

Publications concerning Federal Revolutionary War pension records include *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives* (Washington, D.C.: National Genealogical Society, 1976); Virgil White, *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files, A-Z*, and *Index* (Waynesboro: National Historical Publishing Co., 1990, 5 vols), Alycon Trubey Pierce, *Selected Final Pension Payment Vouchers, 1818–1864: Virginia, Richmond & Wheeling* (Athens: Iberian Publishing Co., 1996); and John Frederick Dorman, *Virginia Revolutionary Pension Applications, Volumes 1–50, and Index* (Washington: 1958–).

Public Service Claims

During the Revolution the Virginia General Assembly authorized the procurement of supplies from its citizenry for the use of the militia, state, and Continental troops. Commissioners were appointed in each county to impress such supplies and services as were thought necessary to the war effort. Officials provided certificates or receipts for the requisitioned items so that the owners could seek reimbursement from the state government. Microfilm copies of these certificates are available at the Library.

Record-keeping proved difficult and in 1782 an act was passed providing for claims to be submitted to the county courts for adjudication. These claims, known as court booklets and lists, exist for almost all Virginia counties. A typical entry includes the name of the claimant and the nature and value of the supplies or services furnished. The booklets and lists are microfilmed and also transcribed by Janice L. Abercrombie and Richard L. Slatten in *Virginia Revolutionary Public Claims* (Athens: Iberian Publishing Co. 1992, 3 vols). Also available on microfilm are Commissioner's Books. A card file in the West Reading Room indexes all public service claims by name of claimant and is available on the Library's Web site.

Other Records

A number of other records concerning the prosecution of the war effort by the Virginia government are also available at the Library. These include a searchable database and images of Letters Received by the Governor, 1776–1784, Journals of the Council of State, and records of various organizations and officials charged with management of the war and supply of the army. The Library holds microfilm and an index of both the Continental Congress Papers and the Draper Manuscripts, which contain material related to the service of Virginians. The Library's online Archives and Manuscripts catalog also contains references to personal papers and military records of Virginians during the Revolution.

Researchers interested in Virginia Revolutionary War research should consult the Library of Virginia's online card catalog for a complete listing of published works related to their topic. The best source for Virginia during the Revolution is John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775–1783* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988). An excellent reference work for general Revolutionary War questions is Mark M. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994).

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Virginia Revolutionary War Records

Virginia played a pivotal role in the struggle for American independence from Great Britain, 1775–1783. Virginia troops were engaged from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River and many citizens provided some form of military or public service. The records of service are numerous, varied and sometimes complex. Most records contain little information about the person's service and seldom contain genealogical data. There are existing records of Virginia Continental Line troops, the Virginia State Line, the Virginia State Navy, county militia, various independent units, and public service claims. Other important records include benefits in the form of land and pensions given by the Virginia and federal governments to veterans and their heirs.

There is no central source or index for Virginia Revolutionary War records, but rather a wide array of records, all of which should be examined. Records exist in a variety of formats, usually microfilm or photostats of original documents, as well as printed material. Soldiers may have served in more than one unit and may appear in several records of service and benefits. Men with common names are easily confused with one another since most records contain little identifying data. A related problem is the variant spelling of surnames. A number of state and county records of that era no longer exist, and not everyone in Virginia was sympathetic to the revolutionary cause. The Library of Virginia is fortunate to hold many of those records which do survive and a close study of them by researchers is advised. Searchable databases on the Library's Web site index selected Revolutionary War records, including bounty warrants, land office military certificates, pensions, public service claims, and rejected claims. Digital images are also available for bounty warrants, pensions, and rejected claims.

Service Records

Records of Virginia Revolutionary War military service begin in 1775 when the first Virginia revolutionary government began to raise troops and make payments for expenses. An excellent source for these and other early records is William J. Van Schreeven, Robert J. Scribner and J. Brent Tarter, eds., *Revolutionary Virginia and the Road to Revolution: 1763–1776* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1973–1983, 7 vols.)

By 1777 Virginia had raised 15 regiments of infantry for service under Continental Congress authority, commonly known as the Virginia Continental Line. Many Virginians also served in continental regiments of artillery, cavalry, and other independent infantry units. These regiments were rearranged several times during the war and many soldiers served in more than one unit. Troops were also recruited to serve within the state under General Assembly authority and were known as the Virginia State Line. These included infantry units raised for special purposes such as guarding prisoners and the Illinois Regiment of George Rogers Clark. The organization and service of these and other Virginia units including the State Navy are detailed in E.M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution: 1776–1783* (Rich-

mond: Virginia State Library, 1978). Records of service with George Rogers Clark are found in Margery Harding, *George Rogers Clark and His Men, Military Records 1778–1784* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1981) and in the George Rogers Clark Papers, indexed microfilm of vouchers and receipts held by the Library of Virginia. A source for the Virginia State Navy is Robert A. Stewart, *Virginia's Navy in the Revolution* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1993). Some free African-Americans served in these units, and Luther P. Jackson, *Virginia Negro Soldiers and Seamen in the Revolutionary War* (Norfolk: Guide Quality Press, 1944) is the best source for this service.

Virginia also organized county militia companies. All free white males aged 16 to 50 were required to serve in a militia company unless exempted. Unfortunately few records of such service exist. Scattered pay records, recommendations and appointments of officers, and some militia fines have survived. Many post-1832 federal pensions also record militia service. A useful source is J.T. McAllister, *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War* (Bowie: Heritage Books, 1989).

Three important indexes for Virginia Revolutionary War service are Hamilton J. Eckenrode, *Virginia Soldiers in the American Revolution* (Richmond: Virginia State Library and Archives, 1989, 2 vols.), John H. Gwathmey, *Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution, 1775–1783* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979), and Gaius M. Brumbaugh, *Revolutionary War Records. Volume I, Virginia* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1967). These volumes index records of individual service in Virginia units held by the Library of Virginia and the National Archives, including some militia service. Records cited are usually pay accounts, muster rolls, or records related to postwar benefits of land and pensions. Multiple records are often listed for the same individual. Researchers are cautioned that service records of different individuals bearing the same name may be indexed together because it was not possible to further identify them.

The National Archives in Washington, D.C. holds many records of Continental Line service by Virginians and soldiers from other states. These are fully indexed in *Index to Revolutionary War Service Records* (Waynesboro: National Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995, 4 vols.). The Library of Virginia holds some of these records on microfilm. The most important are the *Compiled Service Records of Virginia Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War*, 192 reels, *NARA Revolutionary War Service Records Index*, 58 reels, *Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775–1783*, 138 reels, and various compiled service records of Continental cavalry, artillery, infantry, and naval personnel. The records typically may show enlistment, muster, pay, furlough, discharge, capture, sickness, and death. They seldom contain personal or genealogical data. These reels in the collection are only for reference use. Requests for copies should be directed to the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. 20408 (www.archives.gov).

Benefits Records

Benefits in the form of bounty land and pensions were offered by Virginia to induce men to enlist in the Continental or State Line. Beginning in 1790, the new United States government also began to grant pensions and bounty land. These records can be valuable to researchers as they may contain personal and service information about the veteran and identify his heirs.

Bounty Land

Virginia awarded bounty land to soldiers who served for at least three years in the Continental Line, the State Line and the State Navy, died in service, or enlisted for the war. Heirs could apply if the soldier had died.

The process was lengthy. In many cases land speculators obtained the right to the land from the veteran or his heirs. Proof of service had to first be submitted to the state. Once this was approved the governor issued a land office military certificate. The amount of land awarded was based on the rank of the soldier and the amount of time served. Virginia kept no record of the next two steps in the process, which was to have the land surveyed, followed by the issuance of a grant.

All Virginia bounty land was in Ohio or Kentucky and records of the surveys and grants are held by the Secretary of State's Land Office Division, Room T40 Capitol Annex, Frankfort, KY 40601 (<http://sos.ky.gov/land/military>) and the Ohio Historical Society, 1982 Velma Ave., Columbus, OH 43211 (<http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/archlib>). Bounty warrants and rejected claims (rejected for insufficient service or other reasons) are available on the Library's Web site and on microfilm. Land office military certificates are available on microfilm and there is an online index. A card index to these records is located in the West Reading Room. The United States government also awarded bounty land and all records pertaining to it are held by the National Archives and the state(s) where the land was located.

Useful sources relating to bounty land are Lloyd D. Bockstruck, *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants: Awarded by State Governments* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996), Samuel M. Wilson, *Virginia Land Bounty Warrants* (Baltimore: Southern Book Co., 1953), Louis A. Burgess, *Virginia Soldiers of 1776* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Co., 1973), William L. Hopkins, *Virginia Revolutionary War Land Grant Claims, 1783–1850 (Rejected)* (Richmond: 1988), Margie G. Brown, *Genealogical Abstracts Revolutionary War Veterans Scrip Act of 1851* (Lovettsville: Willow Bend Books, 1997), and Clifford Neal Smith, *Federal Land Series* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1972–1982).

Virginia Pensions

Beginning in 1775 the Virginia General Assembly passed several laws to increase military enlistment. These laws provided for pensions for maimed and disabled soldiers or their widows. Surviving state pensions usually include proof of service, the nature of the disability, records of payment and receipt of the pension, and statements of disability from the local court. In most cases the General Assembly was petitioned to pass an act granting a pension. Search the legislative petitions database on the Library's Web site for references to these pensions. The Virginia pensions are available on microfilm at the Library.

Federal Pensions

Federal pensions were granted by Congress under a number of acts beginning in 1789 and continuing until 1878. The earliest acts applied mainly to disabled Continental soldiers or their widows. Beginning in 1818 pensions were granted for service only, and soldiers who served in the militia were eligible beginning in 1832. Papers relating to pension applications prior to 1818 were destroyed, but many exist for later years.

Federal pension records can provide much information about the soldier's service and life, and the files often contain statements made by the veteran, his widow, relatives, or neighbors. The data can include his military unit, rank and period of service, place and date of birth, residence before and after the war, names and ages of family members, bible records, and list of possessions. The widow's application usually contains place of marriage and maiden name. The Library of Virginia holds copies of these records on microfilm. Photocopies must be obtained from the National Archives.