

# CIVIL WAR RECORDS: PROLIFIC AND POWERFUL

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## **Scope of the Civil War – and its Records**

- Over 3 million persons served in the war; if you have a relative/ancestor who was between 18-30 at the time of the War (1861-1865) there is a good likelihood that your person may have served
- There are a multitude of records both for the war period and the many years afterward for those who served

## **Getting Smart About Civil War Records**

- Ancestry.com has many records, + training materials
- Fold3.com is a site that focuses on military records, has major Civil War collection
- Family Search has many records; also it has numerous WIKIs on the Civil War records; and it has training videos on doing Civil War research

## **Finding Your Civil War Relative**

- Go to the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors (CWSS) site, managed by National Park Service; this site lists service personnel for both Union and Confederate
- Then, get your ancestor's Civil War service record from the National Archives
- If you are not sure your ancestor served, you might also check Civil War pension records – on either Fold3 or Family Search.
- Also, check the special 1890 Census Supplement for Civil War veterans

## **Books Listing Civil War Participants**

- Hewitt, Janet – Roster of Union Soldiers, 31 volumes – lists names of all Civil War service personnel
- Hewitt, Janet – Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 16 volumes
- The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Record of the Union and Confederate Armies – 127 volumes

## **The Detailed Pension Records (Union)**

- These are detailed records for each pensioner
- With each application, the veteran needed to verify his war service, and needed to specify where he had lived for the entire time following the war
- His application also required the names and birthdates of all of his children, and marriage dates for him and his wife/wives
- Because most veterans applied for their pension 30 years or more after the war, the data in these applications is often extremely helpful
- For widows who were applying for the veteran's pension, there was often even more data

### **How to Order Pension Data for Your Veteran; and What You Get**

- First, either via Fold3 or another data source, verify that your veteran has a pension file
- Order the file from National Archives (NARA), which is located at 700 Pennsylvania Ave, Washington, DC
- Typically, an entire pension file may cost \$75; if it is more than 100 pages long there is a surcharge
- These sometimes voluminous files are written on legal size paper and may include a variety of data on your veteran
- To verify that a widow was entitled to the veteran's pension, an in-depth investigation was conducted, and this is where much useful data can be found
- The investigators will "prove" that a widow is entitled to the pension by showing proper marriage and divorce and other records as needed

### **Other Types of Civil War (and Beyond) Records**

- The major genealogy sites, such as Family Search, Ancestry, and Fold3 will show listings for many different types of Civil War records, some of which are online
- The military units in which the veteran served will have considerable data about the specific record of the pertinent military unit – most of these, maybe 95% will be units of the different States – only about 5% of veterans were in the Regular Army
- Military Census data, probably on a State level, could be helpful
- Union Provost Marshal records, which correspond to local records for each congressional district, may have excellent local data for your veteran
- Prison data
- Data for the Veteran's organizations; for the North, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a major force for decades, had posts throughout the nation, and maintained a lot of records; similarly, Confederate veterans had their organizations
- Hospital data, both during the war and afterward
- Military cemetery data