

Researching your Revolutionary War Ancestors

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The rich collections of records for soldiers of the Revolutionary War have aided scholars for generations. It is the purpose of this lecture to introduce and review these resources in researching the life of the veteran during the war and in their post-war life.

Basic Steps of Military Research

1. Determine if your ancestor fought.
 - a. Does his age “fit”?
 - b. What do family heirlooms / tradition say?
2. Research Analysis.
 - a. Documents and artifacts.
 - b. Genealogies and published histories.
 - c. Online resources.
3. Seek or Apply to Hereditary Societies.

Examining previous services in the Colonial Wars

1. Determine if your ancestor fought
2. What Colonial Wars occurred during his lifetime?
 - a. King George’s War: 1740-1748.
 - b. French and Indian War.
3. Look at family heirlooms for clues.
4. Examine Probate records.
5. Published Resources.
6. Hereditary Societies.

American Revolutionary War

1. Determine if your ancestor fought.
2. Family relics in the attic.
3. Oral family traditions.
4. Cemetery clues and Pitfalls.

American Revolutionary War Resources

- Muster Rolls
- Quartermaster Rolls
- Pension Files and Final Payment Voucher
- Journals and diaries
- 1840 U.S. Census
- Correspondence from officers
- Maps
- Published Genealogies and town histories

From Published to Primary Sources

1. Published accounts to Muster Rolls.
2. Going beyond abstracts and dissecting Pension files.

Consider Adopting the Regiment or Crew

Consider using the steps you have learned and examine the pensions and stories of those men who served with your ancestor. The details in the diaries, letters, and pensions of his fellow veterans may add more detail to the story you know from researching his records.

Applying to various Hereditary Societies for the Revolutionary War

- National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- National Society Sons of the American Revolution
- National Society Children of the American Revolution
- General Society of the Sons of the Revolution
- Society of the Cincinnati
- Daughters of the Cincinnati