

Handout for Civilian Experience in the Civil War

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Steps to getting started:

1. Identify who was living in America in this time period.
2. Note names, ages, ethnicities, locations.

Getting ahead:

- Profile your ancestor's neighborhood or community using the 1860 census (age, place of birth, occupation), county history, newspapers, photo archives.
- Get in touch with local historical societies and repositories for information on local events.

Questions to ask when looking at your ancestors' lives:

1. Did their community raise companies or home guard units?
2. Did they live in an area where armies were constantly passing through?
3. What was the aftermath of nearby battles?
4. How hard hit was their town with deaths related to the war?
5. Did your family stay in their wartime community after the war or did they move to a different community?

Websites / Digital Collections:

Fold3 - Browse catalog for these databases: <https://www.fold3.com/browse/>

- Civil War Subversion Investigations
- Confederate Citizens File
- Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871-1880

Civil War photographs:

- At the National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/civil-war/photos>
- At the Library of Congress:

Official Records from the war on HathiTrust – Search on locations:

- Medical & Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion:
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/102133624>
- Official Records of the War of the Rebellion: Start at the Cornell website and it will take you to images on HathiTrust: http://collections.library.cornell.edu/moa_new/waro.html
Select "Search".

For maps and battle histories:

- American Battlefield Trust: <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/maps>

Books:

Cole, Garold L., Civil War Eyewitnesses: An Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles 1986-1996 (University of South Carolina 2000)

County histories. Search in your browser for [(location) county history] You may find out-of-copyright copies on www.Archive.org or www.HathiTrust.org

Long, Everette B., The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865 (1971)

Gesch – Handout for Civilian Experience in the Civil War (May 27 & June 3, 2020, VCGS)

McPherson, James, Battle Cry of Freedom (Oxford University Press, 1988)

McPherson, James, The Atlas of the Civil War ©2010

Sellers, John R., comp., Civil War Manuscripts: A Guide to Collections in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress (LOC 1986)

Varhola, Michael O., Life in Civil War America (Family Tree Books, 1999/2011)

Wagner, Margaret E., Gary W. Gallagher, Paul Finkelman, The Library of Congress Civil War Desk Reference (2002, 2009)

Manuscript & Microfilm Collections:

Civil War pension records at the National Archives I, Washington, D.C. (manuscript)

- Pension Act of 1890 allowed old age pensions for Home Guard & local militia
- Indexes on Ancestry and Fold3

Records of the Provost Marshal General's Office on microfilm

- Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Individual Civilians (*NARA M345, 300 rolls*)
- Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Two or More Civilians (*NARA M416, 94 rolls*)
- Check Fold3, Ancestry, state archives online, National Archives regional branches