



FINDING YOUR CIVIL WAR ANCESTOR | RESEARCH GUIDE

Oklahoma Historical Society Research Center www.okhistory.org/research

The American Civil War, 1861-1865, touched every family living in the United States. If your family included a male born around 1840, it is likely he participated in the War. Over 600,000 men died in this bloodiest of wars, with well over a million serving the Confederate cause and over two million in the Union.

Where to begin if you want to know whether your family member served? One starting place is to locate your family in the **1860 census**. Are there males of military age living in the household (17-50)? These ages shifted as the War progressed, but begin by looking for males born 1826-1840. Consider where these persons were living. Most who lived in the south served in the Confederacy, but in some southern states, particularly eastern Tennessee, there were strong areas of Union support. Don't get too entrenched in searching for only one "side." In some cases, men served on both sides.

Once you have found the names in your family of the appropriate age and considered their geographical location, check **Janet B. Hewett's The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865** by or **The Roster of Union Soldiers, 1861-1865**. These volumes are at the library in the microfilm room. They are organized by state and then by name. If you don't find the person you are looking for in one set of volumes, check the other. These volumes will provide the unit in which your relative served. The records are arranged at the archival level by service unit.

Another resource for this information is the online **Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System at www.itd.nps.gov/cwss**. At this site, you can also check for regimental histories. These histories provide information on where the units were formed and the battles in which they participated.

To find the service record for your family member, you have several choices. Many of the basic records have been microfilmed. You can order them from the National Archives once you locate the name and the regimental details. More about the **records held by the National Archives can be found at www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/index.html**.

Individual states sometimes have records for Confederate soldiers serving from that state as well. In addition, **Fold3.com** is digitizing and placing the Civil War service records. Confederate records were digitized first and are fairly complete, but the Union ones are still in progress. Check at Fold3.com for the progress of the state from which your soldier served. Fold3.com is a subscription database available at the Research Library and through some public libraries.

In general, however, Confederate records are not as well preserved as are the Union records. Record keeping was not as well-organized by this newly formed government, and many of these records did not survive the War since they were essentially those of a rebel government. However, it is definitely worth the effort obtain the records. At a minimum, the record will provide the date and place of enlistment and a physical description of the soldier.

Pension Records

You should also check to see if your soldier or his widow received a pension.

The index for the Union soldier pensions can be found at Ancestry.com and at Fold3.com.

The name of the index for these records is **Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900**. The index card will provide the number of the pension, whether for soldier or widow or other dependent, and the date of the law under which the pension was granted. In addition, many of these cards will provide the date and place of death of the soldier.

Remember that the United States did not initially provide pensions to Confederates—they served a government in rebellion against the federal government, after all, and did not qualify for assistance. The other major difference is that pensions for Confederates are not held at the national level, but in the state where the soldier was living at the time a state passed legislation to provide pensions. Pensions from a few states began quickly after the war for soldiers who had lost limbs, but other states, e.g., Oklahoma, did not grant pensions until 1915.

NAME OF SOLDIER: <i>Richardson, Colasue Jr</i>				
SERVICE: Late rank, <i>Co. E, 50 Regt Mass Inf</i>				
TERM OF SERVICE: Enlisted <i>1</i> Discharged <i>1</i>				
DATE OF FILING:	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	LAW.	CERTIFICATE NO.
<i>1870. Dec. 26</i>	<i>Invalid,</i>	<i>945,180</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>701,353</i>
<i>1913. July. 31</i>	<i>Widow,</i>	<i>1,012,150.</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>773,958</i>
	<i>Minor,</i>			
ADDITIONAL SERVICES: <i>29 Co. United Mass 86 A</i>				
REMARKS: <i>Died July 19, 1913, at St. Louis, Mass.</i>				

Veterans applied for a pension to the state where he lived, not from the state from which he served. You can see the dates and repositories for Confederate pensions at www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/civil-war-genealogy-resources/confederate/pension.html. Indexes for Confederate pensions are available in print as well as online. Orders for copies of the pensions should be made to the state that granted the pension. Oklahoma Confederate Pensions are indexed at the **Oklahoma Department of Libraries website** www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf. **The Research Division holds the microfilmed Oklahoma Confederate pensions.**

In addition to Oklahoma, the Research Center has print indexes for Confederate Pensions granted by Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas. Some of these are also available online. Check the "Internet Resources for Genealogical Research" on the Research Library's computer desktops for these links. **Links for each Confederate State can be found at the National Archives at** www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/civil-war-genealogy-resources/confederate/pension.html.

Additional Resources:

Tennessee Civil War Veteran's Questionnaires
Compiled by Gustavus W. Dyer & John Trotwood Moore
E494 T46 1985

1890 Union and Widows Veterans' Census
Available on microfilm and on subscription databases such as Ancestry.com. Will provide unit and injuries, if any.

Check the *Indian Pioneer History* index for interviews that may cover Civil War experiences. This index is on cards at the Research Center with the interviews on microfilm. The Collection is also available online at the University of Oklahoma's Western History Collections digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/

Oklahoma Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, history and patriots
Alice Ann Askew, Mary Y. Hall
E483.5 O38 A85 2001

Civil War union soldiers buried in Oklahoma
N. Dale Talkington, Deone K. Percy
F693 T3

Tributes of Blue: Obituaries of Civil War Union Soldiers and Sailors buried in Oklahoma
N. Dale Talkington, Deone K. Percy
F693 T146

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies / prepared under the direction of the Secretary of War United States War Department
E 464 .U5 1985

Also available electronically at *HeritageQuest* and *The Making of America* at ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moawar/waro.html

The Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War

The Oklahoma Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission commemorated the 150th Anniversary of the American Civil War from 2011 to 2015.



Visit us online to find out more:
www.okcivilwar.org

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