

**“NARA RECORDS YOU WON’T FIND
ON *ANCESTRY....*
or FOLD3 or FAMILYSEARCH
or HERITAGEQUEST”**

**but that you will find in the
National Archives Building, Washington, DC**

(March 2020 Edition)



**National Archives Building (Archives I)
700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20408**

Laid end to end, the paper documents in National Archives holdings would circle the earth over 57 times! Most of them have not been digitized, so they’re not online.

The National Archives is the repository of the permanently valuable records of the United States Government. They are arranged by record group (federal agency) then in the manner the agency kept its records. Billions of pages of records are not on microfilm and not online, so make the most of your visit by getting access to records that aren’t online. Here are some suggestions.

Phone: 866-272-6272

E-mail: archives1reference@nara.gov. Email is better than a telephone call because it allows our staff to more fully understand your question and formulate a useful answer. Include your postal mailing address, phone number, and email address.

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

Web page for Archives I: <http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/washington>

Genealogy home page: <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>

Claire Kluskens, “NARA Records You Won’t Find on Ancestry...or Fold3...or FamilySearch...or HeritageQuest” (March 2020 edition).

Open Monday-Friday, 8:45 a.m.– 5:45 p.m. The research entrance is on Pennsylvania Avenue. For details, see the Building Entrance Map at <http://www.archives.gov/nae/visit/archives-map.pdf>. Microfilmed and original records may be viewed during these hours. Pull times for original records are Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m.

Be Prepared

Free admission but photo identification is required. Upon arrival, first-time researchers apply for a researcher identification card, good for one year at both Archives I and Archives II. A free shuttle bus runs between Archives I and Archives II, Monday-Friday, hourly from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Most copying is self-service. Your researcher identification card also serves as a copy card. After obtaining the researcher identification card, it must be registered at <https://copycard.archives.gov>. Money then can be added to the card online or at a kiosk in the research room.

Paper to paper photocopies cost 25 cents; paper to USB cost 25 cents. Microfilm to paper copies cost 40 cents; microfilm to USB or CD is free. We supply CDs. Paper copies made on book scanner are 85 cents; no USB capability. Your own camera may be used without flash (free).

You can scan Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs) and Pension Files for FREE in the “Innovation Hub.” You take home the scans and we also put them in the online catalog for everyone to use. Be aware that scanning large pension files may take several hours!

How Do You Get Here?

It’s easiest to take Metro. The Archives/Navy Memorial station on the Yellow and Green lines is directly across the street from NARA’s Pennsylvania Avenue entrance.

“TOP 17 SUGGESTIONS FOR RECORDS THAT ARE *NOT* ONLINE”

1. War of 1812 Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs) (Record Group 94).

Plan Ahead: The index, M602, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812*, is online at Ancestry and Fold3. Then fill out your pull slips when you arrive. (There are some War of 1812 digitized and online in our Catalog at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300392>.)

2. War of 1812 Pension Files (Record Group 15) that aren’t digitized (some are online).

Plan Ahead: Digitized files (surnames A–R) are online at Fold3 FREE TO EVERYONE even if you are not a Fold3 subscriber. The index, M313, *Index to War of 1812 Pension Application Files*, is online on Ancestry. Find your ancestors, then fill out your pull slips (for surnames S–Z) when you arrive.

- 3. Civil War Union Compiled Military Service Records (CSMRs)** (Record Group 94) that aren't digitized (some are online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300398>). CSMRs contain information from muster rolls and other records created during the war.

Plan Ahead: CSMRs that have been digitized are on Fold3. (Big states: Illinois, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, etc., have **not** been microfilmed or digitized. The various *Index[es] to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served from the State of __X__* are online at Fold3. Find your soldier and his unit information, then fill out your pull slips when you arrive.

For more information about CSMRs, read these articles:

- (1) "Thank You, General Fred C. Ainsworth!" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2011-101.pdf>
- (2) "Compiled Military Service Records Part I: The Records *Inside* the CMSR Jacket" at <http://www.miltonhistoricalsociety.org/CivilWar/Prechtel-KluskensNGS0112.pdf>
- (3) "Compiled Military Service Records Part II: The Records *Outside* the CMSR Jacket" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2012-01.pdf>
- (4) "Compiled Military Service Records Part III: The Record of Events" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2012-07.pdf>
- (5) "Compiled Military Service Records Part V: The Book Mark" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2015-01.pdf>

- 4. Civil War (Union) and Later Pension Records** (Record Group 15) that aren't digitized. (Some are online on Fold3 **or** in the National Archives Catalog at <https://catalog.archives.gov/>. Pension files often contain much information about the veteran's war experience, life after the war, and family, particularly if his widow survived him. Every file is unique. For more information, see "Anatomy of a Union Civil War Pension File" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2008-07.pdf>.

Plan Ahead: Two indexes are online. T288, *Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*, is online at Ancestry; T289, *Organization Index to Pension*

Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900, is online at Fold3. Widow's pension files numbered up to approximately WC 148,000 are online at Fold3.

5. **Civil War and Mexican War Carded Medical Records.** Arranged by regiment, then roughly alphabetically by first letter of the surname. For more information, read: "Compiled Military Service Records Part IV: Carded Medical Records" at <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2014-102.pdf>. A small number have been digitized and can be found here: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/655646>
Plan Ahead: Know your soldier's name and regiment (such as John Smith, 10th Ohio Infantry). Go to the Finding Aids Room for assistance.
6. **Court Martial Case Files, 1800–1894.** For more information, read Trevor K. Plante, "The Shady Side of the Family Tree: Civil War Union Court-Martial Case Files" at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/winter/union-court-martials.html>.
Plan Ahead: Names of persons who were court-martialed have been indexed. Go to <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/301659>, click on "Search within this series" then type in the surname and click "search." Read through the results. Find anybody? Then go to the Finding Aids Room for assistance. *Creative research possibilities: What if your ancestor was a witness who testified at a courts-martial? His name is not indexed. Search instead for his military unit using this format "New York - 13th Infantry" and submit pull slips for courts-martials involving his unit. Needle in a haystack? Perhaps. But it may be interesting.*
7. **Mexican War Compiled Military Service Records (CSMRs)** (Record Group 94) and **Mexican War Pension Files** (Record Group 15) are not digitized. CMSRs contain information from muster rolls and other records created during the war.
Plan Ahead: CMSRs that have been digitized are on Fold3. (Some from Arkansas, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and the Mormon Battalion.) The index, M616, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the Mexican War* is online at Fold3. Find your soldier and his unit information, then fill out your pull slips when you arrive.
8. **Spanish-American War Compiled Military Service Records (CSMRs)** (Record Group 94) are not digitized. CMSRs contain information from muster rolls and other records created during the war.
Plan Ahead: Florida CMSRs that have been digitized are on Fold3. The index, M871, *General Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War with Spain*. is online at Fold3. Find your soldier and his unit information, then fill out your pull slips when you arrive.

9. Bounty Land Warrant Application Files (Record Group 15) (none are online) for rewarding military service before 1855. The application files are like miniature pension files.

Plan Ahead: A good place to determine whether a warrant was issued is the Bureau of Land Management's General Land Office Records (GLO) database at <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>. If a patent was issued **due to military service**, then of course there had to have been an application! Print out what you find. Fill out your pull slips when you arrive. *Don't get confused. You are looking for land patents issued due to military service. If the patent was issued due to HOMESTEAD or CASH SALE, that is a totally different thing! (See #11 below).*

10. Bounty Land Warrant Surrendered Warrants (Record Group 49) for rewarding military service before 1855. This will tell you what your ancestor did with the warrant. Did he sell it to somebody? Give it to a relative? Use the warrant for himself, and if so, what land did he choose? (More often, what land did the relative or warrant buyer choose?)

Plan Ahead: Do your GLO database search (see #9 above) and print out what you find. Then go to the Finding Aids Room for assistance. You are asking for a "surrendered warrant file."

11. Homestead and Cash Entry Land Files (Record Group 49). These records document whether an ancestor obtained land directly from the federal government. Only Nebraska is online on Fold3 (*Land Entry Case Files of the Broken Bow Land Office, Broken Bow, Nebraska: Homestead Final Certificates, 1890-1908*).

Plan Ahead: A good place to start is the Bureau of Land Management's General Land Office (GLO) Records database at <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>. Researchers who find "cash" or "homestead" entries can then locate the related file at the National Archives. Print out what you find in the GLO database and go to the Finding Aids Room for assistance. You are asking for a "homestead" or "cash entry" file.

12. Navy deck logs (1801-1940) and muster rolls (1861-79, 1898-1938) (Record Group 24). Deck logs usually only mention officers. Muster rolls include enlisted men.

Plan Ahead: Researchers must know name of the ship as well as the date span during which the man was aboard. View the "Genealogy Through Navy Deck Logs" presentation and PowerPoint slides from NARA's 2013 Virtual Genealogy Fair at <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/38248183>.

13. Post Office Records about postmasters and other Post Office Department employee records (Record Group 28). Some of these are on microfilm, some are not. M841, Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-September 30, 1971, is online at *Ancestry*. **M1131**.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, Oct. 1789–1832 (4 rolls) is online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/609088> (free).

Plan Ahead: This web page will help you get started:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/federal-employees/reference-reports/515-post-office-employees.pdf> but also search our online catalog at <https://catalog.archives.gov/> for postmaster's name, post office name, state in which located, etc.

- 14. Bureau of Naturalization Case and Correspondence Files, 1906–1946.** Mostly relates to persons who were aliens during these years.

Plan Ahead: First, read the "Research Guide" at

<http://www.archives.gov/research/naturalization/naturalization-files.pdf>. Second, view the index (A3388) in the microfilm reading room. Find somebody? Third, take the information to the Finding Aids Room for assistance.

- 15. Bureau of Pensions Case Files of Attorneys, Agents, Pensioners, and Others Relating to the Prosecution of Pension Claims and the Investigation of Fraudulent Practices, 1862–1933.** An ancestors who was an attorney, justice of the peace, or notary public may have been investigated or had correspondence with the Bureau of Pensions.

Plan Ahead: Over 11,900 files for attorneys, justices of the peace, notaries, and others whose surnames start with the letters A–H are listed in the catalog at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/2538355>, *as well as the names of thousands of other people mentioned in these files who were veterans, veterans' widows, witnesses, and others*. If you find a name in the catalog, go the Finding Aids Room for assistance. If your attorney or notary public's surname starts with H to Z, go to the Finding Aids Room for assistance.

- 16. Settled Accounts for Payment of Accrued Pensions, 1838-1865.** The Act of Congress of April 6, 1838, allowed heirs of pensioners to claim the amount of pension accrued to a pensioner between the date of last payment and the date of death, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/605914>. These records are indexed by name in Craig Roberts Scott, *The "Lost" Pensions: Settled Accounts of the Act of 6 April 1838* (Heritage Books, 1996, 2009).

- 17. How Did Your Ancestor Interact with the Federal Government?** There may be a record.

For More Information:

"Research Military Records" at www.archives.gov/research/military and "Military Service Records at the National Archives" at www.archives.gov/publications/ref-info-papers/rip109.pdf.

Claire Kluskens, "NARA Records You Won't Find on Ancestry...or Fold3...or FamilySearch...or HeritageQuest" (March 2020 edition).

"Using Civilian Records for Genealogical Research in the National Archives, Washington, D.C. Area" at www.archives.gov/publications/ref-info-papers/110/using-civilian-records-for-genealogical-research-rip110.pdf.

National Archives Catalog: www.archives.gov/research/search

Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States:
www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/

National Archives Catalog at <https://catalog.archives.gov>

Over 160 million catalog records and growing. Search by any key words you wish: geographic location, surname, or subject. Search annually as more information is added frequently.

Descriptions of

- Government agencies
- Record Series
- Files
- Items

Digitized records of

- Record Series
- Microfilm Rolls
- Files
- Items

Selected Highlights:

Confederate Slave Rolls, 1861-65, online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/719477>.

Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, *some files* online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300398>.

Case Files of Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Applications Based on Revolutionary War Service, online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300022>.

Civil War and Later Pensions. Online – Several thousand (mostly Navy) pension files are digitized online in the National Archives Catalog. Here are links to some of them:

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and The War With Spain ('Civil War and Later Survivors' Certificates), 1861-1934, *some files* online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300019>.

Case Files of Disapproved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans of the Army and Navy, ca. 1861-ca. 1934, *some files* online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/567876>.

Case Files of Pension Applications Based on Service Completed in the Years 1817 to Approximately 1903, ca. 1935-ca. 2002 (C and XC files), *some files* online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300021>.

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and other Dependents of Navy Veterans, ca. 1861-ca. 1910, online at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/561929>.