

STRATEGIES TO FIND REVOLUTIONARY WAR RECORDS

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Scope of the Revolutionary War – and its Records

- Over 300,000 Americans served in the war; if you have an ancestor who was between 16-50 at the time of the war (1775-1783) there is a good likelihood that your person may have served
- There are an enormous number of records both for the war period and many years afterward for those who served and sometimes for their family members

Major Record Types

- Service Records: Enlistments; Muster Rolls; Special Rolls; Casualties; Discharges; and Assignments
- These various types of Service Records are merged into a Compiled Service Record for each veteran -- originals kept at National Archives; Online via fold3.com; indexed via Family Search
- These records will give name, state, rank, time period, and location; they won't give age or parentage
- Pension Data: Applications; Pension Payments; Bounty Land Warrants; and Rejected Applications
- These records, created after the war on up to 1850 or so, often give much more data on the veterans and family members, such as birth and marriage dates, and data on children
- These records are kept at National Archives, but may be found online at ancestry.com or certain other sites
- Lineage society data, which identify individual veterans and show how each member is directly descended from the veteran, using well-researched data
- Major societies are DAR and SAR

Getting Smart on Revolutionary War Data

- Use the Family Search Wiki; there are about 40 individual WIKI "pages" dealing with the war.
- Start by reading "Revolutionary War, 1775-1783"
- Then, look at other sub-WIKIs or state Wikis
- Also, Family Search has training videos

The Marvelous DAR (DAR.org) Site

- The DAR site contains data on a good share of the Revolutionary War veterans
- Data comes from members who have meticulously collected data that shows they are descended from war veterans; each member's entry traces the descent and provides data on the relevant veteran
- The site is a little tricky to use; always use "Advanced Search"

- The use of the DAR site will confirm that your ancestor is a bona fide veteran
- Once you have that confirmation, you can move on to other sites to collect added data

Ancestry.com Contributions

- On ancestry.com, click on SEARCH, then click on MILITARY RECORDS, and then click on REVOLUTIONARY WAR
- Then, you can select your ancestor and see what ancestry.com may have
- Ancestry.com will give you a number of individual hits for your ancestor
- The records shown for your ancestor will be drawn from various categories of data, such as the US Revolutionary War Rolls, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) data, Find a Grave data, and other miscellaneous data categories – the War Rolls data may correspond to the Compiled Service Record data
- Examples from Case Study: US Revolutionary War Rolls; Muster Rolls; Find a Grave; Graves of US Revolutionary Patriots.

Fold3.com

- Major site for military records, including Rev War records
- Fold3 is owned by ancestry.com
- Fold3 has Online version of Compiled Service Records

Family Search Revolutionary War Records

- Access these records by going to Family Search. Then, go to SEARCH, go to RECORDS, go to MILITARY RECORDS, scroll down to US Revolutionary War Compiled Service Records
- Example shown

Google

- Go to Google and input a few key words such as “William Heyser Revolutionary War”

Case Study of John DeVane and Family

- DAR Results
- Ancestry.com Results – examples of Pension Records, showing details of births and marriages
- Google example of a variety of hits

Case Study of William Cromartie

- DAR example, showing numerous ancestral line data

Ilgenfritz Case Study

- DAR data showed George Ilgenfritz as a bona fide veteran
- 15 other people had used Ilgenfritz as their Revolutionary War veteran

Conclusions: the 10 Take-aways

1. Basic Facts: 300,000 patriots served (out of 3 million population), so a large share of the American families had some service personnel and their records
2. Compiled Service Records – these are the merged records of basic service data; these are online at fold3, indexed on Family Search
3. Pension Records – contain more good data than the Compiled Service Records, but only available for a portion of the patriots
4. SAR and DAR, the lineage societies, have marvelous data. Always start your search at the DAR site. They have records for a good portion of the patriots but not all
5. Use the Family Search Wikis to get smart on Revolutionary War records; also, training videos will help
6. The National Archives (NARA) have the original records; this is where you can order a photocopy of your ancestor's records
7. Ancestry.com has a lot of Revolutionary War data, covering several categories of data
8. Fold3.com is the major site for all military records, including those for the Revolutionary War
9. Family Search has lots of Revolutionary War records, and tells you where else the data may be located
10. Google often will serve as a quick and efficient method for finding data