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# I Have a Civil War Ancestor . . . Now What?

Civil War records at the National Archives and online

Brian Rhinehart

Brian@CivilWarRecords.com  
www.CivilWarRecords.com

Although there is a wealth of information available for Civil War soldiers, four main records exist to get a good overview of Civil War service for both [Union](#) and [Confederate](#) soldiers.

**The pension** tends to be a large file (usually between 50-100 pages). These usually have information about his service, any injuries he suffered, medical reports, statements from other friends and families, etc. It's not unusual to have genealogical information in these files. [Pensions for Union Soldiers are at the National Archives.](#) [Confederate pensions are kept at the individual state archives and were granted by the state where the soldier was living after the war.](#) [Confederate pensions also tend to be much smaller files than Union pensions.](#)

**Compiled military service records** will tell if a soldier was transferred, promoted, deserted, killed, captured etc. These can also contain prisoner of war records and enlistment papers. These exist only for state army regiments, not regular army soldiers or Navy sailors. These exist for both [Union](#) and [Confederate](#) soldiers and are both at the National Archives.

**The carded medical records** tell if the soldier was sick, injured or hospitalized. They're a good addition to get the complete picture of your ancestor during the war. Some soldiers have one card in their file, some have five or more, some have none at all. These are all at the National Archives. [Confederate medical records are filed within the compiled military service records.](#) [Union medical records are filed separately at the National Archives.](#)

**The company's record of events** will tell where each company was during the war. You can often tell if they were engaged in a specific battle, where they were stationed at different points during the war, and what was going on each month. These exist for both [Union](#) and [Confederate](#) regiments and are both at the National Archives.

## Online resources:

### Confederate pensions:

- [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Confederate\\_Pension\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Confederate_Pension_Records) (links to some of the files that are online)
- <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/confederate/pension> (addresses and phone numbers of various state archives that have the Confederate pensions)
- Look for the soldier in the state he was living in when he would have filed, which isn't always the state he served from.

### Union pensions:

Fold3.com has the widow/dependent pensions for army soldiers up through #148,100. Many of these are soldiers who died during the war or shortly after. If your ancestors lived well past the end of the war, their pensions are most likely not on Fold3.

Many of the Union Navy pensions are on Fold3.com.

### Compiled Military Service Records:

Fold3.com has Union Army service records for the following states online:

Alabama	Missouri
Arkansas	Nebraska
California	Nevada
Colorado	New Mexico
Dakota Territory	North Carolina
Delaware	Oregon
District of Columbia	Tennessee
Florida	Texas
Georgia	Utah
Kentucky	Vermont
Louisiana	Virginia
Maryland	West Virginia
Massachusetts	
Mississippi	All of the US Colored Troops

Fold3.com also has all of the Confederate service records online, for all states.