

U.S. Civil War Records

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Guest presenter Brian Rhinehart, professional genealogist, makes a living looking up Civil War Records at the National Archives. Most of the records he looks up at the National Archives are on the Union side. Union Civil War records are at the National Archives and Confederate records are held at the State Archives. Find Brian Rhinehart at CivilWarRecords.com.



Indirect Evidence

These are clues that you might have had a Civil War soldier.

- Soldiers were likely born around the 1830's – 1840's, likely between 1810-1847.
- Look for disappearing ancestors after the 1860 census. This might be a clue they were in the Civil War and or died in the war. If a wife is noted as the head of household in 1870, this is a clue that her husband may have died during the war.

Direct Evidence

Brian's steps for finding direct evidence of Civil War service.

1. **Ask Your Relatives**
2. **1890 Veterans' Census** – States starting with Kentucky to the end of the alphabet have survived.
3. **1910 Federal Census** – Asked if they served in the Civil War.
 - a. Numbers in column 30, do not indicate service.
 - b. UA, UN, CA, or CN mean Union Army, Union Navy, Confederate Army, or Confederate Navy.
4. **1930 Federal Census** – Asked if they were in the military and if so, what war.
5. **National Park Service Soldiers and Sailors Database** <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm>
6. **Obituaries** - Often noted Civil War service.
 - a. Chronicling America part of the Library of Congress
7. **Gravesites** – Gravesites often have Civil War markers or insignia or even the enlistment date.
 - a. GAR = Grand Army of the Republic
 - b. UCV = United Confederate Veterans
 - c. OVI = Ohio Volunteer Infantry
 - d. OVA = Ohio Volunteer Artillery



8. Pension Index Cards

- a. There are two versions of the index cards. One on Ancestry and one Fold3.com.
 - i. On **Ancestry** it may list the **widow** by name.
 1. Match the numbers on the pension index card with the one on Fold3.com
 - ii. Go to **Fold3** to find the same card. These cards sometimes have the **death date**.
 - iii. Class Column:
 1. **Invalid** – Pensions filed from some injury from the war or later in life from some ailment from aging.
 2. **Widow** – Can be a clue if the widow survived her husband.
 3. **Minor** – If children were left behind and a pension was filed for the children.
 - b. See those records if you find a pension index card.
9. **Draft Registration Records.** If you find a Draft Registration Registrations, this does not mean they served, it just means they registered for the draft.
10. **Online Family Trees** – May have clues but are not always correct.
11. **Local Historical Societies and Libraries.**
- a. Look for local history books
 - i. **Google Books** – books.google.com
 - ii. **HathiTrust.org**
 - iii. **Archive.org**

12. Homestead Files

- a. <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search> (free index)
- b. Homestead Act was passed during the Civil War.
- c. Union soldiers could count their time in service toward their five-year requirement.
- d. Look for the word “Homestead” as an entry noted on the BLM website.
- e. Records can be downloaded for free.

Case Study

See the Case Study in this video (starting at 35:40) about how Brian found William Smith. This was a challenge given the common name and the client did not know which regiment in which he served. This is one worth watching.

Find Brian Rhinehart

You can contact Brian Rhinehart directly at CivilWarRecords.com. He goes to the National Archives monthly to do research for clients.

Additional Free Handouts on his website.