMES OF ARMIES AND BATTLES

- Union armies were named after bodies of water
 - Army of the Potomac [River]
 - Army of the Tennessee [River]
- Confederate armies were named after bodies or regions of land
 - Army of Northern Virginia [State]
 - Army of Tennessee [State]
- battles followed the same pattern
 - Union battle of 1st Bull Run [Creek] is the Confederate battle of 1st Manassas [railroad junction/town near the creek]
 - Union battle of Antietam [Creek] was Confederate battle of Sharpsburg [town near the creek in Maryland]
 - Union battle of Stone's River was Confederate battle of Murfreesboro [town in Tennessee near the river]

ETHNIC DIVERSITY

FOREIGN POPULATION (1860 CENSUS)

- Northern States shows a population of 4 million foreigners
- Southern States shows a population of 233,000 foreigners

UNION

- brigadier generals: 9 were German, 4 Irish, 2 French, 1 Russian, Hungarian, Polish and a Spaniard
- Germans formed 10 New York regiments, 6 Ohio, 6 Missouri, 5 Penn., 4 Wisconsin, and 3 Illinois regiments
 - the 82nd Illinois regiment had 1 company entirely of German-Jews
- the Irish flag with the Harp of Erin flew on every major Civil War battlefield
 - third most common flag in the war
 - entire units of Irishmen included 2 from Mass., 4 NY, 2 Penn., 2 Indiana
 - the famous NY Irish Brigade was virtually wiped out at the Battle of Fredericksburg by a brigade of Confederate Irishmen
- there were smaller units of Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Italians, Native Americans, Scottish, Scandinavians, Swiss, Welsh, Dutch, and Mexican
- the 39th NY regiment, also known as the Garibaldi Guard
 - commanded by a Hungarian, seconded by an Italian
 - ranks comprised of English, Swiss, Croats, Bavarians, Cossacks, Garibaldians, Sepoys, Germans, and Algerian Zouaves formerly of the French Foreign Legion
 - 3 companies of Hungarian Hussars, 3 of German infantry, 1 of Italian Carabineers, 1 of Swiss, 1 of French, 1 of Spanish, 1 Portuguese
 - most were veterans of European wars

CONFEDERATE

- Generals: 5 Irish, 3 French, 2 from England, 2 Germans, 1 Scottish
- the Confederacy had so many French speaking soldiers, that French was made the second official language of the Confederate Army
- Confederate Colonel Santos Benavides was from Mexico
- 5 Colonels came from Poland, including a Count

- Hugh McVey, age 70+, an Irish veteran of Waterloo, enlisted in the 4th Kentucky and was killed at the Battle of Shiloh
- generally the Germans were against slavery, but many still served the Confederacy
 - German-Jews
 - Marcus Baum served on Gen. Kershaw's staff
 - two Prussian Barons served as staff members
 - Baron William Henry von Eberstein served as Fife Sergeant in the Washington Grays of the 7th North Carolina regiment
- there were entire companies of Germans, French, Poles, Italians, Spaniards, Mexicans
- Louisiana
 - the 1st Louisiana Regiment had men from 37 nationalities
 - including Italians, Spaniards, Mexicans and Chinese
 - the European Brigade consisted of French, Spanish, Italians, Germans, Dutch, Scandinavians, Swiss, Belgians, English and Slavonians

DEATHS

618,000 to 700,000 Americans died in the American Civil War
this exceeds deaths in all other wars from the Revolution to Vietnam combined

UNION

- total number of soldiers during war ranged from 2,500,000 to 2,750,000
- 112 out of every 1000 federal soldiers were wounded in battle
- total battle deaths: 110,070
- total deaths by disease: 250,152
- total loses: 360,222

CONFEDERATE

- total number of soldiers during war ranged from 750,000 to 1,250,000
- 150 of 1000 confederate soldiers were wounded in battle
- total battle deaths: 94,000
- total deaths by disease: 164,000
- total loses: 258,000

BATTLE STATS -- killed, wounded and missing

- Sharpsburg/Antietam: September 17, 1862
 - total casualties in 1 day of fighting: 26,134
 - considered the bloodiest day of the entire War
- Fredericksburg: December 13, 1862
 - total casualties in 1 day of fighting: 17,962
- Chancellorsville: May 1, 2, 3 & 4, 1863
 - total casualties in 4 days of fighting: 29,556
- Gettysburg: July 1, 2 & 3, 1863
 - total casualties in 3 days of fighting: 51,112
 - Vietnam in 10 years of fighting: 55,000
- Chickamauga: September 20 & 21, 1863
 - total casualties in 2 days of fighting: 34,654
- The campaign from Wilderness to Richmond
 - May 5 to June 30, 1864 -- two months of fighting
 - Grant now in command of the Union Army

- total Union loses of killed and wounded: 61,315
 - no figures for missing
 - no Confederate figures, believed to be greater
- Franklin, Tennessee: November 30, 1864 (2 hour battle)
 - Confederate loses: 6,000 to 21,000
 - including 6 generals

UNIT LOSES

- 1st Maine Heavy Artillery
 - record one day loss for any unit of the war on June 18, 1864 Petersburg, Virginia
 - 635 killed within 7 minutes of 900 going into the battle
- 26th North Carolina
 - at Gettysburg lost 714 of 800 in the three days
 - 584 on the first day
 - the war's greatest loss for a unit
 - on the morning after the first day, G Company had only one man answer roll call, & he had been knocked unconscious by a shell the first day; the roll was called by a sergeant in a stretcher with a severe leg wound
- 24th Michigan
 - was in front of 26th NC at Gettysburg
 - lost 362 of 496 on the first day
- Vermont Brigade lost 1645 of 2100 in the Wilderness battle
- The Irish Brigade began in 1861 with 7000, came back with 1000 in 1865
 - one company was down to seven men
- Native American losses show of 3530 who fought for the Union, 1018 were killed
- Colored Union troops totaled 178,975 during the war
 - losses are estimated at 36,000 dead
- some of the highest unit loses in percentages
 - 1st Texas CSA, Antietam with 226 men, lost 82.3%
 - 1st Minn. USA, Gettysburg, 262, 82%
 - 21st GA CSA, Manassas, 242, 76%
 - 141st Penn. USA, Gettysburg, 198, 75.7%
 - 101st NY USA, Manassas, 168, 73.8%
- average losses sustained by a unit was 50%

COMPARISON

- the famous charge of the "Light" Brigade
 - Crimean War, 1854-1856
 - Battle of Balaklava, Oct. 25, 1854
 - British cavalry lancers charging Russian artillery
 - sustained losses of 36%
 - considered extremely high
 - a noted disastrous defeat for British
 - considered a military blunder followed by an investigation

AGES OF THE SOLDIERS

Federal Soldiers -- 2,700,000

- 2 million were of the age of 21 or under
- 1 million of those were 18 or under
- 100,000 of those were 15 or under
- 25 were 10 or under
 - the famous Johnny Clem of the 22nd Michigan
 - at age eleven became a lance sergeant on the staff of General George H. Thomas

Confederate Soldiers – less reliable

- a sampling of 11,000 found:
 - 8,000 were 19 & over
 - 1,000 were 18
 - 366 were 17
 - 200 were 16
 - 31 were 15
 - 3 were 14
 - 1 was 13

Colleges

- on both sides, entire units were formed from students from various colleges, closing them for the entire war

LOCATIONS OF MILITARY RECORDS

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

- Indexes, Service Records, and Benefit Records to various Wars
 - Civil War
 - Union and Confederate Service Records
 - Union Service records indexed by State
 - Confederate Records were considered captured records of war
 - indexed by State
 - there is also a comprehensive index
 - Union Pension Records
 - comprehensive index
 - includes veterans of other wars
 - Indian Wars in the West
 - Spanish-American War
 - Philippine Insurrection
 - Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System
 - online comprehensive index by National Park Service
 - assisted by genealogist's nationwide
 - <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss>
 - includes unit histories
 - includes battle information
 - Regular Army, Naval and Marine Records
 - no index
 - requires extra concerted effort for research
 - Records Regarding Civilians
 - no index
 - no known research strategy

STATE ARCHIVES

- Militia Lists, Colonial to Civil War
- some Union and Confederate Service Records
- post Civil War State Military units, later National Guard
- Possibly some Benefit Records from State
- Confederate Pension Records at original Confederate States

FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

(Resources available through local Family History Centers)

Same Military Records from National Archives

All Indexes Available on Microfilm

Service and Pension for all Wars

Confederate Service Records on Microfilm

Book: *Register of Federal United States Military Records*

Mesa Family History Center, Reference Table, 973 M2de

4 brown books with American Flag and green strip with yellow dot

Volume 1 1775 - 1860

Volume 2 Civil War

Volume 3 1866 - WWII, and Misc.

Volume 4 Supplemental, mostly Civil War

SEARCHING INTERNET

Many, many Civil War websites

Unit histories

by hobby historians and Re-enactment organizations

Battle site histories

Biographies of major officers and leaders

Heritage and/or preservation organizations

National Park Service

Battle sites

Civil War Soldiers Index - <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss>

Google Tips

Use quotes for clear exact phrases

Sometimes don't use quotes

Use "Civil War" phrase in most all searches

Use the tilde (~) in front of terms that have terms for the same or related topic

Researching Unit histories and/or rosters

- number designations
- companies, battalions, regiments
- Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Guard
- officers

Use Google Books

Lots of publications available full text

Full text available for books written prior to 1920s

Unit histories and personal reminiscences

Use Google Images

Civil War photos

Units, battles, ships, etc.

Weapons

Leaders and officers

Artwork

Of times and/or modern

Other Internet Sites

- May include any or all of the above resources
 - Cyndislist
 - USGenWeb
 - National Archives
 - Library of Congress
 - State Archives and Libraries
 - Heritage Quest
 - Ancestry

OTHER SOURCES

Military/Unit Histories

- Published Diaries, Journals, Accounts
- Histories of Units

EXAMPLE USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

- ***Military bibliography of the Civil War***, by Charles E. Dornbusch
 - E 470 D67x
 - bibliography of personal narratives & unit histories
- ***A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion***, by Frederick H. Dyer, c. 1959, 3 vols.
 - E 491 D99 1959
 - vols. 1 & 2 generally have stats, indexes, etc.
 - vol. 3 has complete history of every Union unit
- ***Confederate Military History***
 - E 484 E9
 - history of each Confederate State in the war
 - includes unit histories with listings of officers
- ***New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865***, compiled by Frederick Phisterer, c. 1912
 - E 523 P58
 - 5 Vols. & Index
 - history of units including detailed biography of officers from service records
- ***Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia, 1861-1865***, c. 1982
 - abstract of service records for every soldier in every unit from Georgia
- ***War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies***
 - by Civil War historians also known as the "O.R."
 - 130 books
 - cumulative index which includes every surname
- ***Confederate Veteran Magazine***, 1893-1932 (50 vols.)
 - E 482 C74
 - with Cumulative Index in 3 vols.
 - publication of the United Confederate Veterans
 - includes biographies, obituaries, annual reports, listing of UCV officers
 - comments and recollections of the Civil War submitted by Confederate Veterans
- ***Southern Historical Society Papers*** (52 vols.)
 - E 483.7
 - with Cumulative Index
 - history of the South
 - includes comments and recollections of the Civil War submitted by Confederate Veterans
- ***Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires***, compiled by Dyer & Moore, 5 vols., c. 1985
 - E 494 T46
 - responses to questionnaires given to Federal and Confederate Veterans living in Tennessee from 1915 to 1922