



Resources for Researching Your War of 1812 Ancestor Online: Parts 1 & 2

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The War of 1812 may be a “forgotten war” for some, but many valuable genealogical resources were created as a result of this conflict. Could your ancestor have been involved in America’s second Revolutionary War? Find out which resources are available to bring your War of 1812 ancestor’s service to life.

The War of 1812

The War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain formally began on 18 June 1812. It involved about 60,000 U.S. Army forces, and was supported by 470,000 militia and volunteer troops.

While the Treaty of Ghent was signed on 24 December 1814 to end the war, another battle was fought on 8 January 1815 at New Orleans. The U.S. Congress ratified the treaty on 17 February 1815, and President James Madison declared the war to be officially ended.

Identify an Ancestor Who May Have Served

Age – Most soldiers and sailors were men between the ages of 18 and 30, so they would have been born between 1782 and 1796. Some were as young as 10 or as old as 70, which widens the birth years to between 1742 and 1804.

Date and Place of Death – Did your ancestor die between 18 June 1812 and 17 February 1815? Did he die in a different state from his family?

Residence – Where was your ancestor living when the war broke out in 1812? Most of the soldiers and sailors were men from these locations:

- **Canada** - Most soldiers came from Ontario. If your ancestor owned property in Ontario, search the Ontario Land and Property records.
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ontario_Land_and_Property
- **Great Britain** - Most soldiers were regular troops. They may have come from anywhere in the British Isles, although the majority were from England.
- **United States** - Soldiers and sailors came from all of the states and territories in existence at that time: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts (including Maine), New Hampshire, New

Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and the territories of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri. You may be able to locate your soldier and his family in the 1810 or 1820 U.S. census, which is free to search on FamilySearch.

- Lineage Societies – National Society United States Daughters of 1812 (ancestor database available), General Society of the War of 1812
<https://usdaughters1812.org> and <https://gswar1812.org>
- Obituaries and newspaper clippings

Locate the Service Record

- *FamilySearch* - "United States War of 1812 index to service records, 1812-1815"
Name index to compiled military service records of volunteer soldiers who served in the War of 1812. The original files are located in the National Archives in Washington D.C.
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916219>
- *Ancestry* - "U.S., War of 1812 Service Records, 1812-1815" (\$)
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/4281/>
- *Online War of 1812 Indexes and Records* – Includes links to general indexes and records and those broken down by state
<https://www.militaryindexes.com/warof1812/index.html>
- *National Society United States Daughters of 1812 Ancestor Database*
<https://usdaughters1812.org/ancestor-database/>
Visit <https://www.thefamilyheart.com/war-of-1812-ancestor-database> for tips on how to use this database.

Did He Receive a Pension?

The War of 1812 pension files resulted from a man's service during the war, from 1812-1815. They were granted to the veteran, his widow, or his heirs.

The first applications were based on disability or death of a soldier. Beginning in 1871, they were based on service. A veteran's pension file typically includes his rank, place of residence, age or date of birth, and time of service. A widow's application usually includes her place of residence, her maiden name, date and place of marriage, circumstances of her husband's death, and the names of children under 16 years of age.

Where to find these records:

- *FamilySearch* - "United States War of 1812 Index to Pension Application Files, 1812-1910"
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1834325>

- *Ancestry* – “War of 1812 Pension Application Files Index, 1812-1815” (\$) <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1133/>
- *Fold3* – “War of 1812 Pension Files” (free – digitization is 82% complete) <https://www.fold3.com/title/761/war-of-1812-pension-files> (if you get an error, copy and paste the link or go to <https://www.fold3.com> and search for “War of 1812 Pension Files”)

Research the Regiment

To better understand your ancestor’s military experience, learn the history of his regiment. Where did his regiment travel? Which battles did they participate in? Were they captured and taken prisoner?

Maps:

- *Library of Congress* – War of 1812 Maps <https://www.loc.gov/maps/?dates=1810/1819&fa=subject:war+of+1812>
- *Explore the War of 1812* – Interactive map of War of 1812 sites in the United States and Canada. <http://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=5f6451ab884f4435bfd6bd9e91da44bd&webmap=043cef4ec7e6409c9447ffa00b40fc38>
- *Battle Archives* “War of 1812 Battle Maps” <https://battlearchives.com/collections/1812>
- War of 1812 in the Collections of the Lilly Library, Indiana University <https://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/warof1812/items/browse?tags=Maps>

Prison Records:

- “War of 1812, Prisoner of War Records, 1812-1815” at *Ancestry* (\$) <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1131/>

Casualty Reports:

- “US War of 1812 Casualty Records” at *FamilySearch Wiki* https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/US_War_of_1812_Casualty_Records

Next Steps

Write the story of your War of 1812 ancestor:

- Create a timeline of events affecting your ancestor during his service
- Write a research report
- Create an eBook
- Share the story in a blog post

Join a lineage society honoring your ancestor:

- National Society United States Daughters of 1812 - <https://usdaughters1812.org>
- General Society of the War of 1812 - <https://gswar1812.org>

Additional Resources

- United States in the War of 1812 – *FamilySearch* Wiki
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_in_the_War_of_1812
- War or 1812 databases at *Ancestry* (\$)
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog/?title=%22war%20of%201812%22>
- War of 1812 databases at *Fold3* (some are free; copy and paste URL if error)
<https://www.fold3.com/browse/247/>
- *Cyndi's List* – War of 1812
<https://www.cyndislist.com/1812/>
- *American Battlefield Trust* – War of 1812 Facts
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/war-of-1812-faqs>
- *Library of Congress* – “A Guide to the War of 1812”
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/1812/>
- *Library of Congress* – War of 1812 Military Records
<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/war-of-1812>
- *Access Heritage* – “The War of 1812 Website”
<http://www.warof1812.ca/>
- *War of 1812 Chronicles*
<http://warof1812chronicles.blogspot.com/>
- *Newberry Library* - War of 1812 Military Research
<http://www.newberry.org/war-1812-military-research>

Visit <https://www.thefamilyheart.com/researching-war-of-1812-ancestors-online> to view updated resources for researching your War of 1812 ancestor online.