



New England Military Records

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Most New England men served in the military at some time. Many military records are available and may contain valuable genealogical clues and family relationships.

Objectives

- Review military history time line, minor wars or skirmishes
- Identify major wars and record sources
- Define Loyalists and their record sources
- Explain how to find the records

New England States

Comprised of: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Dates of Wars and Possible Birth Years of Soldiers

Typical Birth Years	War (years fought)	Extended Birth Years
1615–1660	King Philip's War (1675-1676)	1605–1662
1629–1681	King William's War (1689-1697)	1619–1685
1642–1697	Queen Anne's War (1702-1713)	1632–1701
1684–1732	King George's War (1744-1748)	1674–1736
1695–1739	French & Indian War (1755-1763)	1685–1751
1715–1767	Revolutionary War (1775-1783)	1705–1771
1720s–1880s	Indian Wars (1780s-1890s)	1710–1890
1752–1799	War of 1812 (1812-1815)	1742–1803
1788–1832	Mexican War (1846-1848)	1778–1836
1801–1849	Civil War (1861-1865)	1791–1851

Minor Wars and Skirmishes

King Philip's War, 1675–1676

King Philip or Metacomet, son of Massasoit became chief of the Wampanoags in 1662. They lived peacefully with whites for many years. On 1 June 1675—3 Indians executed by English. The Wampanoags attacked white settlements and the English retaliated. The Narragansett Indians joined the fight. Philip was betrayed and killed in 1676.

King William's War, 1689–1697

Named for King William III of England; Also called War of League of Augsburg. French and Indians attacked English colonies in NY, MA, and NH and the British counterattacked. It ended in 1697 in Europe with Treaty of Ryswick and both sides surrendered territory they gained.

Queen Anne's War, 1702–1713

Named for Queen Anne of England and grew out of War of Spanish Succession. Spain, England, and France fought for possessions and colonists fought with each side. French and Indians raided settlements near Canadian border and British seized Port Royal, Nova Scotia (NS). It ended in 1713 with Peace of Utrecht. Great Britain received Hudson Bay region, Newfoundland, and Acadia, but borders not defined. France kept Cape Breton Island (NS) and islands on the St. Lawrence.

King George's War, 1744–1748

Named for King George II; Also called the War of Austrian succession. British and French fighting over territory. Colonial troops took French fortress of Louisburg on Cape Breton Island (NS). Ended in 1748 and each nation surrendered whatever was won.

French and Indian War, 1755–1763

Last and most important conflict between France and England. Started in North America and spread to Europe; Also called Seven Years War in Europe. Fought for possession of territory in New England and Canada. Disputed boundaries of Acadia, Great Lakes region, and Lakes George and Champlain. Skirmishes for 2 years before war. Colonists closely involved and relied on militia force of citizen soldiers. Continued into the Revolutionary War.

Militia Conditions

Compulsory service for men ages 16–60 with exemptions for clergy, public officials, and faculty and students at Harvard. Militia regiments included men in a single county; Militia companies included men of a single town in that county.

Records of Minor Wars and Skirmishes

Not many records with names of soldiers because these were not formal wars. No formal organization, just colonists defending themselves. Some names of soldiers are in town histories.

Revolutionary War, 1775–1783

Why was Revolutionary War important? It gave birth to a new nation and generated many records—Service Records, Pension Records, correspondence, muster rolls, and many others

Situation Leading to War

Two million British colonists on east coast and 60,000 French in North America, mostly Canada. The two countries couldn't agree on boundaries—British wanted to expand westward and French blocked their way.

Colonial Perspective

Colonists were, at first, loyal to England because they were brought up to fear “God and the King.” No clear reason for change of attitude, but colonists knew they could exist on their own—they were self-reliant, independent, optimistic and could support themselves in farming, crafts, and trade. They resented Britain managing affairs.

Town Militia

- No rank given, just “sentinel,” “soldier,” or “private,” and had to provide own weapon; Town provided flints and ammunition; No clothing allotment.
- Faced with hazards of fighting as well as smallpox and dysentery. If soldier died on duty, widow received no pension. Pay stopped if taken prisoner.

History

Began 19 April 1775 in Lexington, Massachusetts with “shot heard round the world.” No one knows who fired the first shot but one British soldier wounded, 8 colonists killed, and 10 wounded. Final treaty was signed in Paris on 3 September 1783.

Military Records

- Pensions were received based on service and contains more family information—Includes Applications, Bounty Land Warrants, Pension Payments, Rejected Applications
- Service Records contain only information relating to service and were created while soldier was serving—Includes Enlistments, Muster Rolls, Special Rolls, Casualties, Discharges, Assignments
- Other military records may contain information about the soldier and regiment—Includes Lineage Societies, Draft Cards, Cemetery, Unit Histories

Pensions

Received from federal government. Includes name of soldier, family members—spouse and children, dates and places of service, rank, other documents proving family connections, military service, disability, or death

Pension Laws for Revolutionary War

- 1776—Only for death or disability
- 1818—For service
- 1828, 1832, 1836, 1843, 1848, 1853, 1878—various laws

Bounty Land Warrants—1775–1855

- Granted to 1855 and number of acres depending on rank
- In 1855—160 acres regardless of rank, and widows and children could receive land

Original Pension Applications

On 2670 FHL microfilms beginning with 970001; Alphabetical by soldier's name. Use FamilySearch Catalog Film/Fiche Search and type in first film number and find the film that would include soldier's name. Also available on FamilySearch.org and Fold3.com.

Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files

Abstracted by Virgil D. White, FHL book 973 M28g. Four volumes in reference and book areas shows brief service and family information.

Service Records

Record of service with dates of service and discharge, unit of service, rank; May also include place of enlistment, description of soldier, pay rates

Service Record Indexes

- *Index to Revolutionary War Service Records*, by Virgil D. White. FHL book 973 M22wv
- Compiled Index to Service Records On 58 FHL films beginning with 882841

Original Service Records

On 1096 FHL microfilms beginning with 1485281; Search for soldier's state and then the unit in which he served. Also on FamilySearch.org and Fold3.com

Other Revolutionary War Records

Revolutionary War Rolls, Orderly Books, correspondence, histories, burials, others
On FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, and Fold3.com

Lineage Societies

Daughters of the American Revolution

DAR Society Databases at www.dar.org/national-society/genealogy

DAR Patriot Index—older material; FHL book 973 C42da

Lineage Books—older material; Indexes and 166 volumes; FHL book 973 D2d

Sons of the American Revolution

Membership information, Catalog of members, Index of Ancestors, Applications, Membership

Application Documentation on 1087 FHL microfilms beginning with 541457; some are digitized.

Available on Ancestry.com

Loyalists

Estimated $\frac{1}{3}$ of the colonial population were active Patriots, $\frac{1}{3}$ were determined Loyalists, and $\frac{1}{3}$ were neutral or 'fence sitters.'

- Loyalists in all states with some families split between loyalists and patriots
- About 500,000 American colonists, about $\frac{1}{5}$ of the population; about 80,000 were exiled permanently
- In 1783 and 1784 more than 30,000 Loyalist refugees went to Canada. Loyalists migrated to Great Britain; Canada—Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia; Florida; Jamaica; Bahamas; or other British colonies

Definition of a United Empire Loyalist

In the narrow UELA definition:

- Male residents in the 13 colonies by April 1775
- Joined or served the "Royal Standard" by 1783, either as members of Loyalist regiments, or by seeking protection at British-controlled places
- Suffered loss of property, assets, or life

Loyalist Sources and Research Strategy

Loyalist Claims, Land Grants, Muster Rolls, Compiled Sources but there is no single or comprehensive source for Loyalist research. Search:

- Home sources: letters, diaries and journals, obituaries, certificates
- Local histories in Canada and the U.S. (county, township, town)
- Published genealogies and family histories
- Internet
- Primary sources such as claims and grants
- Compiled sources—(Always check the original sources)
- FamilySearch.org Research Wiki topics: Loyalists, Canada Military Records, American Loyalists, Revolutionary War Loyalists, or United Empire Loyalists of Canada
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
- FamilySearch Catalog Keyword or Subject Search for American Loyalists or United Empire Loyalists

War of 1812, 1812–1815

- Started between England and France over shipping—blockaded shipping into U.S. ports and U.S. soldiers "impressed into service"
- Fighting in French and English Canada and New Orleans

- Index to Pension and Service Records on FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, Fold3.com
- Service and Pension Records on Fold3, Ancestry.com and at National Archives

Civil War, 1861–1865

- Many New Englanders had slaves. Many Union New England regiments and companies, and some “Colored” regiments fought for Union
- Service and Pension records Indexes at FamilySearch.org, and records at the National Archives, on Ancestry.com and Fold3.com
- Soldiers and Sailors Database at National Park Service website
www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm

Connecticut

Called the “Provision State” in honor of military contributions

- Lists of soldiers in colonial wars
- Civil War regimental histories
- Records of men in Revolution, War of 1812, and Mexican Wars
- State Archives has index to Revolutionary state papers

Maine

- *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of Revolutionary War, Maine*. FHL book 974.1 M2f
- Old Maine Cemetery Association (MOCA)—records of Revolutionary War veterans’ burials
- State Archives, State Library
- See Massachusetts records before 1820

Massachusetts

- *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*. FHL book 974.4 M23m
- *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War*. FHL book 974.4 M2ma
- Colonial Wars and War of 1812 records
- Records of Adjutant General’s Office
www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcgen/genidx.htm#military

New Hampshire

- New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers for French and Indian War, Civil War
- Soldiers and Sailors of Civil War. FHL book 974.2 M23nh
- New Hampshire Historical Society

Rhode Island

- Colonial Wars, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, and Civil War
- State Archives
- Historical Society

Vermont

- *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War*. FHL book 974.3 M2f
- Civil War Adjutant General Records
- Most pre-1920 muster and pay rolls and other records were destroyed by fire
- Town clerks’ offices

Other Military Engagements with Records

- Mexican War, 1846–1848
- Indian Wars, 1780s–1890s

- Spanish American War, 1898
- Philippine Insurrection, 1899–1902
- World War I, 1917–1918
- World War II, 1941–1945
- Korean War, 1950–1953
- Vietnam War, 1964–1972

Where to Find the Records

- FamilySearch Catalog—Place Search for the state, county, and town and topics Military Records and Military Records—Pension Records
- FamilySearch.org Records
- Ancestry.com
- Fold3.com
- New England Historic Genealogical Society and AmericanAncestors.org
- State Archives and Historical Societies
- State Adjutant General's offices
- National Archives