

**Civil War Research:  
Learning about Your  
Union Veteran Ancestor**  
Revised, Aug. 2024  
(may be outdated within 5 years)



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Union veterans would have been born between 1816 and 1843 and signed up from:  
California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota,  
New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, & Wisconsin;  
but may also have lived in: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, or Missouri.

To check for rosters and specific state resources: Go to <https://FamilySearch.org> click on “Search” and “Wiki” link.  
In the search box, enter “United States Civil War” and click on the help you seek (to start: Recommend  
“Getting Started with Civil War Research”)

([https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Civil\\_War\\_1861-1865#Getting\\_Started\\_with\\_Civil\\_War\\_Research](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Civil_War_1861-1865#Getting_Started_with_Civil_War_Research)) and work from there, as topics and units dictate.

Note: Not every state has the same information

Another note: Some resource links may take you away from FamilySearch and may include pay  
(subscription) websites; some of these may be free for use at local FamilySearch Centers or Affiliates.

To check for veterans/pensioners: From the Wiki, click on link or go straight to the information page:

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/General\\_Index\\_to\\_Pension\\_Files\\_1861-1934](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/General_Index_to_Pension_Files_1861-1934) or  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Union\\_Pension\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Union_Pension_Records)

Other options: State Civil War sites. Enter “Civil War” and state name into a search engine. Some offer rosters.  
Most provide history of the state in the war, allowing the researcher to track the serviceman with the addition of his  
*Muster Rolls* (obtained from the National Archives Records Administration: [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)).  
Fold3.com – various Civil War pension index card records, among other things (changing rapidly).

**Military Service Records** (muster rolls plus other documents accumulated during the serviceman’s duty time) also  
provide information about injuries, illnesses, imprisonments, desertions, pay raises, advancements, demotions, etc.

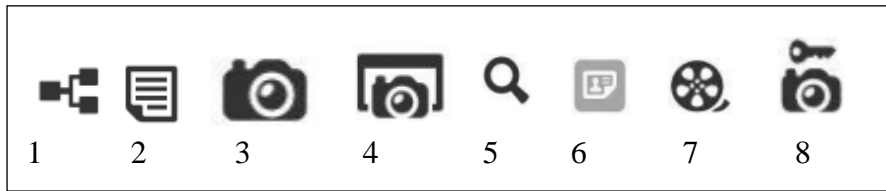
**Pension Records** issued to veterans (invalids) who can prove need: include affidavits from the veteran as well as his  
friends and family members, the names his wife and children (with birth dates), and other personal information.

**Widow’s Pension Records** include serviceman’s widow’s application, including personal information (wedding date  
and place, specifics of other marriages, and more). May include copies of vital records. (Part of the **Pension  
Records** file for the veteran, assuming he predeceased his wife.) If there are dependent children, their pension  
allowance paperwork is also included.

**To order documents from NARA website ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)):** Click on “Veterans’ Service Records” in the  
blue colored panel on the home page and follow the instructions. Documents that can be obtained:

- Compiled Military Service File - \$30 (incl shipping)
- Federal Military Pension Application – Civil War & Later – Complete File (up to 100 pages) - \$80 (incl shipping)
  - Files over 100 pages: applicant will receive form for information on ordering remaining pages
- Federal Military Pension Applications – Pension Documents Packet (8 pages that include “genealogical information) - \$30 (incl shipping) – **Not recommended – you get no choice and someone else decides what might be of interest to you!**

## What do the FamilySearch icons mean?



From left:

1. View family tree
2. Transcription (maybe from an indexer) available
3. Actual image available on FamilySearch.org
4. Image available at another (Partner) website
5. Collection is searchable
6. Database includes “Record Hints” (from Indexed collections)
7. Records from collection on film only, must be viewed at the Family History Library (in Salt Lake)
8. Image is available, but can be viewed only at a FamilySearch Center, FamilySearch Library, or affiliate

### A Few Helpful Websites

<https://americancivilwar.com/> history, timeline of battles, links to maps and much more  
<https://www.nps.gov/search/?query=civil+war+battlefields&sitelimit=%2F&affiliate=nps>

Civil War Battlefields & summaries by State

<https://accessgenealogy.com/military/civil-war-records.htm> Access Genealogy – a searchable database on Civil War Records and Battlefield Maps

<https://suvcw.org/> Sons of Union Veterans group, formed from the GAR

<https://www.duvcw.org/> Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War

### Primary Websites for Genealogical Research & Civil War

- FamilySearch.org (this also includes a comprehensive list of other websites & resources; check them out!)
- Archives.gov (NARA)
- Ancestry.com
- Fold3.com
- MyHeritage.com
- Local libraries and repositories (county & historical society websites) – vary by region & collection regulations

