

USING MILITARY RECORDS



To Unearth Your Family's History



Department of the Interior,
BUREAU OF PENSIONS,
Washington, D. C. May 27, 1908

Dear Sir: To all the Bureau in procuring any military personnel you, or otherwise concerning them
in your name, or in record of your service, you are required to answer fully the questions mentioned
below.

You will please return this circular under cover of the enclosed one that requires no postage.
Very respectfully,
Eugene A. Crandall
Commissioner

1. What was your name? Answer: *D. J. McManis*
2. What was your rank? Answer: *1st Lieutenant*
3. What did you enlist? Answer: *7th Regt. 11th Inf.*
4. Where did you enlist? Answer: *St. Paul, Minn.*
5. Where had you lived before you enlisted? Answer: *at Des Moines, Iowa*
6. What was your previous address of abode? Answer: *Des Moines*
7. What was your occupation at enlistment? Answer: *Farmer*
8. Where were you discharged? Answer: *August 28, 1861*
9. Where were you discharged? Answer: *at St. Paul, Minn.*
10. Where have you lived since discharge? Give dates, so nearly as possible, of any changed residences.
Always at Des Moines, Iowa
11. What is your present occupation? Answer: *Farmer*
12. What is your height? Answer: *6' 8"* inches. Your weight: *145*
13. The color of your eyes? Answer: *Blue* The color of your hair? Answer: *Your complexion?*
Dark Are there any prominent marks or scars on your person? If so, describe them.
14. What is your full name? These write in on the line below, in full, in the manner in which you are
known to sign it, in the presence of two witnesses who see you.
E. J. Crandall
Albert Rosenthal
Albert Rosenthal July 16, 1908



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gateway to

Harvey County GenWeb

Harvey County Genealogical Society

Harvey County Historical Society



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Federal Military Records

Not everyone had ancestors who served in the military, but most do. Of those who don't, there are still registration records and other documents related to their interaction with military. Thus, familiarity with these records is important as we track our relatives through history.

Location Is Everything: Keep Your Ancestor In Context

Your ancestor did not graduate from High School in 2005. Probably not even back in 1965. And very likely not in 1865. We must never make the mistake of forgetting the social context of the time in which our ancestor actually lived, but we must also have some awareness of the history to understand the clues and find the records which would have been created during our ancestor's lifetime.

When looking for military records, you will have to keep in mind not only each place the veteran lived after the war, but also where he resided when he enlisted and the actual county in which he enlisted.

Short List Of Resources

Federal Records - National Archives

State Records - State Archives

Local Records - Local Historical Society, Library

Local Cemetery Records

Veteran Organizations & Regimental Histories

Local Newspaper on Memorial Day - Lists!

Veteran Cemeteries & Databases Online

National Archives - Archival Databases

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad>

Remember, check every location where your ancestor lived. Pursue every possibility. Keep a checklist so that you can review where you've looked and where you haven't. And, with new records coming online ever day, go back and check the same web sites from time to time to see if new information has appeared for your ancestor.



Civil War Medicine

More soldiers died in camp of illness and infection than in battle. Twice as many died from disease than from gunshot. Dystentery, pneumonia, malria, meaasles, etc. were common. Infection was not understood, and even minor wounds easily became fatal.

It's always fun to look in military honor rolls and battlefield monuments for our ancestors, but most likely we might find them sick on their cots.

For a fun week by week popular report of the Civil War, read Harper's Weekly copies online at www.sonofthesouth.net.

Muster Rolls

Civil War Muster rolls are lists of soldiers assigned to every military unit, usually created twice a month. This roll was used to determine the pay for the soldiers. Muster-in and Muster-out rolls were created when the Unit was created and disbanded. On the date the list was created, soldiers present and accounted for were listed and a review of the troops and inspection of their weapons was held. If a soldier was sick or in the hospital it was generally noted.

Muster Rolls during the American Revolution were prepared by the commanding officer. Loyalist rolls were prepared about once every 61 days.

Americans Loyal To Britain - www.royalprovincial.com
Revolutionary War Indexes - www.militaryindexes.com/revolutionarywar
Other War Indexes - www.militaryindexes.com
National Archives - www.archives.gov/veterans
Check State Archives, Libraries, & Historical Societies

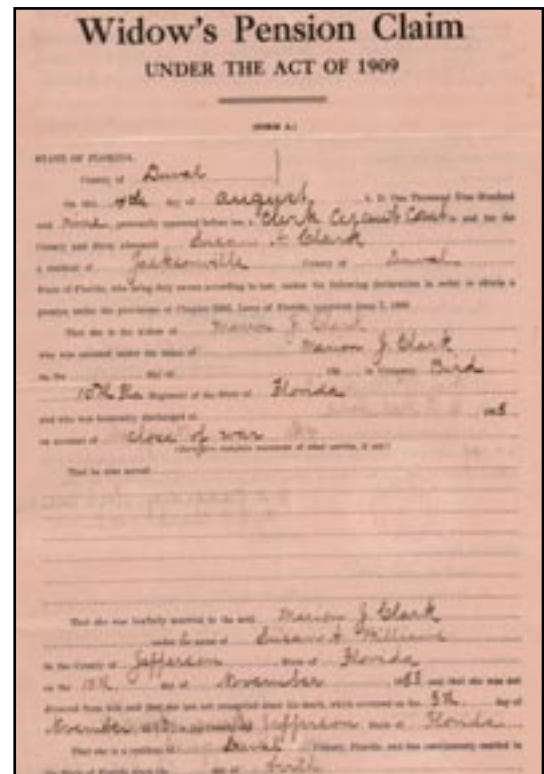
Muster roll indexes are widely available and searchable. Not all are complete, and different transcriptions contain variant spellings. Copies of Paymaster rolls are generally included in a Civil War soldier's military records file at the National Archives.

Claims Records

During Revolutionary & Civil Wars, residents submitted claim requests for lost property to provide service to the war effort.

Between March 1871 and March 1873, Southerners from the 12 Confederate States filed 22,298 claims before the Southern Claims Commission. They certified that they had been loyal to the Union and had supplies taken by or furnished to the Union Army. Only 7,092 claims (32%) were approved. One site for more information:

www.slcl.org/branches/hq/sc/scc/steps.htm



Confederate Pension Records

The 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. Generally, an applicant was eligible for a pension only if he was indigent or disabled. For an information on each Confederate State and the records, visit:

<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html>

Union Pension & Military Records

Military personnel records prior to 1917 are on file at the National Archives. From 1917 forward are on file in St. Louis and are harder to obtain unless you are next of kin. The older Military Service records held in Washington, DC include:

Volunteers - Military service performed by persons serving during an emergency and whose service was considered to be in the Federal interest, 1775 - 1902

Regular - Army Enlisted personnel, 1789 - October 31, 1912 & Officers, 1789 - June 30, 1917

Navy - Enlisted personnel, 1798 - 1885 & Officers, 1798 - 1902

Marine - Corps Enlisted personnel, 1798 - 1904 & Some officers, 1798 - 1895

Coast Guard - Persons who served in predecessor agencies to the U.S. Coast Guard: the Revenue Cutter Service (Revenue Marine), the Life-Saving Service, and the Lighthouse Service, 1791 - 1919

Confederate - States Persons who rendered military service for the Confederate States government in its armed forces, 1861 - 1865

Veterans Records - Claims files for pensions based on Federal military service, 1775 - 1916 and Bounty land warrant application files relating to claims based on wartime service, 1775 - 1855

Indexes are located in various locations, including ancestry.com and others.

Order these records by visiting:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans>

* If a veteran is not listed in the pension index you search, he may not have qualified for a pension, or he possibly never applied to receive one.

* Different pension laws and qualifications were enacted at different times. Someone whose pension was rejected at one time may have reapplied and been granted a pension at a later time. Widows and dependents under certain conditions at various times were allowed to apply for a pension.

* Confederate records are not listed in Union pension indexes. Visit the various confederate States in which the veteran lived. For example, the 1911 Arkansas Census of Confederate Veterans gives amazing biographical detail of Arkansas residents - NOT the soldiers who fought in Arkansas regiments.

* Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served In Organizations from the CSA is available at the National Archives.

Watch Changes In Terminology

Until recently, the term “Honor Roll” or “Roll of Honor” was used ONLY to refer to those who were killed in military service.

Today it often refers to any person who has SERVED in the military.

Government Documents

Official war correspondence and reports are generally filed under the Commanding Officer of the unit. They can be valuable if your ancestor was mentioned, but it also gives you a history and background of what your ancestor was actually doing while he served.

www.gpoaccess.gov

www.govinfo.org

Civil War Soldier & Sailors System - www.itd.nps.gov/cwss

Currently, over 6 million names of veterans are listed in this database. Click on the Name to get the soldier’s information, and click on the Unit name to see a list of others in the Unit.

For a history of the Unit and battleground information, visit:

www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp

Sons Of Union Veterans Of The Civil War National Graves Registration Database:

www.suvcwdb.org

Diaries & Letters

A lot of people wrote home while they were in the Military - and many of those survive. Even if you’ve checked Grandma’s attic and Aunt Joan’s desk drawers, LOOK for letters, diaries, etc from people who served WITH your ancestor. They may have written about their friends, and what they were doing. Always worth a look.

From J.E. Robuck, “My Own Personal Experiences And Observations As A Soldier In The Confederate Army” (www.geocities.com/svc323/Robuck1.html):

*“When I was a school boy in the country, there was a boy in school with me whose name was **Vul Nabors**. We used to play cat, bullpen, town-ball and several other such games during our noon hour and at recess. Vul was a good player, but he wanted to have his own way. So if we did not agree to play HIS way he declined to take any part in the game, but would sit on a log, or stand about and watch the progress of the game. So when the South seceded and war was declared I, like Vul Nabors, declined to take at first any part in the game of war, because it failed to be played my way. Notwithstanding all sorts of arguments had been brought to bear against me, Vul Nabors like, I still sat on my log eagerly watching with much interest the progress of the great game of war now being played in the same family, divided.”*

State & Local Records

If you've only found your ancestor's National Archives file, you've only scratched the surface. Those records will point you to LOCAL records you will need to review next.

Context & Color: Why did your ancestor join up WHEN he did? WHERE he did?

Census

Federal Census - Military Service recorded in 1910 and 1930

State Census - Varies by State but records more detail of Veteran Service (Discharge date, State of Enlistment, Company & Regiment, Military Prison if confined)

- Nebraska 1893
- Kansas 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, 1925

State Adjutant General's Office

The State Adjutant General handles the military affairs of the State.

- State-wide roster of Soldiers, sorted by Regiment.
- Muster Rolls & Description Rolls
- State Militia (not called into Federal Service)
- Inquiries concerning Claims (indexed in and out)

Governor & Legislature

Many people "wrote to the Governor" to appeal for help with claims, denied pensions, etc. Others wrote to their legislator, or took their appeal to the Statehouse. These documents will be recorded.

County Records

- County Recorder or Register of Deeds: Graves registration for veterans buried in the County, Soldier's Discharge Records (supposed to be recorded, but not required), Commutation Records.
- County Auditor: Records of indigent veterans buried at county expense.

Local Library, Genealogical, & Historical Societies

- Veterans lists
- Memorial Day Newspapers - even while your ancestor was alive
- Cemetery listing of veterans buried
- Local pension application attorney papers



- Funeral Home records, Death Certificates show military service
- Diaries, photos, & personal letters of soldiers
- National Organizations: SAR, DAR, SUVCW, VFW
- Regimental Fraternal Organizations

Regimental Histories add information and context to the veteran's service - where they were, where they camped, what they did, etc.

Every Regimental Roster includes the history of the unit, their general service record, and at the back will be the index of veteran's names. This is additional source data to prove that your ancestor was a part of that particular regiment.

Note the names of other soldiers from the same area. After the war, did census records show them living near each other? Signing affidavits for one another in pension and homestead records?



Examples of State Database Indexes

Kansas State Historical Society

www.kshs.org

World War II Kansas Veterans Index - Search Results

Schrader, Albert Inducted 31 October 1942, Army 7236562 Registered, order # 10842 Hutchinson, Reno Co. (Board # 2)

Ahnert, Donald G. Inducted 25 November 1943, Marines 903518 Registered, order # 10827 St. John, Stafford Co. (Board # 1)

Illinois State Archives

www.ilsos.gov/genealogy

Records in the Illinois State Archives
 Public Domain Land Tract Sales Database
 Database of Illinois Servitude and Emancipation Records
 Database for the Illinois Veterans' History Project
 Database of Illinois War of 1812 Veterans
 Database of Illinois Winnebago War Veterans
 Database of Illinois Black Hawk War Veterans
 Database of Illinois Mexican War Veterans
 Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls Database
 Database of Illinois Civil War Veterans Serving in Navy
 Database of Illinois Civil War Veterans of Missouri Units
 Database of Illinois Spanish-American War Veterans
 Database of the 1929 Illinois Roll of Honor
 Database of Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home Residents
 Illinois Statewide Vital Records Databases
 Illinois Statewide Marriage Index, 1763-1900
 Illinois Statewide Death Index, Pre-1916
 Illinois Statewide Death Index (1916-1950)

World War II Database

www.ww2db.com

World War II History Center

www.wwiihistorycenter.org
 go to Research Database

WWII Veterans Website

ww2.vet.org

Civil War Battles & Maps

www.civilwar.com

World War I: State Archives Resources (copied from Kansas Historical Society)

This finding aid lists state archives materials regarding World War I that are useful for genealogical research. Some archives material has been microfilmed. Most microfilm circulates through interlibrary loan; however, original documents do not.

Applications to enter Camp Taylor training camp. 1918. 1 folder. Contains letters and telegrams.

Burials of Kansas Soldiers in France. 1929. pamphlet. Includes name of cemetery, name of soldier, rank, company, regiment, and division, and grave site. Includes short introductory remarks by Senator Capper. Arranged by cemetery and individual.

Classification book. 1917-1918. U.S. War Department, Selective Service System. 1 microfilm reel (National Archives microfilm). Classification book for Wyandotte County, Kansas. Includes name, race, serial number, date of mailing questionnaire, date of return of questionnaire, date claim filed by another, classification, date of mailing notice of classification, etc. Arranged by order number. [Microfilm AR 1936]

REGISTRATION CARD	
SERIAL NUMBER	43
ORDER NUMBER	Q4932
NAME	William Layton Hodgson
ADDRESS	R# 1, Hutchinson, Reno, Kas.
DATE OF BIRTH	37 September 21, 1881
RACE	White
PRESENT OCCUPATION	Farmer
EMPLOYER'S NAME	Self
NEAREST RELATIVE	George Hodgson

Draft registration cards. 1917-1918. U.S. War Department, Selective Service System. 2 microfilm reels (National Archives microfilm). Draft registration cards for Wilson, Woodson, and Wyandotte Counties, Kansas. Include name, age, address, date of birth, citizenship, nativity, occupation, employer, dependents, marital status, previous military experience and rank, claim of exemption from draft, and physical description. Arranged by county. These cards are very difficult to read. [Microfilm AR 1937-AR 1938] NOTE: Family History Centers and some Societies have other counties.

Enlistment and discharge records. 1917-1919. 53 boxes; 2 oversize folders. Photostatic copies of enlistment and discharge papers and other documents submitted by individuals applying for a state bonus paid to World War I veterans or their widows or orphans. Include name, rank, physical description, age, character, vocation, nativity, and battles or skirmished. Arranged alphabetically by surname.

Index to National Guard enlistments. 1917. 1 volume. Includes name only. Arranged roughly alphabetically by surname.

Enrollment of veterans. 1930. 43 volumes. Copies of forms used in compiling information about all World War I veterans, widows, and orphans residing in Kansas. Includes name, county and city of residence, rank at discharge, military unit, nature of wound or injury, name and number of American Legion post if a member, date and place of death if deceased, name and address of widow and any orphan children if deceased. Arranged by county and surname. Index available in reference room; index (only) also available on microfilm through interlibrary loan.

Initial muster rolls, Kansas National Guard. 1917-1918. 1 microfilm reel. Muster rolls of Kansas National Guard units activated for service during World War I. [Microfilm AR 135]

Kansas Casualties in the World War. 1 volume plus supplements. Lists of casualties from the regular army, national guard, enlisted men, and reserve corps. Includes name, rank, residence, regiment, when enlisted or commissioned, date of death and from what cause, relatives and friends of the deceased. Arranged alphabetically.

List of commissions issued to Kansas State Guard. ca. 1917. 1 folder. Arranged alphabetically by town.

Muster roll, 1st Kansas Cavalry. ca. 1917. 1 box. Includes name, rank, date of enlistment, and remarks. Arranged by company.

Residents of Kansas whose military service in the Army of the United States was terminated by dishonorable discharge, by desertion, or who were discharged not honorably. 1917-1919. 1 pamphlet. Includes name, residence, date deserted or dishonorably discharged, fraudulent enlistments, alien enemies, etc. Arranged alphabetically by classification.



Roster, 117th Ammunition Train, Rainbow Division. 1917-1918. 1 folder. Includes name, rank, and residence of officers and enlisted men. Arranged by unit and alphabetically by surname.

Kansas Selective Service inductees. 1917-1918. 13 volumes; 1 box. 2 volumes are also on microfilm reel AR 136. Includes name of draftee, nativity, camp sent to for training, etc. Arranged alphabetically by surname or by county.

State Decennial Census, 1865, 1885-1925. Population lists compiled every year ending in "5" for the State Board of Agriculture by city and county assessors. Those for 1865 include regiment and company of each individual involved in Civil War military service; those for 1885 through 1925 include discharge status, state where enlisted, company, regiment, branch of service, and name of prison if a prisoner of war. Indexes are available for 1865 and for scattered localities in other years. city or township. Available through interlibrary loan.