

Tracing New Englanders in the Revolutionary War

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Note: Many of the sources listed are part of subscription websites. Ancestry.com is available at the library. The FamilySearch resources are freely accessible; some from home, while restricted sources must be accessed at the library. Fold3.com is a subscription website but offers a 7-day free trial. HathiTrust is free; log in as a guest.

Resources for tracing New Englanders during this period are abundant but scattered. We will explore military service, pension, and limited bounty land records, but we will also dig deeper and wider. What role did women play? How did people of color serve? How did local and social history affect our ancestors' lives?

When working with military records, always consider that your ancestor may have switched sides. Also, many records are arranged and indexed **exactly** as the names were spelled at the time. As with all genealogical research, **be careful to check all possible spelling variations**. Try pronouncing the name with your ancestor's native accent. You may find new spellings that you had not considered!

The first overt act of rebellion occurred at Portsmouth Harbor on 14-15 December 1774 with the capture of Fort William and Mary. New Hampshire patriots seized gunpowder and cannons later used at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Subsequent military action began in April 1775 with skirmishes between British troops and local militiamen in Lexington and Concord. Tensions grew and spread throughout the colonies over the course of the following year, erupting into full-scale war. France joined the colonists in 1778, bolstering the Continental Army and ultimately forcing the defeat of the British at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. Fighting continued until the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 3 September 1783, which was ratified by Congress on 14 January 1784, bringing the Revolutionary War to a close.

MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS

Compiled military service records are an excellent starting point in researching your ancestor's military service. A disastrous fire on 8 November 1800 destroyed many records. Reconstruction efforts relied on records of the Treasury, Interior, and State Departments. The compilation of these records was begun under the auspices of Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth, a native of Vermont, after being appointed head of the Records & Pension Office in 1886. By 1889, the office's name changed to Records & Pension Division of the Surgeon General Office. Carding for the

Revolutionary War and War of 1812 was begun only after the carding for the Mexican War, Civil War, and Indian Wars was completed in 1894.

Federal Military Service Records and Sources

Revolutionary War (1775-1783)

- Eales, Anne Bruner and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds. *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*. 3rd edition. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000. Digital images. *HathiTrust*. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071221272&seq=1> : 27 July 2025.
- "Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800." Database with images. Rosenzweig Center for History and News Media, George Mason University. <https://wardepartmentpapers.org/s/home/page/home> : 27 July 2025. Note: This is an active project. Transcribers are needed.
- Plante, Trevor K. "An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service." *Prologue Magazine* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2002). Digital images. United States. *National Archives* <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/fall/military-records-overview.html> : 27 July 2025.
- "Revolutionary War Prize Cases – Captured Vessels, 1776-1787." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/publication/468/us-revolutionary-war-prize-cases-captured-vessels-1776-1787> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- Scott, Craig. *Revolutionary War Series*. 5 webinars. MyHeritage. *Legacy Family Tree Webinars*. <https://familytreewebinars.com/speaker/craig-scott/> : 27 July 2025. Note: Subscription required. \$\$
- United States. *Guide to Federal Records in the National Archives of the United States*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1999. *National Archives*. <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records> : 27 July 2025. Note: This guide is not updated, but it provides a detailed history and arrangement for each record group. It can be used in conjunction with NARA's online catalog.
- "US, Army Registers, 1798-1969." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/899/army-registers-1798-1969> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Army Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/891/army-register-of-enlistments-1798-1914> : 27 July 2025.
- "US, Discharge Certificates and Misc Records of the Regular Army, 1792-1815." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/999/discharge-certificates-and-misc-records-of-the-regular-army-1792-1815> : 27 July 2025.
- "US, Final Payment Vouchers Index for Military Pensions, 1818-1864." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/publication/654/us-final-payment-vouchers-index-for-military-pensions-1818-1864> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Navy and Marine Corps Officers, 1775-1900." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/895/navy-and-marine-corps-officers-1775-1900> : 27 July 2025.
- "US, Navy Casualty Reports, 1776-1941." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/808/navy-casualty-reports-1776-1941> : 27 July 2025.

- "US, Numbered Record Books, 1775-1790." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/784/numbered-record-books/description> : 27 July 2025.
- "US, Revolutionary War Manuscript File, 1775-1790's." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. [https://www.fold3.com/title/910/revolutionary-war-manuscript - file](https://www.fold3.com/title/910/revolutionary-war-manuscript-file) : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/469/revolutionary-war-rolls> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Revolutionary War Service and Imprisonment Cards, 1775-1778." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/747/revolutionary-war-service-and-imprisonment-cards> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Revolutionary War Service Records, 1775-1783." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/470/revolutionary-war-service-records> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Revolutionary War Service Records – Navy, 1775-1785." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/publication/789/us-revolutionary-war-service-records-navy-1775-1785> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Service Records of Volunteers, 1784-1811." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. [https://www.fold3.com/title/788/service-records-of-volunteer s-1784-1811](https://www.fold3.com/title/788/service-records-of-volunteer-s-1784-1811) : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "US, Veterans' Gravesites, ca. 1775-2019." Database with images. Ancestry.com. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/1092/u-s-veterans-gravesites-ca-1775-2019> : 27 July 2025. \$\$

Military Service Records and Sources by State

Connecticut

- "Connecticut Archives, 1629-1820." State of Connecticut. *CT State Library*. <https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/ctarchives> : 27 July 2025. Concise descriptions with links to the indexes. Also, <https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/ctarchives/online> : 27 July 2025. **Note: the links may load slowly. Be patient.**
 - "Connecticut archives. Militia, second series, 1747-1788." <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:o502426725> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Connecticut archives. Militia, third series," October 1728–May 1820. <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:o502420000> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Connecticut archives. Revolutionary war, 1756-1856. <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:o879375474> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Connecticut archives. Revolutionary war, 1763-1789." <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:o503001617> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Connecticut archives. Revolutionary war, June 1765–May 1820." <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/30002:720026250> : 27 July 2025.
- Connecticut Historical Society. *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*. 31 vols. Hartford: The Society, 1860-1967.
 - "Orderly Book and Journals Kept by Connecticut Men While Taking Part in the American Revolution, 1775-1778." Vol. VII. Hartford: The Society, 1899. Digital

- images. *Internet Archive*. <https://archive.org/details/collectionsofcon07conn/page/n11/mode/2up> : 27 July 2025.
- "Rolls and Lists of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, 1775-1783." Vol. VIII. Hartford: The Society, 1901. Digital images. *Internet Archive*. <https://archive.org/details/rollsofcon08conn/page/n9/mode/2up> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Lists and Returns of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, 1775-1783." Vol. XII. Hartford: The Society, 1909. Digital images. Google. *Google Play*. https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Connecticut_Historical_Society_Lists_and_Returns_o?id=tqxPAQAAIAAJ. Also, *FamilySearch*. Digital images. <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/442802-lists-and-returns-of-connecticut-men-in-the-revolution-1775-1783> : 27 July 2025.
 - "Connecticut Military Records." *FamilySearch. Research Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Connecticut_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.
 - Grundset, Eric G., editor. *Connecticut in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*. Washington, D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.
 - Hoadly, Charles J., et al. *The Public Records of the State of Connecticut: with the Journal of the Council of Safety ... and an Appendix*. 22 vols. Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1894-1948. Digital images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/209473> : 27 July 2025.
 - Jacobus, Donald Lines, ed. *History and Genealogy of the Families of Old Fairfield. Vol. 3, Revolutionary Records*. New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1930-32. Digital images. *FamilySearch* <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/434907-history-and-genealogy-of-the-families-of-old-fairfield-vol-03> : 27 July 2025.
 - Johnston, Henry P., ed. *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the (I) War of the Revolution (II) War of 1812 (III) Mexican War*. Hartford: The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889. *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/recordofserviceo00john/mode/2up> : 27 July 2025.
 - National Archives. *Index to Compiled Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers Who Served with the American Army in Connecticut Military Organizations*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1976. Digital images. *FamilySearch* <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-B3PJ-X7JQ> : 27 July 2025. See descriptive pamphlet at beginning of roll.
 - Richards, Josephine Ellis. *Honor Roll of Litchfield County Revolutionary Soldiers*. Litchfield, CT: Mary Floyd Tallmadge Chapter DAR, 1912. Digital images. *FamilySearch* <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/822442/> : 27 July 2025.
 - Wicks, Edith M. and Virginia H. Olsen. *Stamford's Soldiers: Genealogical Biographies of Revolutionary War Patriots from Stamford, Connecticut*. New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1976. Digital images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/415578-stamford-s-soldiers-genealogical-biographies-of-revolutionary-war-patriots-from-stamford-connecticut> : 27 July 2025.

Maine

Maine was part of Massachusetts until 1820, so many early records will be found among Massachusetts collections.

- Fisher, Carleton E. and Sue F., comp. *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War: Maine*. Louisville, KY: National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, 1982. Also useful for tracing soldier migrations after the war.
- Fisher, Carleton E., comp. *Supplement to Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War: Maine*. Rockport, ME: Picton Press, 1998.
- Grundset, Eric G., ed. *Massachusetts and Maine in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*. Washington D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 2015.
- "Maine Military Records." FamilySearch. *Research Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Maine_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.
- Massachusetts. Secretary of the Commonwealth. *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War: A Compilation from the Archives*. 17 vols. Boston: Wright & Potter, 1896-1908. Digital images. FamilySearch. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/213956> : 27 July 2025.
- "Records of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia." Database with images. Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48195/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- White, Paul R. "Maine Estate Schedules from Revolutionary War Pensions." *The New England Genealogical and Historical Register*. Vol 142 (1988), pp. 29-38, 197-209, 298-304, 386-91; Vol. 145 (1991), pp. 44-56, 159-73. Accessible with membership. Digital images. New England Historic Genealogical Society. *American Ancestors*. <https://www.americanancestors.org/publications/register/past-issues> : 27 July 2025. \$\$

Massachusetts

The "Massachusetts Archives" collection (1629-1799) is a very important 328-volume resource for Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire research. It is listed as two separate collections below because of the way in which it was microfilmed.

- Grundset, Eric G., editor. *Massachusetts and Maine in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians*. Washington D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.
- Hambrick-Stowe, Charles E. and Donna E. Smerlas, eds. *Massachusetts Militia Companies and Officers in the Lexington Alarm*. Boston: Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et al., 1976.
- Massachusetts. Lincoln, William, compiler. *The Journals of Each Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775, and of the Committee of Safety with an Appendix...* Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1838. Digital images. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/journalsofeach177417mass/page/n5/mode/2up> : 27 July 2025.
- "Massachusetts Military Records." FamilySearch. *Research Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Massachusetts_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.

- "Massachusetts, Revolutionary War, Index Cards to Muster Rolls, 1775-1783." Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2548057> : 27 July 2025.
- "Massachusetts State Archives, Collection, Colonial Period, 1622-1788." 239 vols. Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1055547> : 27 July 2025. Revolutionary records begin with vol. 137. Collection continued in separate filming below.
- "Massachusetts State Archives Collection, Colonial and Post Colonial Period 1626-1806." 89 vols. (collection includes vols. 240-328). Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1050952> : 27 July 2025.
- "Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War: A Compilation from the Archives." 17 vols. Digital images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/213956> : 27 July 2025. Also, Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62337/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "Records of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48195/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- Whittemore, Bradford A. *Memorials of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati*. Boston: The Society, 1964.

New Hampshire

- Bouton, Nathaniel, ed. *Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society*. Vol. VII. Concord: G. Parker Lyon, 1863. Digital images. *Google Books*. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Collections_of_the_New_Hampshire_Histori/Y7kMAAAAYAAJ : 27 July 2025.
- Knoblock, Glenn A. *"Strong and Brave Fellows": New Hampshire's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution, 1775-1784*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003.
- "New Hampshire Military Records." *FamilySearch*. *Research Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/New_Hampshire_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.
- New Hampshire State Archives. *Guide to the New Hampshire State Archives*. <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/vosl84wb8cfdblvo902x5/guide-to-archives.pdf?rlkey=jks11oa6lfeo3ar9s2oadzw84&st=qgp0az5f&dl=0> : 27 July 2025. The guide was temporarily removed from the State Archives' website to be converted into an online catalog. This copy was provided by the State Archivist. The staff is happy to help with any subject inquiries.
- "New Hampshire, U.S., Revolutionary War Records, 1675-1835." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61902/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
These records include:
 - Oaths of allegiance, 1695-1816
 - Muster rolls and petitions, 1710-1779
 - Tax books, 1775-1823
 - Pension rolls, 1794-1834
 - Pension applications, Hillsborough County, 1820-1835
 - Officers' account books, 1-3rd regiments
- Potter, C.E. *The Military History of the State of New Hampshire from its Settlement, in 1623, to the Rebellion, in 1861....* Concord: McFarland & Jenks, 1866. Digital images.

Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/militaryhistoryo00lcpott/page/n5/mode/2up> : 27 July 2025.

- "Provincial and State Papers." 40 vols. Digital images. University of New Hampshire. *Scholars Repository.* <https://scholars.unh.edu/propapers/> : 27 July 2025. Esp. vols. VII, VIII, X, XIV-XVII, XXX. Includes consolidated index.

Rhode Island

- Cowell, Benjamin. *Spirit of 76 in Rhode Island: Or Sketches of the Efforts of the Government and People in the War of the Revolution.* Boston: A.J. Wright, Printer, 1850. Digital images. *Internet Archive.* <https://archive.org/details/spiritof76inrhod00cowe/page/n3/mode/2up> :2024.
- Field, Edward, ed. *Diary of Colonel Israel Angell, Commanding the Second Rhode Island Continental Regiment During the American Revolution, 1778-1781.* Providence: Preston and Rounds Co., 1899. Digital images. *Providence College Digital Commons.* <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/primary/2/> : 27 July 2025.
- Grundset, Eric G., ed. *Rhode Island in the American Revolution: A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians.* Washington D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 2014.
- Murray, Thomas Hamilton. *Irish Rhode Islanders in the American Revolution.* Providence: The American-Irish Historical Society, 1901. Digital images. *Internet Archive.* <https://archive.org/details/irishrhode00murrich> : 27 July 2025.
- "Rhode Island Military Records." *FamilySearch. Research Wiki.* https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Rhode_Island_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.
- Rhode Island. Secretary of State. *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England.* Vol. VII. Providence: A. Crawford Greene, 1862. Digital images. *Internet Archive.* <https://archive.org/details/cu31924071194876/page/n8/mode/1up> : 27 July 2025.
- Showman, Richard K., ed. *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene.* 12 vols. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Rhode Island Historical Society, 1976-2002; vols. 1-4, 6 available at *Internet Archive.* <https://archive.org/>.
- Smith, Joseph Jencks, compiler. *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island, 1647-1800: A List of All Officers Elected by the General Assembly from the Organization of the legislative government of the colony to 1800.* Providence: Preston and Rounds Co., 1900. Digital images. *FamilySearch.* <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/144912/> : 2024.
- Smith, Joseph Jencks, compiler. *New Index to the Civil and Military Lists of Rhode Island...Giving Christian and Family Names...* Providence: J.J. Smith, 1907. Digital images. *FamilySearch.* <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/371553> : 27 July 2025.

Vermont

Many of Vermont's military records were destroyed by fire following a lightning strike on 31 August 1945. However, many of the state's Revolutionary War records were published before the fire. Records that survived are maintained at the State Archives.

- Fisher, Carleton Edward and Sue Gray, comp. *Soldiers, Sailors, and Patriots of the Revolutionary War: Vermont*. Camden, ME., Picton Press, 1992.
- Goodrich, John E. *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, 1775 to 1783*. Rutland: The Tuttle Company, 1904. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/rollsofsoldiersi01verm> : 27 July 2025.
- Nolin, Kelly, comp. *Military Records Collection* (finding aid). *Vermont Official State Website*. <https://sos.vermont.gov/media/sogdicns/a-315.pdf> : 27 July 2025.
- Nye, Mary Greene. *State Papers of Vermont*. "Volume Six: Sequestration, Confiscation, and Sale of Estates." Montpelier: Office of Secretary of State, 1941. *FamilySearch* <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/431533-sequestration-confiscation-and-sale-of-estates> : 27 July 2025.
- Slade, William, Jun., compiler. *Vermont. Vermont State Papers: Being a Collection of Records and Documents ... Together with the Journal of the Council of Safety...* Middlebury: J.W. Copeland, 1823. *HathiTrust*. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt> : 27 July 2025.
- "Vermont Military Records." *FamilySearch*. Research Wiki. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Vermont_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.

MILITARY PENSIONS AND BOUNTY LAND

The first legislation providing pensions for Revolutionary soldiers was passed in August 1776. The first legislation providing widows' pension was passed in August 1780. If pension applications were rejected, the applicant could appeal to Congress. Many Revolutionary War pension application files were destroyed by fire in 1800 and 1814. The pension files are part of National Archives Record Group (RG) 15, Records of the Veterans Administration.

Initial pension claims were often made at the local court level. The fledgling federal government had to rely on local courts for processing and detecting fraudulent claims. Eligibility requirements changed many times, eventually including orphans and widows. Marriage records and identification of children may be found among these records.

Bounty land awards served as inducements or rewards for military service and were authorized by Congress in 1776 in place of cash payment that the government could not afford. Approximately 450,000 bounty land warrant claims are housed at the National Archives. Most of the New England bounty land was in Maine and awarded by the state of Massachusetts.

Although early pensions were paid by the state, most states turned over funding to the federal government by 1792. By 1808, soldiers could not collect both state and federal pensions.

Federal Pension and Bounty Land Records and Sources

- "A Century of Lawmaking for a New National: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates 1774-1875." Database with images. Library of Congress *U.S. Serial Set*. <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwss.html> : 27 July 2025. If a record is found,

you may pursue additional records by contacting NARA's Legislative Branch at <https://www.archives.gov/legislative>.

- "American Revolutionary War Rejected Pensions." *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/4329/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- Nudd, Jean. "Using Revolutionary War Pension Files to Find Family Information." *Prologue Magazine* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2015). *National Archives*. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/summer/rev-war-pensions.html> : 27 July 2025.
- Prechtel-Klusens, Claire. "Follow the Money: Tracking Revolutionary War Army Pension Payments." *Prologue Magazine* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2008). *National Archives*. <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/winter/follow-money.html> : 27 July 2025.
- Rose, Christine. *Military Pension Laws, 1776-1858: From the Journals of the Continental Congress and the United States Statutes-at-Large*. San Jose, CA: CR Publications, 2001.
- Schamel, Charles E. "Untapped Resources: Private Claims and Private Legislation in the Records of the U.S. Congress." *Prologue Magazine* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1999). *National Archives* <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1995/spring/private-claims-1.html>. Excellent sources appear in notes at the end of the article.
- Scott, Craig R. *"Lost" Pensions, Settled Accounts of the Act of 6 April 1838*. Berwyn Heights, MD: Heritage Books, 2013.
- Scott, Craig. *Understanding Revolutionary War and Invalid Pension Ledgers 1818-1872 and the Pension Payment Vouchers They Represent*. Berwyn Heights, MD: Heritage Books, 2014.
- "United States: Revolutionary War Naval Pensioners' Receipts, 1829-1832." Database with images. New England Historic Genealogical Society. *American Ancestors*. <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/294/united-states-revolutionary-war-naval-pensioners-receipts-1829-1832> : 27 July 2025. Images of original records in NEHGS manuscript collection. \$\$
- "US, Final Payment Vouchers Index for Military Pensions, 1818-1864." Database with images. *Ancestry*. *Fold3*. <https://www.fold3.com/title/654/final-payment-vouchers-index-for-military-pensions-1818-1864> : 27 July 2025. Records have not been microfilmed or digitized, except for Delaware and Georgia, which are available at FamilySearch and Fold3. Records for the remaining states may be ordered directly from NARA. See ordering instructions in database "Description." \$\$
- "U.S., The Pension Roll of 1835." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60514/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "U.S., Revolutionary War Pensioner Census, 1840." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7678/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$ Secretary of State. *1840 Census: A Census of Pensioners for Revolutionary or Military Services*. Washington: Blair and Rives, 1841. *Internet Archive*. https://archive.org/details/censusofpension_e00usce/page/n5/mode/2up : 27 July 2025. A census of pensioners for revolutionary or military services; with their names, ages, and places of residence, containing separate downloads for Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island; Connecticut, Vermont, New York, New Jersey.
- "U.S., Revolutionary War Pensioners, 1801-1815, 1818-1872." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1116/>. \$\$

- "US, Revolutionary War Pensions, 1800-1900." Database with images. Ancestry. *Fold3*/ <https://www.fold3.com/title/467/revolutionary-war-pensions> : 27 July 2025. \$\$ Also, "United States Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Applications, 1800-1900. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1417475> and Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1995/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
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- "U.S., War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858." Database with images. Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1165/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- White, Virgil D. *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*. 4 vols. Waynesboro, TN: National Historical Publishing Co., 1990-92.

Pension and Bounty Land Records and Sources by State

These are excellent sources for learning more about state pensions and bounty land grants.

- "Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants." Database with images. Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/49315/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$ Original data: Bockstruck, Lloyd D. *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants Awarded by State Governments*. (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996).
- Bockstruck, Lloyd D. *Revolutionary War Pensions Awarded by State Governments 1775 – 1874, the General and Federal Governments Prior to 1814, and by Private Acts of Congress to 1905*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2011.
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Connecticut

Although Connecticut did not award true bounty land, it did award land in the Western Reserve to compensate citizens whose towns were destroyed by the British in 1781. Because the land was distributed through a corporation, records are usually found in local deed books.

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Maine

Maine was not a state during the Revolutionary War but later offered bounty land for military service. On 17 March 1835, the Maine legislature passed a resolution awarding grants to noncommissioned officers and soldiers in the Revolutionary Army and their widows. Recipients were to receive 200 acres in the Indian Purchase in Penobscot or Washington County. Applicants were required (1) to have served a minimum of three years, unless honorably discharged due to wounds or other infirmity; (2) to have been, at the time of enlistment, a resident of the state of Massachusetts or Maine, and at the time of application, to have been a resident Maine; and (3) had not received any bounty from Massachusetts. On 8 February 1836, coverage was extended to heirs of the recipients. On 23 March 1838, the resolution was amended to include those who served in the line of any other state. On 20 March 1838, the legislature resolved to include commissioned officers, awarding 600 acres for each claim in Washington County.¹

Original records are housed at the Massachusetts State Archives. Links to digitized collections are provided below.

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- "Maine Military Records." *FamilySearch. Research Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Maine_Military_Records : 27 July 2025.
- "Maine Revolutionary War Bounty Land Applications, 1835-1838." Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1881491> : 27 July 2025.
- "Maine, U.S., Revolutionary War Land Grants, 1776-1780." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2411/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- Taylor, Alan. *Liberty Men and the Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

¹ Lloyd D. Bockstruck, *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2998), pp. xiv-xv; *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/49315/>). \$\$

- "U.S., The Pension Roll of 1835." Database with images. *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60514/>; citing United States Senate. \$\$ *The Pension Roll of 1835*. 4 vols. 1968 Reprint, with index. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1992.

Massachusetts

The state of Massachusetts did not award bounty land during the Revolutionary War. On 5 March 1801, the Commonwealth granted 200 acres in Maine to each noncommissioned officer and soldier who had been honorably discharged after serving a minimum of three years. Widows and children of those who died in service were also eligible.

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- "Massachusetts: List of Pensioners." Database with images. New England Historic Genealogical Society. *American Ancestors*. <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/146/massachusetts-list-of-pensioners> : 27 July 2025. \$\$
- "Massachusetts: Revolutionary War Pensioners' Receipts, 1799-1807." Database with images. New England Historic Genealogical Society. *American Ancestors* <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/185/massachusetts-revolutionary-war-pensioners-receipts-1799-1807>), 2002. \$\$ Includes images of original receipts in the NEHGS manuscript collection.
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[1824-Consolidated.pdf](#). Check the State Archives' website for the updated copy when available. <https://www.sos.nh.gov/archives-and-records-management/archives-and-records-management/archives-and-records-management>.

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Vermont

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UNDERAGE WARRIORS²

When trying to distinguish your soldier from others with the same name, you must consider that some enlisted as young as the age of 8. They often followed their fathers as waiters, or they served as musicians.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the minimum enlistment age was 16, 15 with parental consent. But as the war dragged on and officers became more desperate, they tended to look the other way as younger children enlisted.

LOYALISTS

It is estimated that approximately one-third of the American colonists were loyal to the British Crown. Following the defeat of the British, many fled to Western Canada (now Ontario) and the Maritime Provinces.

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- Stark, James H. *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*. Boston: The author, 1910. Digital images. *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/465002-redirection> :2024.
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DAR/SAR SOURCES

Both the DAR (<https://www.dar.org/>) and SAR (<https://www.sar.org/>) websites offer copies of membership applications for a fee. SAR applications through 1970 have been digitized and are available online. "U.S., Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970." *Ancestry*. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2204/> : 27 July 2025. \$\$ The researcher must verify sources found in older applications, especially those prior to 1976, before more stringent approval standards were applied.

TOWN RECORDS

Town records may offer militia lists, bounty payments, signed receipts, depositions, and other evidence of military service. Some town records have been published. If no index is available, you must resort to a page-by-page search in the relevant time period.

DON'T FORGET THE WOMEN!

Women played an important role in the new nation. Some women followed their soldier husbands and became known as "camp followers." They tended to the domestic needs of the troops, e.g., washing, mending, nursing, etc. The wives of Generals Henry Knox, Nathaniel Greene, and George Washington often joined them in the field.

Some women experienced active combat. Margaret Corbin was severely wounded and was the first female to receive a soldier's lifetime pension after the war. Some, like New England native Deborah Sampson, dressed as men to serve. Sampson enlisted in May 1782 using the alias Robert Shurtleff, the name of her deceased brother. Her secret was discovered by a physician, but not revealed. She was discharged and received a pension from the state of Massachusetts and the federal government.

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- Hunt, Paula D. "Sybil Ludington, the Female Paul Revere: The Making of a Revolutionary War Heroine." *The New England Quarterly*. Vol. 88, no. 2. The New England Quarterly, Inc., 2015, pp. 187–222. Digital images. ITHAKA. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24718670> : 27 July 2025.
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PEOPLE OF COLOR

African Americans fought in the Revolutionary War hoping to secure their freedom. Historians estimate that between 5,000 and 8,000 African-descended people participated in the Revolution on the Patriot side, and that upward of 20,000 served the crown.³ Former slaves served in the First R.I. Regiment, and their contact with Army bureaucracy is a major gateway to genealogical research.⁴

³ Colette Coleman, "7 Black Heroes of the American Revolution," *History Channel* (<https://www.history.com/news/black-heroes-american-revolution>).

⁴ Ibid. Also, Cheryl Bamberg, "Strategies for Rhode Island Research," *New England Regional Genealogical Conference Syllabus*, 2019, p. 391.

By the time of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, many native tribes' numbers in New England had been greatly reduced as a result of disease introduced by European settlement and by prior conflicts. Participating tribes included: (1) Wampanoag, esp. Battle of Bunker Hill; (2) Nipmuc; (3) Pequot; (4) Mohegan; and (5) Penobscot and Passamaquoddy from Maine (part of the Wabanaki Confederacy tribes), esp. coastal defense.

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DIARIES AND MANUSCRIPTS

Genealogical treasures lie in manuscript collections of libraries, universities, and historical societies across the country. Use *Archive Grid* (<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>) to find these collections. For example, we find the diary of Israel Angell listed in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society:

Revolutionary War diary attributed to Israel Angell, commander of the 2d Rhode Island Regiment of the Continental Army. The diary dates from 1 Oct. 1777-28 Feb. 1778; 1 Nov.-11 Dec. 1778; and 25 Jan.-14 Apr. 1780 and records service in the defense of Philadelphia and in the Philadelphia-Monmouth, N.J. area, including engagements at Fort Mercer (Red Bank), N.J. and Fort Mifflin, Pa. (1777-78); at winter quarters at Valley Forge (1777-78); in Rhode Island (1778); and in the Elizabethtown area of N.J. (early 1780). Topics discussed include troop movements and encampments, intelligence reports on the British, news of other engagements, orders, court-martials, and visits to the sick and wounded.

Another excellent source for researching your soldier is Paul Friday's *Military Manuscripts at the State Historical Societies in New England* (Privately printed, 2014).

USING LOCAL AND SOCIAL HISTORIES

Your ancestors did not live in a vacuum. Never underestimate the value of local and social histories! They will place your ancestors in historical context and provide clues to records you may not have considered. Consider a variety of sources.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County histories ▪ Gazetteers ▪ Newspapers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State histories ▪ Town histories |
|--|---|

A good source for understanding customs of the day that might lead to additional sources is Jack Larkin's *The Reshaping of Everyday Life: 1790-1840*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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WHEN YOUR SEARCH IS STALLED

Don't forget an important rule of genealogical research: ***Remember the neighbors!*** In this case, explore the community and those with whom they served.