

Notes on locating a Confederate ancestor

To find information regarding a Confederate ancestor requires several easy steps. While the focus of the collection is on and about Virginia and Virginians, there are some titles referencing other states and more general works available.

If you know the name and unit the ancestor served in, you may apply directly to the National Archives or a private service for his Compiled Service Record (CSR). The Special Collections staff will be happy to assist you with the appropriate forms.

If you have just a name and do not know, or are uncertain as to what unit the ancestor served in, or need more information about a specific unit, we recommend the following procedure:

1. Proceed to *Confederate Corner*, located at the back of Local History/Special Collections. Go to the alphabetical *Roster of Confederate Soldiers* and find your ancestor's name and unit.
2. If the service was in a Virginia unit, you can proceed to the appropriate volume in the *Virginia Regimental Series* located below the *Roster*. These books will give you a history of the unit and an alphabetical roster which often includes personal data on individual soldiers. If your ancestor was from Northern Virginia and served in the 4th, 5th or 6th Va Cavalry Regiments, 17th Va Infantry, the Alexandria Artillery or Triplett's Heavy Arty. Company, Special Collections has CSRs for those units on microfilm. The collection also features significant holdings of microfiche from the Virginia Historical Society covering Virginia military manuscripts and unit histories.
3. If your ancestor's service was not in a Virginia unit, you can look in the *Compendium of Confederate Armies* and get a brief sketch of the unit's history and deployment. There are also books on Maryland and North Carolina units in the collection.
4. Other useful sources for names or unit histories are the *Official Records*, *Confederate Veteran* and the private memoirs and journals written by participants. Check the Special Collections catalog and volume four of *Dyers Compendium* for titles about specific regiments.

A note about Virginia artillery units: Researchers should be aware that most Virginia batteries are known by at least two different designations, one usually referring to the place of formation ("Lynchburg Artillery") and the other to the officer commanding ("Shoemaker's Battery.") The battery used in this example was also known by yet a third, or nickname. In this instance that name was the "Beauregard Rifles."

Confederate Genealogy Resources on the Internet

The Library of Virginia has an electronic card file listing of all the pensions the state of Virginia paid out to veterans and widows. This useful resource can be accessed at <http://image.lva.virginia.gov/collections/CW.html>.

The National Park Service operates the Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System which can include service and pension information and may provide a link to other people also researching the same individual. The system is accessed at www.civilwar.nps.gov/cwss/.