

# EXPLORING



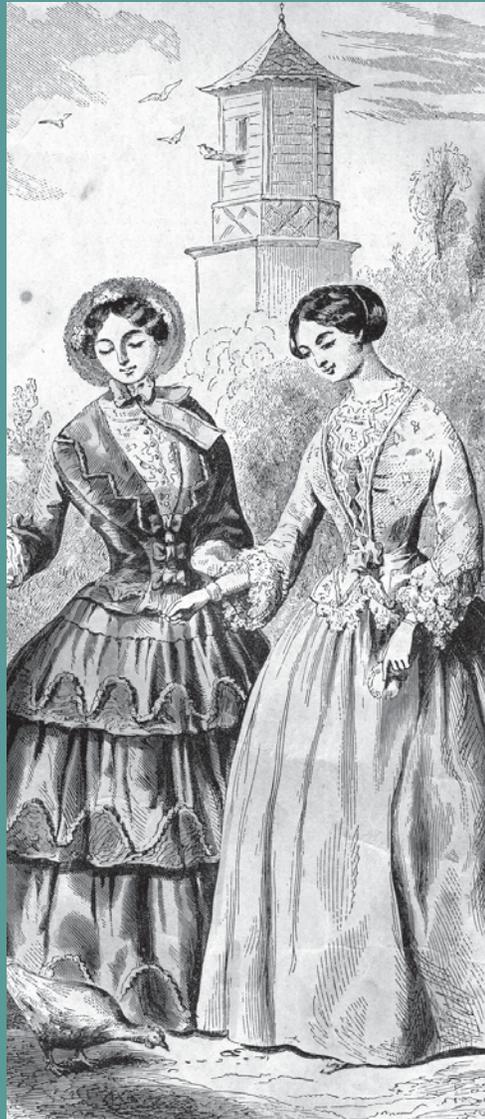
YOUR **CIVIL WAR** ROOTS

# AN ENDURING LEGACY

The Civil War captures America's imagination like no other conflict in our history. As the nation commemorates the 150th anniversary of the War Between the States, it's the perfect time to dig deeper into your own family's role in the landmark conflict.

This ebook will help you do just that, with tips and resources to trace soldier ancestors and understand what they and their families lived through.

You'll get even more help discovering your roots—in the Civil War and beyond—from *Family Tree Magazine's* Genealogy Insider email newsletter. Whether your forebears were Union or Confederate, soldiers or civilians, discover their story today—and preserve their legacy for tomorrow.



## INSIDE...

- ★ top 10 Civil War websites
- ★ 9 steps to trace your Civil War roots
- ★ costs of goods and the impact of shortages during the war
- ★ tips for identifying Civil War era photos

### More to Explore

Life in Civil War America free on-demand webinar <[bit.ly/civilwaramerica](http://bit.ly/civilwaramerica)>

Civil War resources on FamilyTreeMagazine.com <[familytreemagazine.com/civilwar150](http://familytreemagazine.com/civilwar150)>

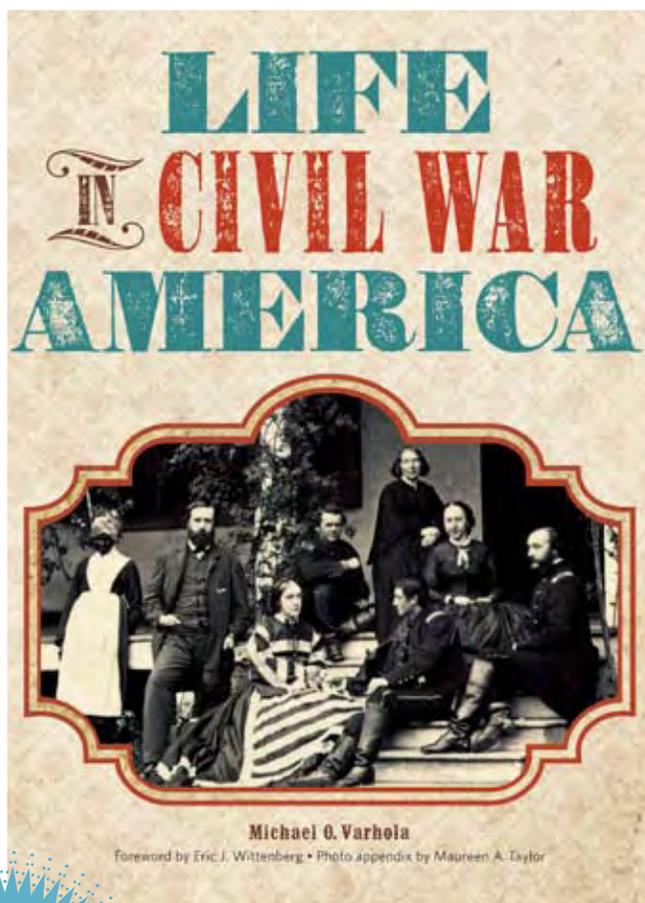
Civil War products at ShopFamilyTree.com <[shopfamilytree.com/category/civil-war-anniversary](http://shopfamilytree.com/category/civil-war-anniversary)>

Get Started in genealogy <[familytreemagazine.com/articlelist/get-started](http://familytreemagazine.com/articlelist/get-started)>

Online genealogy classes <[familytreeuniversity.com](http://familytreeuniversity.com)>

# Bring Civil War History to Life!

Just in time for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war, this new book takes you back to 1860s America. Discover what life was like for your ancestors in battle and on the home front.



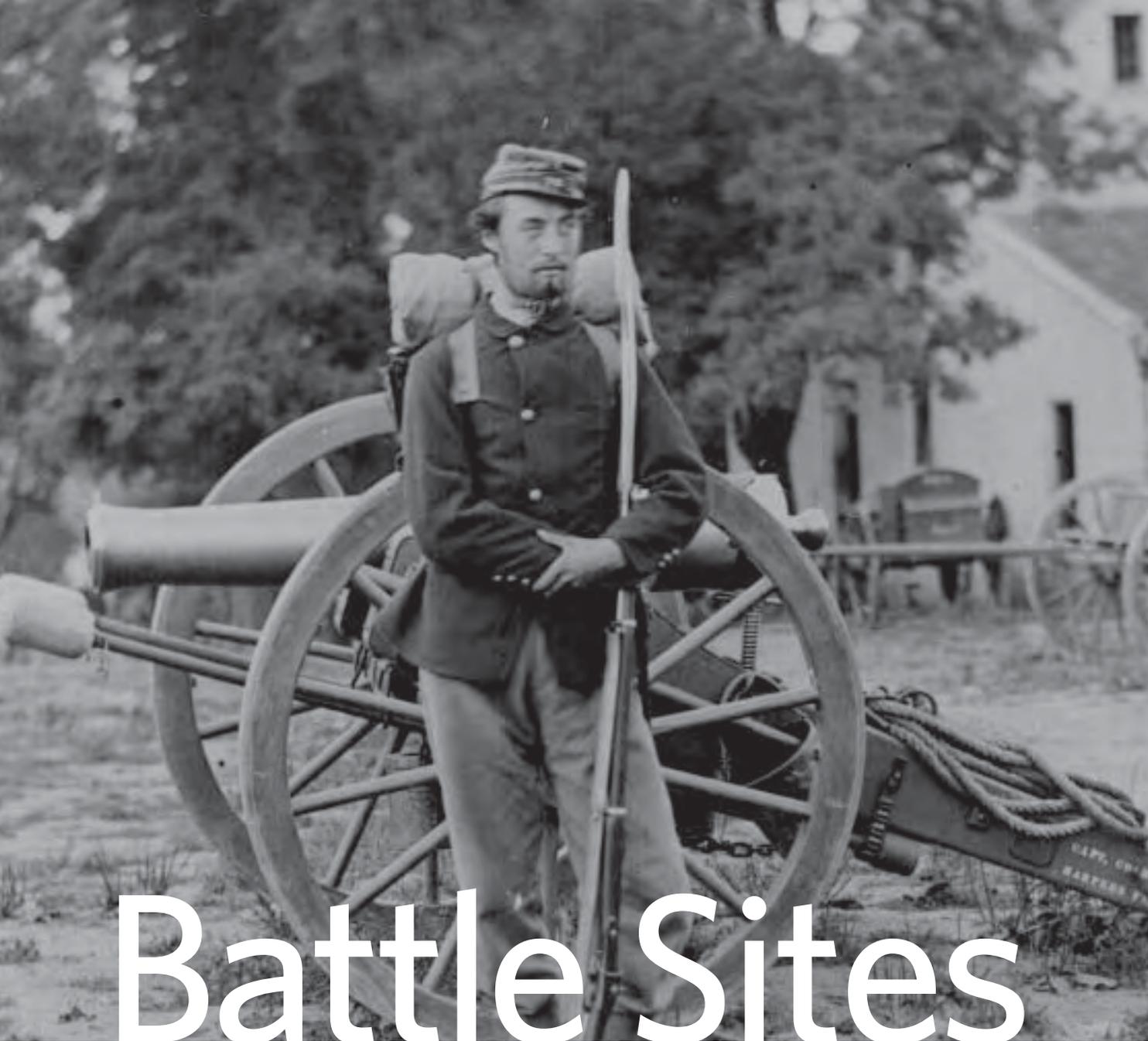
**FREE WEBINAR**

featuring a conversation with author Michael O. Varhola  
<[bit.ly/civilwaramerica](http://bit.ly/civilwaramerica)>

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Life in Civil War America | Y1795 · 978-1-4403-1086-7 | \$22.99 · 320 pages

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the best resource for genealogy how-to books, CDs, webinars and more!



# Battle Sites

**Explore Civil War genealogy records and history at these top 10 online destinations. BY DAVID A. FRYXELL**

**AS AMERICA COMMEMORATES** the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, you can explore the history of that conflict—and your ancestors’ roles in it—in ways those fighting men in blue and gray never could have imagined. Today, you can look up the name and unit of every known Civil War soldier on the web, along with histories of his (and, yes, her, in some cases) regiment. Many of the service records that, until recently, you could get only by writing to the National Archives <[archives.gov](http://archives.gov)> can now be downloaded to your desktop. Pension applications, which can solve mysteries

about a Civil War veteran’s whole family, are increasingly available without even a trip to the library. And you can walk in Civil War ancestors’ battlefield footsteps with ani-



ated maps, collections of letters and photographs, and even the complete *Official Record* of the conflict—all online.

It’s all a far cry technologically from those pioneering Mathew Brady photos of the war (yep, also online—see <[archives.gov/research/civil-war/photo](http://archives.gov/research/civil-war/photo)>) or Abraham Lincoln scribbling his Gettysburg Address on the back of an envelope. (Today, we bet Abe would’ve used an iPad.)

Take advantage of online resources to learn about your Civil War relatives, whether Union—like Pvt. D.W.C. Arnold, shown here—or Confederate.

The sesquicentennial celebration itself has its own ever-growing web presence, of course, at the National Park Service Civil War Website <[www.nps.gov/civilwar](http://www.nps.gov/civilwar)>. It features a calendar of events and links to resources and exhibits. To help you get off on the right foot in researching your Civil War fighting kin (that would be the straw foot, in the classic “hay-foot, straw-foot” training given raw recruits), we’ve selected the top 10 websites for Civil War research.

## 1 Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System

<[www.itd.nps.gov/cwss](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss)>

Also a National Park Service site, this essential starting place for Civil War research has added new features in time for the sesquicentennial, including backgrounders on the social, economic, political and military aspects of the Civil War. Browsing each topic is like having a Park Service ranger lead you through the underlying history of the war. You’ll also find a section on using the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System (CWSS) in the classroom, plus a guide to African-Americans in the war and suggested readings.

Another new feature, still in the works, will list all the names of burials in the 14 national cemeteries managed by the Park Service, all but one of which is related to a Civil War battlefield park. The first phase, now online, involves data from records of Poplar Grove National Cemetery at Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia, and includes images of the headstones.

But the heart of this site remains the database of 6.3 million names from both sides, covering 44 states and territories, derived from General Index Cards—now at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)—that Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth’s staff created in the 1880s to determine eligibility for military pensions. (The index does include Confederates, even though they were ineligible for federal pensions.) Transcribers copied names from muster rolls, which companies usually kept and updated about every two weeks. On the CWSS, “hits” for soldiers’ records also link to regimental histories and, in turn, capsule histories of battles.

Searching this massive database is easy: Enter any combination of last name, first name, side (Union or Confederate), state of enlistment, unit number or function (such as infantry or cavalry). Name spellings can vary widely in Civil War records, as in other genealogical resources, so try variations if you don’t find your ancestor at first (the CWSS database doesn’t accept wildcards). You also can try entering less information—omit the first name, for example, in case your John W. Smith was transcribed as J.W. Smith, J. Smith or even mistakenly as J.W. Smith.

Once you’ve found your Civil War ancestor in the list of results, click on his name to see the basic information from his General Index card: name, side, company, rank on

## Enlisting Offline Sources

Not all essential Civil War resources are online—at least not yet. When you reach a dead end on the web, turn to these paper and microfilm tools:

■ **UNION PENSION FILES:** The index is online at Footnote and Ancestry.com, but the actual files haven’t been digitized or microfilmed. Request copies from NARA using NATF Form 80 or order online at <[eservices.archives.gov/orderonline](http://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline)>; select either the Pension Documents Packet (\$25), eight pages of genealogical information, or the Complete File (\$75).

■ **CONFEDERATE PENSION FILES:** If not online (see the box on page 22), most are available on microfilm from the Family History Library.

■ **COMPILED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS:** You can order Union and Confederate records online from NARA (\$25). Confederate service records are online at Footnote.

■ **UNION DRAFT RECORDS:** These have not yet been microfilmed; they’re at NARA in Record Group 110.

■ **BURIAL RECORDS:** Nearly 359,000 Union soldiers who died during the war are recorded in the 27-volume *Roll of Honor*, available on FHL microfilm and reprinted in 10 volumes by Genealogical Publishing Co., which also published an index by Martha and William Reamy. Compilations of Confederate gravesites include *Confederate Burials* (28 volumes) and *Deaths of Confederate Soldiers in Confederate Hospitals* (14 volumes), both by Raymond W. Watkins.

enlistment, ultimate rank, any notes and NARA microfilm location. You can use this information to search for his compiled military service record (CMSR) at Footnote <[footnote.com](http://footnote.com)> (see below) or request it from NARA (see the box above). You also can click on the regiment name to view information about this unit with links to write-ups of its battles. From this regiment page, you can search for others in the unit or browse a list of all the regiment’s soldiers (which often will include relatives of your ancestor who enlisted at the same time and place).

The “Sailors” part of the CWSS name, alas, is a bit misleading. No naval records equaling soldiers’ CMSRs exist on either side. Although the Park Service is organizing and indexing sailors’ records, the only sailors online now are 18,000 African-Americans indexed in a Howard University project.

## 2 Footnote <[footnote.com](http://footnote.com)>

Thanks to its partnership with the NARA, this subscription site (recently acquired by Ancestry.com <[ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)>) is working toward instant gratification for Civil War researchers who formerly had to wait for NARA records to arrive in the mail. For \$11.95 a month or \$79.95 a year, you can view a nearly complete collection of Confederate Soldier Service Records. They contain digitized papers relating to

# Working the System

**1** The free Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System <[www.itd.nps.gov/cwss](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss)> is the best place to start researching your Civil War ancestors. Once you've confirmed an ancestor served and identified his unit, you can find him in other, richer records. To search, enter as much or as little information as you know about your ancestor. If you don't know the state from which he served, for instance, leave that drop-down menu blank. You can always go back and refine with more details if your search returns too many hits.

**2** Clicking on the soldier's name in your list of results will take you to the full entry for that individual. To learn more about a soldier's unit, just click on the regiment link.

**3** The information about each soldier is basic, but this data can unlock

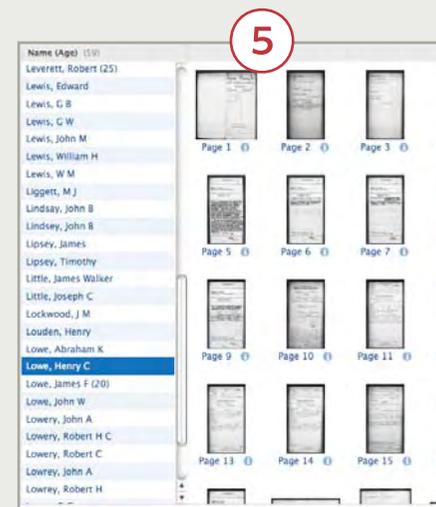
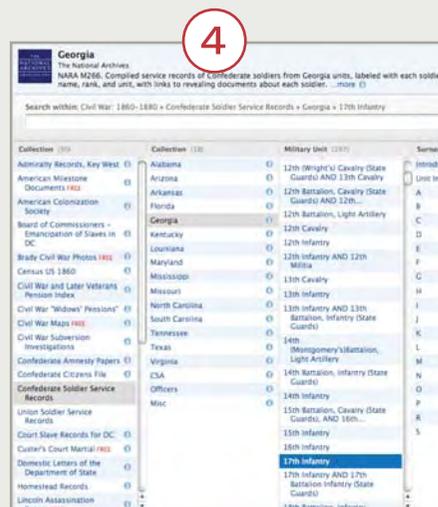
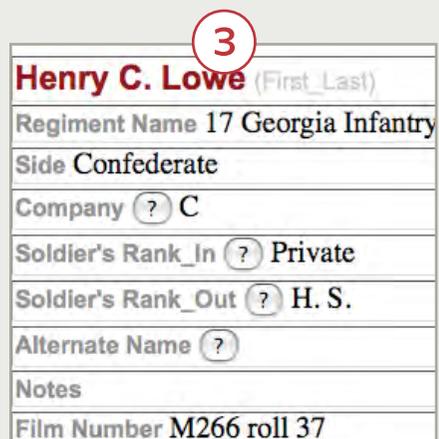
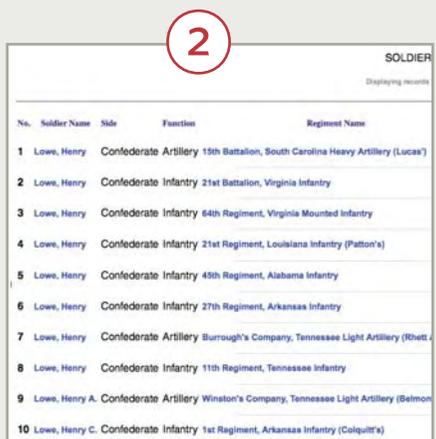
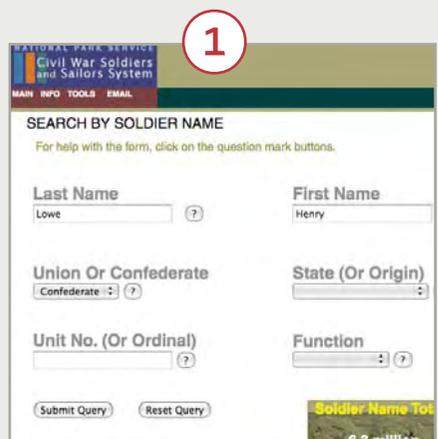
other records about your Civil War ancestor—sometimes page after page of detail. Note especially the regiment name. If you're researching a Union ancestor, whose compiled military service records (CMSRs) are likely not yet online, you'll need to know the regiment to request records from the National Archives. You can order a CMSR online at <[eservices.archives.gov/orderonline](http://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline)>; click on Order Reproductions. CMSR copies cost \$25 and ship in 60 to 90 days.

**4** If your ancestor fought for the Confederacy (or served the Union from a southern, border or western state, or was an African-American soldier), you can search for the soldier's name in the Civil War collection on the subscription site Footnote <[footnote.com](http://footnote.com)>. Since you know your ancestor's unit from the CWSS,

however, it's often faster—and avoids potential search quirks and misspellings—to browse to his records. In this case, click on Confederate Soldier Service Records, the state, the unit and the first letter of the last name.

**5** Once you've found your ancestor, click on his name to bring up thumbnails of the pages in his file. Click on any thumbnail to see it in the viewer.

**6** The viewer lets you zoom in and out, print or download, or scroll to other pages in the file using the filmstrip at the bottom. You could learn, for instance, where and when this soldier enlisted. Other pages give details about his service (in this case, time as a steward at a military hospital—where, an officer noted, "he has been discharging his duties to my entire satisfaction").





**TIP:** Besides service records and pensions, the National Archives' Civil War records include draft records, court martials, some soldiers' home records, photos and others. Visit [archives.gov/research/civil-war](http://archives.gov/research/civil-war) to learn more.

individual soldiers, as well as card abstracts of entries from muster rolls, regimental returns (personnel reports from a post commander), rosters, payrolls, appointment books, hospital registers, Union prison registers and rolls, parole rolls and inspection reports. Union CMSRs aren't as far along in digitization, but it's worth a look, especially if your ancestor in blue came from a southern, border or western state.

You can look for your Union ancestor, however, in the nearly 3 million record images of the Civil War and Later Veterans Pension Index. This series, from NARA microfilm T289, contains index cards, arranged by unit, for pension applications of veterans who served in the US Army between 1861 and 1917 (including other wars). You can learn about a soldier's term of service and use the indexed information to request his pension record from NARA. Unique to this series of records are death dates and locations for many of the veterans who died after the war.

Other Civil War resources at Footnote include Confederate amnesty papers, postwar claims cases filed by Southern citizens, Union naval pensions and a small but growing database of pension applications from Union soldiers' widows.

You can search Footnote records by name, or you can browse any collection by clicking on the database name then drilling down by state, sometimes by regiment or company, and then by an alphabetical list of names. Given the vagaries of bureaucratic name-spelling, this browsing approach is often the surest way to find your ancestors' records. It's especially effective if you've already found a soldier's unit information using the CWSS (see No. 1).

### 3 Ancestry.com <ancestry.com>

Footnote's new owner is also worth a look for Civil War records, though Ancestry.com isn't quite as rich a resource for this data—yet. This subscription site (\$19.95 a month, \$155.40 a year for a US Deluxe membership) includes several databases that duplicate or overlap the free CWSS info. You'll want to check out the US Civil War Soldiers Records and Profiles (an updated version of the American Civil War Research Database, also online here), which covers much of the same ground but also pulls in records including state rosters, pension records, regimental histories, photos and even journals; to date it covers more than 4.2 million soldiers.

The other star attraction here is the General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934, which covers more than 2 million Union Army soldiers who filed for pensions after the war. The pension index cards come from NARA microfilm T288,

## MORE ONLINE

### @ Free Web Content

- Civil War on the Web <[familytreemagazine.com/article/civil-war-on-the-web](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/civil-war-on-the-web)>
- Civil War Genealogy Toolkit <[familytreemagazine.com/article/civil-war-genealogy-toolkit](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/civil-war-genealogy-toolkit)>
- Common military abbreviations <[familytreemagazine.com/article/winning-the-acronym-war](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/winning-the-acronym-war)>

### + For Plus Members

- Civil War research guide <[familytreemagazine.com/article/a-house-divided](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/a-house-divided)>
- Military records online <[familytreemagazine.com/article/operation-online-records](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/operation-online-records)>
- Top Civil War resources <[familytreemagazine.com/article/inside-sources-top-civil-war-resources](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/inside-sources-top-civil-war-resources)>

### \$ ShopFamilyTree.com

- *Life in Civil War America* <[shopfamilytree.com/product/life-in-civil-war-america](http://shopfamilytree.com/product/life-in-civil-war-america)>
- Online Military Records on-demand webinar <[shopfamilytree.com/product/online-military-records-webinar](http://shopfamilytree.com/product/online-military-records-webinar)>
- *Civil War Sites in Georgia* <[shopfamilytree.com/product/civil-war-sites-in-georgia-9781558539044](http://shopfamilytree.com/product/civil-war-sites-in-georgia-9781558539044)>

and are arranged by name. It's much easier to search this database—or Footnote's similar index, for that matter—than to pore over the microfilm alternative, available through the Family History Library.

Ancestry.com also has 1.5 million Civil War prisoner of war records, Alabama muster rolls and some other Confederate records, historic photos and a database of headstones provided for Union veterans who died from 1879 to 1903. The collection, titled *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865*, compiles documents from three NARA record groups relating to the war.

Don't overlook Ancestry's complete census collection when researching your Civil War kin. The 1890 veterans schedules for states alphabetically from part of Kentucky through Wyoming are almost the only surviving piece of that enumeration. The 1910 census also asked whether a person was a survivor of the Union Army (abbreviated UA) or Navy (UN) or the Confederate Army (CA) or Navy (CN).

### 4 CivilWar.com <www.civilwar.com>

This free site for Civil War buffs is cluttered with ads, but if you can get past the commercials you'll find a searchable version of the 128-volume *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (the "OR" for short). This is the official—and exhaustive—government account of all that went on in the war. The thousands of pages of information on this site also



**TIP:** Civil War battlefield maps and historical accounts of the battles your ancestor's unit participated in can help you trace exactly where he was during those conflicts. You can find maps and accounts of many battles at <[www.civilwar.org/battlefields](http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields)>, <[www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/battles/bystate.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/battles/bystate.htm)> and <[www.civilwarhome.com/records.htm](http://www.civilwarhome.com/records.htm)>.

include historical letters, a searchable collection of Civil War photos, guides to period weaponry and vessels, and regimental histories. A clickable map takes you to all the battles fought in that state or territory, with summaries of each.

## 5 eHistory <[ehistory.osu.edu](http://ehistory.osu.edu)>

Although not limited to the Civil War, this free site under the auspices of The Ohio State University is especially strong on that era, including not only the complete online edition of the OR (searchable, along with an index) but also

## States' Rights

Many of the best Civil War sites concentrate on a single state. (Keep in mind that Confederate pensions, after all, came from the seceding states, not the federal government.) Here are top state Civil War sites, both North and South:

■ **ALABAMA CIVIL WAR SERVICE CARDS FILE** <[www.archives.alabama.gov/civilwar/search.cfm](http://www.archives.alabama.gov/civilwar/search.cfm)>: Search a database of 231,000-plus entries from a card file maintained by the Alabama Department of Archives and History from the early 1900s until 1982.

■ **ARKANSAS CIVIL WAR** <[arkansascivilwar.com](http://arkansascivilwar.com)>: Search Confederate pension records, Arkansas Confederate Home records, and 1911 questionnaires of Confederate soldiers in Arkansas.

■ **WESTERN HISTORY AND GENEALOGY** <[history.denverlibrary.org/research/index.html#co\\_military](http://history.denverlibrary.org/research/index.html#co_military)>: This Denver Public Library site includes Colorado veterans and a database for Nebraska.

■ **FLORIDA CONFEDERATE PENSION APPLICATION FILES** <[www.floridamemory.com/collections/pensionfiles](http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/pensionfiles)>: Search a database of 13,000 veterans' and widows' pension applications.

■ **GEORGIA CIVIL WAR PENSION APPLICATIONS** <[docuweb.gsu.edu/civilwar.htm](http://docuweb.gsu.edu/civilwar.htm)>: Get online access to the Georgia Department of Archives and History's collection of microfilmed pension records of veterans and their widows.

■ **ILLINOIS STATE ARCHIVES** <[www.library.sos.state.il.us/departments/archives/datcivil.html](http://www.library.sos.state.il.us/departments/archives/datcivil.html)>: Find a database of more than 285,000 soldiers from Illinois who served in the Union Army, plus downloadable regimental histories.

■ **INDIANA CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS** <[www.indianadigitalarchives.org/titleinfo.aspx?tid=77](http://www.indianadigitalarchives.org/titleinfo.aspx?tid=77)>: Search a database of more than 213,000 Hoosier Civil War records.

■ **LOUISIANA STATE ARCHIVES** <[www400.sos.louisiana.gov/archives/gen/cpa-alpha.htm](http://www400.sos.louisiana.gov/archives/gen/cpa-alpha.htm)>: Search 49,000 names indexed from microfilmed Confederate Pension Applications.

■ **ARCHIVES OF MARYLAND ONLINE** <[www.aomol.net/html/military.html](http://www.aomol.net/html/military.html)>: Access two volumes of Union muster rolls plus "The Maryland Line in the Confederate Army."

■ **SEEKING MICHIGAN** <[seekingmichigan.org/discover-collect-ion?collection=p4006coll15](http://seekingmichigan.org/discover-collect-ion?collection=p4006coll15)>: Search a collection of muster rolls, letters, lists of dead, monthly returns and other materials sent to the state Adjutant General during the war.

■ **MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES** <[www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/resources.asp](http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/resources.asp)>: Find a Civil War Provost Marshal Index Database and database of Missouri soldiers.

■ **RECORD OF OFFICERS AND MEN OF NEW JERSEY IN THE CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865** <[www.njstatelib.org/NJ\\_Information/Digital\\_Collections/Digidox20.php](http://www.njstatelib.org/NJ_Information/Digital_Collections/Digidox20.php)>: The New Jersey State Library digital edition is fully searchable.

■ **NEW YORK STATE CIVIL WAR SOLDIER DATABASE** <[iarchives.nysed.gov/CivilWarWeb/search.jsp](http://iarchives.nysed.gov/CivilWarWeb/search.jsp)>: Searchable database of more than 360,000 New York soldiers.

■ **INDEX TO OKLAHOMA CONFEDERATE PENSION RECORDS** <[www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf](http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf)>: 5MB downloadable PDF index.

■ **PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES** <[www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/archive.asp](http://www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/archive.asp)>: The Civil War Veterans Card File typically includes the soldier's age, physical description, residence, birthplace and service data.

■ **SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY** <[www.archivesindex.sc.gov](http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov)>: A database here holds nearly 11,000 records of Confederate veterans from 1909 to 1973.

■ **TENNESSEE CONFEDERATE PENSION APPLICATIONS** <[www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/pension.htm](http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/pension.htm)>: Application forms from 1891 list service information plus place of birth, number and gender of children, and value of personal and real property. These cover veterans living in Tennessee at the time, not only those who served from Tennessee. Also find an index of Confederate Soldiers' Home Applications <[www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/csh1.htm](http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/csh1.htm)>.

■ **TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION** <[www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html)>: Search 54,634 Confederate pension applications, the Confederate Indigent Families Lists, and the Index to Texas Adjutant General Service Records.

■ **LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA** <[www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil](http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil)>: Read about this stellar site under No. 9.

■ **WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY** <[www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy)>: Check alphabetical and regimental lists of soldiers who served from Wisconsin units during the Civil War, plus state veterans' censuses from 1885, 1895 and 1905.

its companion atlas. In 1895, the Government Printing Office produced these 175 full-color plates with detailed maps of battles and other events covered in the OR. This site's Civil War collection also includes letters and diaries.

## 6 Civil War Trust

<[www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org)>

For the latest in Civil War battlefield maps, turn to this site from the organization (formerly called Civil War Preservation Trust) dedicated to preserving those grounds. The trust is adding animated maps that put the battle action in motion, and serves up downloadable maps (free registration required), a collection of historical maps, and battle maps overlaid on Google Earth imagery. You also can explore the Civil War Discovery Trail across 32 states, search for battlefields by state or by year, and plan your visit to these historic sites. The History Center (under Education) includes biographies of key figures, battle histories from *Hallowed Ground* magazine, and links to primary-source documents about the war.

## 7 Nationwide Gravesite Locator

<[gravelocator.cem.va.gov](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov)>

Although not specifically geared to the Civil War, this site from the Department of Veterans Affairs is the fastest and simplest way to search for the government burial site of your Civil War veteran ancestors (and possibly their dependents). It covers VA National Cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries and other Department of Interior and military cemeteries, among them numerous Civil War battlefield cemeteries. Unlike postwar US government records such as pensions, which cover only the winning side, the Gravesite Locator does include burial sites of Confederate veterans.

You can search all the cemeteries or a single location using last name (the only required field), first name, middle name, birth date and/or death date. Name searches can be exact or “begins with.” Because the Nationwide Gravesite Locator includes burial records from many sources, results of your searches will vary. You should get at least the veteran's birth and death dates and cemetery; some listings give precise burial locations with a link to a map.

## 8 Ken Burns' "The Civil War"

<[www.pbs.org/civilwar](http://www.pbs.org/civilwar)>

If your impressions of the Civil War were mostly formed by documentary filmmaker Ken Burns' landmark PBS series “The Civil War,” this handsome site is for you. More than just a collection of pictures, the site's image gallery features two interactive sections (you'll need the Flash plug-in), Telling Details and Telling a Story. In the first, click on the highlights in each image to learn more about places, battles and daily life of the Civil War. In Telling a Story, you can play Ken Burns by mixing archival images, narration and music, then e-mail your “movie” to a friend. A section called The War adds biographies, maps, historical documents, a bibliography and links.

There's also a complete background on the making of the series, with video clips and a schedule to catch rebroadcasts. Bios tell about Burns and his fellow filmmakers, and you can even download a Civil War screensaver.

## 9 Library of Virginia

<[www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil](http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/mil)>

Although state sites can be packed with Civil War data, most focus tightly on soldiers from that state. (You can see some of our favorite state-specific sites for Civil War research in the States' Rights box on the previous page.) The Library of Virginia is the exception, and not just because so much of the war's pivotal action took place within that state's borders. Even if you don't have Virginians in your family tree, but you grew up calling the conflict “the War Between the States” (or “the Recent Unpleasantness”) and whistlin' “Dixie,” visit this site for its index to names in nearly 30 years' worth of *Confederate Veteran* magazine published between 1893 and 1932. You can search for names or other words and phrases, or browse an alphabetical list of names. Index entries typically list the veteran's service unit, death date and place, and the issue and page of the original citation.

Of course, those with Virginia kin will want to consult this site for its helpful guides to Civil War research at the Library of Virginia, list of Civil War Resources in the Personal Papers and Military Records Collections, Confederate Navy Index, Index to Virginia Confederate Rosters, Virginia Confederate Pensions, Virginia Confederate Disability Applications and Receipts, Virginia Military Dead Database and applications for admission to the Robert E. Lee Camp Soldiers Home.

## 10 American Civil War Homepage

<[sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html](http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html)>

If the previous nine sites haven't quenched your thirst for Civil War info on the web, this classic—but constantly updated—list of links will take you wherever you might still want to go online. We rarely honor mere link sites in this day of databases and slick graphics, but George H. Hoemann's American Civil War Homepage remains essential to exploring the Civil War on the web. From music of the era to political cartoons, Animal Mascots of the Civil War to the Confederate Salt Co., you can delve into aspects of the Civil War you probably hadn't even thought of.

Be sure to scroll down to the State & Local Studies section, organized alphabetically by state. Here you may find some surprising gems—perhaps containing info about your ancestors—you'd never have thought to Google for, such as “A Few Soldiers of Old Tallapoosa” (Alabama) or “Trumbull County, Ohio, in the Civil War.” ■

Contributing editor **DAVID A. FRYXELL**'s great-grandfather William F. Dickinson served with the 37th Alabama Infantry.

# A HOUSE DIVIDED



**Whether your Civil War ancestor served in blue or gray, you can reveal his part in our nation's epic struggle. Our nine research steps will lead the charge.**

**BY DAVID A. FRYXELL**

**✿ I GREW UP** in a Blue-Gray household. When watching movies or playing war games about what my Alabama-born mother called “the War Between the States,” my youthful sympathies were nonetheless aligned solidly with the Union. Only later, while doing genealogy research as an adult, did I discover that my Illinois ancestors arrived from Sweden much too late to don any color and that my lone Civil War ancestor wore gray: My great-grandfather William “Frank” Dickinson served with the 37th Alabama Infantry. Now that I’ve gotten copies of his military service records, I have a greater empathy for what both sides endured in “the recent unpleasantness.”

A century and a half since that great conflict—2011 marks its sesquicentennial—it’s never been easier to start researching your Blue or Gray soldier ancestor. Not only can you search for the basic facts of his military service, you also can delve into the details of his regiment and battles he may have fought in, trace the unit’s movements on historical maps, and perhaps even find an image of him with his comrades. Pension files and other records could provide long-sought details about your soldier’s spouse and children, helping you win your own battle to understand your family’s past.

The Civil War produced voluminous documentation about the more than 3.5 million men (and a few hundred women) who fought both for the Union and the Confederacy. But because military records don’t fit the familiar patterns of most genealogical research—vital records, wills, passenger lists and the like—they can seem daunting to a first-time researcher. Fortunately, understanding a few key facts and a handful of essential resources can unlock a wealth of information about your Civil War ancestor. Follow these nine simple steps and you’ll soon be immersed in the epic struggle between North and South—and your ancestor’s role in that drama.

## 1 Look in the index.

First, you want to confirm your ancestor was in the war and learn some basic facts about his service. The Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System (CWSS) <[www.itd.nps.gov/cwss](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss)>—a massive project by the National Park Service with the Genealogical Society of Utah and the Federation of Genealogical Societies—puts basic information on 6.3 million soldier names just a click away. How can there be 6.3 million records in this online index, you ask, when only 3.5 million fought in the Civil War? If a soldier served in more than one regiment, he'll be listed multiple times; the same goes for men who served under more than one name or whose records are separated by spelling variations.

The CWSS contains transcribed information from General Index Cards, which were created beginning in the 1880s by Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth's staff to determine veterans' eligibility for military pensions. Happily, the staff pored over Confederate records as well, even though "Rebel" soldiers weren't eligible to draw federal pensions. The names on the index cards were drawn from muster rolls, usually kept on the company level and updated about every two weeks. The original cards are now at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <[archives.gov](http://archives.gov)> in Washington, DC.

Searching the CWSS couldn't be easier. Click on Soldiers, then fill in as many blanks in the search form as you can: last name, first name, Union or Confederate, state or place of origin, unit, function (infantry, cavalry, artillery, sharpshooters or engineers). Don't worry—you don't have to know your ancestor's unit; in fact, that's one of the key pieces of data you can learn from CWSS. If you know the unit but can't find your soldier, click on Regiments to search for a specific unit. You'll get a brief regimental history and a link to a list of all soldiers in that unit.

A successful search will confirm your ancestor served in the Civil War and retrieve his name (as listed in related records), side (Union or Confederate), regiment and company, initial rank and final rank, and the microfilm location of the original index card. The index also might contain an alternate name or notes. You can find the same information on microfilm or in two series edited by Janet B. Hewett, both from Broadfoot Publishing: *The Roster of Union Soldiers, 1861-1865* (33 volumes) and *The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865* (16 volumes).

You face a bigger challenge for sailor ancestors. Naval records aren't microfilmed or well-organized for either side. About 18,000 African-American Union sailors are in CWSS.



**TIP:** For more tips to trace your ancestors in blue and gray, look for *Family Tree Magazine's* special Civil War issue for the 150th anniversary <[shopfamilytree.com](http://shopfamilytree.com)>.

## Facts of Life

Mark the 150th anniversary of the start of War Between the States by walking in your Civil War ancestors' shoes with these fast facts from *Life in Civil War America* by Michael Varhola (Family Tree Books):

- In 1860, the textile factories in Lowell, Mass., had more spindles turning thread than did the entire South.
- The Second American Revolution, the War to Suppress Yankee Ignorance and the War for Constitutional Liberty were all Southern euphemisms for the "late unpleasantness" that was the Civil War.
- Later in the war, when for many there was no flour or anything else to be had, people held "starvation parties," where the only refreshment served was water.
- Some Union army engineers made prefabricated railroad bridge components and reached the point where they could replace demolished bridges within 24 hours.
- More soldiers actually perished from disease than from any other causes during the war.
- Bed linens, repurposed for bandages and clothing, often could not be replaced in the South, and many families had none at all by the end of the war.

## 2 Go on record.

Now you're ready to get a copy of your ancestor's Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR). Every soldier has a CMSR for each regiment he served in, so if your ancestor was in more than one, seek out all his CMSRs. The CMSR envelope, with contents compiled from original muster rolls and other records, contains various cards typically recording whether the soldier was present during a period of time, facts of enlistment and discharge, and any wounds or hospitalization. (Note you usually can't prove from a CMSR that a soldier was present in a particular battle, unless he was injured or captured.) His place of birth may be cited; only the country is listed for foreign-born men. The CMSR also may include an internal jacket of "personal papers," such as his enlistment documents and any prisoner of war records. According to NARA's Civil War records guide <[archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war](http://archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war)>, CMSRs "were so carefully prepared that it is rarely necessary to consult the original muster rolls and other records from which they were made."

What might you learn from an ancestor's CMSR? NARA's guide gives the example of Pvt. William P. Western, Company D, 106th New York Infantry: He enlisted July 29, 1862, at DeKalb, NY. He was 26 years old, born in Stockholm, NY, and stood 5 feet, 8 inches, with gray eyes and brown hair. The CMSR follows Western as he was taken prisoner at Fairmont, Va., April 29, 1863. After his parole, Western suffered "remittent fever" and "chronic diarrhea" (perhaps more than you really want to know about an ancestor!), and was hospitalized in Virginia and Washington, DC. During his service, he



Pension files often contain richer information about a soldier's service than his compiled military service record does.

received \$95 in clothing, \$27 in advanced bounty and pay through Aug. 31, 1864; he owed \$1.27 for a “painted blanket” and \$23.96 for transportation.

Confederate records tend to be sparser and less detailed, though some CMSRs from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama units list battles the soldier fought.

CMSRs are increasingly accessible online. At subscription site Footnote.com <[footnote.com](http://footnote.com)>, you can view some Union and many Confederate CMSRs. Confederate CMSRs are searchable on subscription site Ancestry.com <[ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)>.

Most Union CMSR files aren't microfilmed, but you can access microfilmed Confederate records at NARA or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Family History Library (FHL) <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>. Visit your local FamilySearch Center to borrow FHL microfilm for a fee.

You also can study original Union or Confederate CMSRs at NARA in Washington, DC, or request copies: On the web, go to Order Online <[eservices.archives.gov/orderonline](http://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline)> and click Made-to-Order Reproductions. To get copies by mail, use NATF Form 86, which you can request at <[archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html](http://archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html)>. CMSR copies cost \$25 and ship in 60 to 90 days.

If you learn your ancestor, like Western, was a prisoner of war, check Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861-1865, on Ancestry.com <[search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1124](http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1124)> or on NARA or FHL microfilm. This resource is also available for download at <[www.archive.org/details/selectedrecordso0132unit](http://www.archive.org/details/selectedrecordso0132unit)>. On CWSS, click Prisoners to search its index of Confederate prisoners held at Fort McHenry in Maryland and Union prisoners at Andersonville in Georgia.

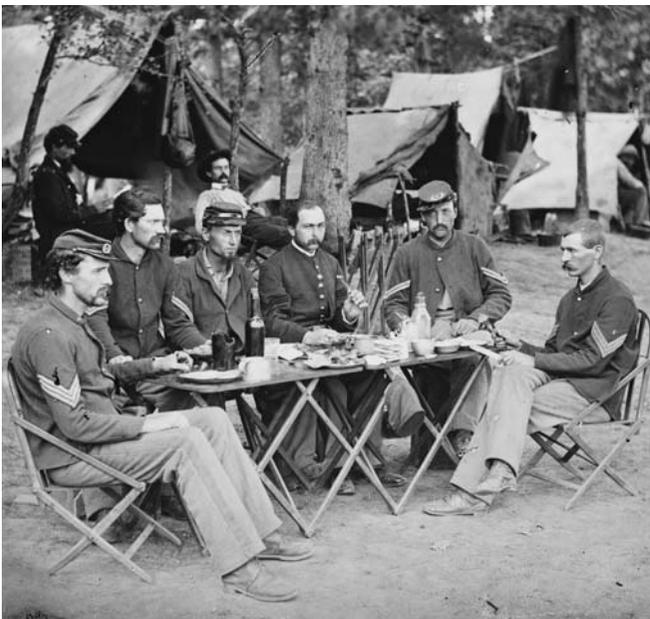
### 3 Draw on pensions.

If your ancestor fought for the Union, it's likely he, his widow or his minor children later applied for a pension. Surprisingly, these pension files often contain richer information about a soldier's service than his CMSR does, including a medical history if he lived for a number of years after the war. Pension files can be a genealogical gold mine for researching the family, too: Widows had to supply evidence of marriage, and applicants on behalf of minor children had to prove their birth and the soldier's marriage. Western's pension file, for example, details his death and burial in October 1864; his marriage to Ulisa Daniels; the birth of their daughter, Rosena; and Ulisa's remarriage to Patrick Curn.

Union pension records are indexed on 544 rolls of NARA microfilm called General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934 (T288); also is available from the FHL and digitized on Ancestry.com. The index is arranged by place, then by the veteran's or widow's name. Footnote also has a Civil War pension index, and is adding digitized records of approved pension applications made by widows of Union soldiers.

The actual pension files aren't microfilmed, but you can request copies from NARA's Order Online service or by mail using NATF Form 85. Ask for copies of all the documents in the file, or you'll receive only selected pages. If you order online, you can choose either the Pension Documents Packet for \$25 (you get eight documents if they're present in the file) or the Complete File for \$75 (up to 100 pages, with an additional fee per page for longer files).

The average Civil War soldier was in battle only a quarter of the time. Camp life was often tedious, spent drilling, reading, writing letters and playing games such as baseball, cards and boxing.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LC-B8171-0217 DLC

The victorious federal government wasn't too eager to pay pensions to those who'd fought against it, so Confederate pensions fell to the states. Some paid only to indigent or disabled veterans, widows and orphans. A qualifying veteran could apply to the state where he lived, even if he served in another state's unit. NARA doesn't keep Confederate pension records, but does provide a guide to locating them <[archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html](http://archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html)>. Most Confederate pension files are on FHL microfilm, and several states have put indexes or applications online (see the box Collecting Pensions).

Many former Confederate states also built soldiers homes for needy veterans. Records of homes in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia are on FHL microfilm—search the online catalog on the state name and *soldiers home*. You also can search indexes to homes in Arkansas <[ark-ives.net/documenting/confed\\_pensions.asp](http://ark-ives.net/documenting/confed_pensions.asp)> and Tennessee <[tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/csh1.htm](http://tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/csh1.htm)>.

#### 4 Draft your ancestors.

Not all Union soldiers were volunteers, of course. In 1863, Congress enacted the nation's first military draft; it applied to men ages 20 to 45. Draft records, which aren't microfilmed, are at NARA in record group 110, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau. They include much genealogical data, even if your ancestor never actually served. Consolidated Lists show each man's name, residence, age, occupation, marital status, place of birth and any previous military service. Descriptive Rolls include physical description, birthplace and whether the person was enlisted. Both listings are organized by state, then congressional district, then surname. To find your ancestral county's 1863 congressional district, consult United States Congress, Congressional Directory for the Second Session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress of the United States of America, available on FHL film 1425543 (Item 6, Official Congressional Directory).

The Enrollment Act of 1863 granted your Union ancestor the option to avoid military service by giving a substitute \$300, but in practice, this fee escalated. With a little digging in draft records, you can find out if your ancestor followed the example of, for instance, then-future president Grover Cleveland, who paid 32-year-old Polish immigrant George Berniski to take his place in the 76th New York Infantry.

If you've already found your ancestor's CMSR and pension files, there's little extra to be gleaned from draft records. But if you strike out in the former, draft records may provide otherwise-elusive answers.

#### 5 Enlist the census.

Yes, those decennial head counts so familiar to family tree researchers sometimes hold clues about Civil War service. The 1890 census included a special enumeration of Union veterans and widows. Most of that census was lost to fire, but the special schedules survived for states alphabetically



Pension files for Confederate soldiers, such as these men from units in Tennessee (left) and Louisiana (right), are generally in state archives' collections.

### Collecting Pensions

Each of the former Confederate states issued pensions to ailing and aging soldiers, so no central repository holds all those records. Several state archives have posted the following online pension indexes, some with record images:

- **Arkansas Confederate Pension Records**  
<[ark-ives.com/documenting/confed\\_pensions.asp](http://ark-ives.com/documenting/confed_pensions.asp)>
- **Florida Confederate Pension Application Files**  
<[www.floridamemory.com/collections/pensionfiles](http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/pensionfiles)>
- **Georgia's Virtual Vault: Confederate Pension Applications, 1879-1960**  
<[content.sos.state.ga.us/cdm4/pension.php](http://content.sos.state.ga.us/cdm4/pension.php)>
- **Louisiana Confederate Pension Applications Index Database**  
<[sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/581/Default.aspx](http://sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/581/Default.aspx)>
- **Index to Oklahoma Confederate Pension Records**  
<[www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf](http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/docs/pension.pdf)>
- **South Carolina On-Line Records Index: Confederate Pension Applications, 1919-1938**  
<[archivesindex.sc.gov](http://archivesindex.sc.gov)>
- **County Index to Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications**  
<[tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/pension.htm](http://tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/pension.htm)>
- **Index to Texas Confederate Pension Applications, 1899-1975**  
<[tsl.state.tx.us/arc/pensions/introcpi.html](http://tsl.state.tx.us/arc/pensions/introcpi.html)>
- **Library of Virginia: Military Records**  
<[virginiamemory.com/collections/collections\\_by\\_topic](http://virginiamemory.com/collections/collections_by_topic)>  
From here, link to databases for Confederate Pension Rolls: Soldiers and Widows, as well as Confederate Disability Applications and Receipts.

from Kentucky through Wyoming. You can access the records on FHL and NARA microfilm, and on Ancestry.com.

The 1910 census also asked whether a person was a survivor of the Union Army (abbreviated UA) or Navy (UN), or the Confederate Army (CA) or Navy (CN). Some postwar state censuses also identified Union veterans, such as the 1865 New York and 1885 Wisconsin enumerations (both available at <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>). Several Southern states took

censuses of Confederate veterans. Those available on FHL microfilm include Alabama in 1907, 1921 and 1927; Arkansas in 1911; and Louisiana in 1911.

## 6 Join the club.

After the war, many Union veterans joined organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). By 1890, some 40 percent of Union veterans were GAR members. Records of local GAR posts, including rosters and meeting minutes, often provide genealogical information. Look for them in state historical societies, archives and libraries. They're on FHL microfilm for some states, including Iowa, South Dakota, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon and Utah. See a listing of GAR posts by state at <[loc.gov/rr/main/gar](http://loc.gov/rr/main/gar)>.

Union officers formed the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States <[suvchw.org/mollus/mollus.htm](http://suvchw.org/mollus/mollus.htm)>, which exists today as a hereditary group. Other hereditary organizations include the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War <[www.duvcw.org](http://www.duvcw.org)> and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War <[suvchw.org](http://suvchw.org)>; both offer historical information on their websites.

Confederate veterans established the United Confederate Veterans in 1889. Records of the organization are available on FHL microfilm, and the Library of Virginia has an online index to names in Confederate Veteran magazine (click the link at <[lva.virginia.gov/public/using\\_collections.asp#\\_guides-MilitaryService](http://lva.virginia.gov/public/using_collections.asp#_guides-MilitaryService)>). Confederate hereditary groups include Sons of Confederate Veterans <[www.scv.org](http://www.scv.org)> and United Daughters of the Confederacy <[www.hqudc.org](http://www.hqudc.org)>.

## 7 Visit the cemetery.

Whether during the war or years later, all Civil War veterans have passed on—and cemetery records yield more ancestral clues. About 200,000 Union soldiers who died in the war are named in the 27-volume *Roll of Honor*, available on Ancestry.com, FHL microfilm, and CD (Genealogical Publishing Co.). It's arranged by burial place, so first check *Index to the Roll of Honor* by Martha and William Reamy, and its addendum, *The Unpublished Roll of Honor* by Mark Hughes, both from Genealogical Publishing Co. and available on Ancestry.com.

If you think your Civil War ancestor is buried in a government cemetery, start at the Department of Veterans Affairs' Nationwide Gravesite Locator <[gravelocator.cem.va.gov](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov)>. This site indexes burial locations of veterans and their families in VA national cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries and other military and Department of Interior cemeteries.

An 1879 act of Congress authorized the government to provide headstones to soldiers and veterans buried in private cemeteries. Cards recording 166,000 headstones that honor Union deaths between 1861 and about 1903 are available on Ancestry.com and NARA microfilm M1845. The FHL has copies. You'll get the name, rank, company and regiment, date of death, place of burial and grave number, if any.

## Websites

- **American Memory Civil War Collections**  
<[memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse)>
- **Civil War Archive: United States Colored Troops**  
<[www.civilwararchive.com/unioncol.htm](http://www.civilwararchive.com/unioncol.htm)>
- **Civil War Rosters Arranged by State**  
<[www.civilwarroster.com](http://www.civilwarroster.com)>
- **Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System**  
<[www.itd.nps.gov/cwss](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss)>
- **Cyndi's List: US Civil War**  
<[cyndislist.com/cw.htm](http://cyndislist.com/cw.htm)>
- **Grand Army of the Republic and Related Research Links**  
<[www.suvchw.org/research.htm](http://www.suvchw.org/research.htm)>
- **National Park Service Civil War Site**  
<[nps.gov/civilwar](http://nps.gov/civilwar)>
- **US Military Records Research Outline**  
<[wiki.familysearch.org/en/united\\_states\\_military\\_records](http://wiki.familysearch.org/en/united_states_military_records)>

## Books

- *Bibliography of State Participation in the Civil War, 1861-1866* (Martino Publishing Co.)
- *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861-65* by E.B. and Barbara Long (Da Capo Press)
- *Civil War Sites* by the Civil War Preservation Trust (Globe Pequot Press)
- *The Confederacy: A Guide to the Archives of the Confederate States of America* by Henry Putney Beers (NARA)
- *Confederate Burials*, 28 volumes, by Raymond W. Watkins (Lauderdale County Department of Archives and History)
- *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War* by George B. Davis, Calvin D. Cowles and others (The Fairfax Press)
- *Personnel of the Civil War* edited by William Frayne Amann, 2 volumes (Thomas Yoseloff)
- *Union: A Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* by Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putney Beers (NARA)
- *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 volumes (Government Printing Office)

No single source lists all the 250,000-some Confederate soldiers who died during the Civil War, but the FHL has several useful references. Two book series compiled by Raymond W. Watkins are good starting places: *Confederate Burials* (28 volumes) and *Deaths of Confederate Soldiers in Confederate Hospitals* (15 volumes).

CWSS eventually will contain an index to all the burials in the National Park Service's 14 national cemeteries. To date, you'll find data and headstone images from Virginia's Poplar Grove National Cemetery at Petersburg.

## 8 Follow the regiment.

Once you've researched your ancestor's military records, you can learn much more about his Civil War experiences by studying his regiment and company. For a quick regimental history, including major battles, just click on the CWSS site's Regiments link. It covers 4,000 Union and Confederate units, with links to soldiers' names and detailed battle histories.

Legions of histories exist in print and online. You'll find an exhaustive list of Union regimental histories and related societies at [history-sites.com/~kjones/unions.html](http://history-sites.com/~kjones/unions.html); for Confederate units, use the companion page at [history-sites.com/~kjones/confeds.html](http://history-sites.com/~kjones/confeds.html). Look for books about your ancestor's regiment at [loc.gov/rr/main/uscivilwar](http://loc.gov/rr/main/uscivilwar).

The ultimate information source for Civil War events—though it rarely names individual soldiers—is the “OR.” That's the War Department's 70-volume *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Many large libraries have these books, which also are on NARA and FHL microfilm. Even better, you'll find a searchable version of the OR at [digital.library.cornell.edu/m/mao](http://digital.library.cornell.edu/m/mao) (click Browse, then look under Browse Civil War Documents). It's also available through The Ohio State University's eHistory website [ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/records](http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/records).

You'll also want to consult the unit histories in *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* compiled by Janet B. Hewitt (51 volumes, Broadfoot Publishing). It's drawn from two NARA regimental records microfilm collections: the 225-roll Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations and its 74-roll Confederate counterpart.

For additional background on the war, see if your library subscribes to ProQuest's Civil War Era database. The service includes eight newspapers from the North, South and border states spanning 1840 to 1865, as well as nearly 2,000 opinion pamphlets from leaders of the era.

## 9 Use visual aids.

Nothing brings your ancestors' world alive like images. Photographers such as the legendary Mathew Brady made the Civil War the first military conflict captured in pictures, showing uniforms, weapons, camp life and battle aftermath. Maps let you trace the movements and battlefield positions of your soldier's unit. NARA offers a guide to its Civil War

## TOOLKIT

### Organizations

#### ■ Civil War Preservation Trust

1156 15th St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 367-1861, [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org)

#### ■ Confederate Research Center

Box 619, Hillsboro, TX 76645, (254) 582-2555, [rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mscivilw/csa\\_resc.html](http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mscivilw/csa_resc.html)

#### ■ Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War

503 S. Walnut St., Springfield, IL 62704, (217) 544-0616, [www.duvcw.org](http://www.duvcw.org)

#### ■ Grand Army of the Republic Museum and Library

4278 Griscom St., Philadelphia, PA 19124, (215) 289-6484, [garmuslib.org](http://garmuslib.org)

#### ■ Library of Virginia

800 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219, (804) 692-3500, [www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us)

#### ■ National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740, (866) 272-6272, [archives.gov](http://archives.gov)

#### ■ Sons of Confederate Veterans

Box 59, Columbia, TN 38401, (931) 380-1844, [www.scv.org](http://www.scv.org)

#### ■ Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Box 1865, Harrisburg, PA 17105, (717) 232-7000, [suvcw.org](http://suvcw.org)

#### ■ United Daughters of the Confederacy

Memorial Building, 328 North Blvd., Richmond, VA 23220, (804) 355-1636, [www.hqudc.org](http://www.hqudc.org)

images, including maps and Brady's work, at [archives.gov/research/civil-war/photos](http://archives.gov/research/civil-war/photos). Access the archive's war-related holdings through its Archival Research Catalog [archives.gov/research/arc](http://archives.gov/research/arc).

The Library of Congress' American Memory site offers Civil War maps and photos from its own and other repositories' collections; browse or search from [memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov). Its photographic holdings are cataloged at [loc.gov/rr/print](http://loc.gov/rr/print). Ancestry.com also has Civil War photos, including part of the LOC's collection. Another key resource for photos and maps is the US Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pa. [www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec).

Whatever you learn about your ancestor's part in the great drama of the Civil War—whether he turns out to be a Yankee or a Rebel, a hero or a deserter—finding how your family fits into this American epic will illuminate that time, 150 years ago, as no schoolbook lesson can. As the Civil War sesquicentennial hoopla ensues, you can say, “We were there.” ■

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**DAVID A. FRYXELL's** great-grandfather William F. Dickin-  
son served with the 37th Alabama Infantry.



## CLOTHING AND DRY GOODS: WHAT ITEMS COST AND THE IMPACT OF SHORTAGES

“Next to the plough, this sewing machine is perhaps humanity’s most blessed instrument.” — Louis Antoine Godey, 1856

**D**uring the mid-nineteenth century, Americans scrupulously imitated European fashions, which they modified little or not at all. This was in keeping with a trend established in Colonial times and adhered to until the 1910s. This rigidity of style was always greatest in the East, especially in urban areas, and became more and more diluted the farther West one went.

This chapter describes period clothing, as well the costs of apparel, its components, and other dry goods. It also looks at some of the ways people, particularly those in the South, dealt with shortages and the sorts of substitutions they availed themselves of.

### Clothing

While styles were rigid and conventional, they were not always austere, and men and women in the big cities, such as New York, Charleston, and New Orleans, were more likely to be concerned with elegance and ostentation. Local mores varied from region-to-region, of course, and would have affected attitudes toward fashion; the Puritan heritage of Boston’s upper crust or the Quaker underpinnings of Philadelphia society, for example, would have made sobriety more acceptable than caprice, at least in the most conservative circles.

## Chapter Eight

One of the most significant technological advances of this period was the introduction of the sewing machine, something that helped the industrialized North keep its troops in uniforms much more consistently than the South was able to do. Most clothing was still hand-sewn during this period, however, regardless of whether it was made at home or purchased from a tailor. The time it took to hand-sew a garment was indeed greater than it took to machine-sew it, but not by that much. A simple, one-layer gown, for example, could be completed by hand in a day or so (although home-sewers' stitches were longer and not as consistent as those produced by machines).

This period also marks the beginning of haute couture, exclusive custom-fitted clothing, starting with the opening of Charles Frederick Worth's Paris fashion house in 1857. Major American urban areas like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia had their own fashion houses, and these tended to scrupulously copy the latest fashions from London and Paris.

By 1860, the shoulder seams on both men's and women's clothing swept down toward the back of the shoulders, which forced people into a more restrictive posture that limited arm movement (posture was considered to be very important during this era, and was even taught in school as part of the subject of deportment).

Prior to the onset of the war, affluent Southerners obtained clothing that was imported from Europe or the Northern fashion houses. Many well-to-do families also escaped the worst of the sultry Southern climate by summering in various Northern states, in many cases in vacation homes along the New England coast, and they would typically incorporate shopping excursions through big cities into their travel plans. Some families even traveled to Europe every few years or so and acquired the latest fashions in conjunction with their "grand tours."

### Men's Clothing

During the era of the Civil War and the years following it, the prevailing image in men's clothing was that of the lawyer-statesman, as exemplified by Abraham Lincoln himself. Men wanted to present a distinguished appearance, impress their peers, and appear substantial. An austere black suit, white linen shirt, black bow tie, and low-cut boots composed the quintessential outfit for the middle- or upper-class man. Some fashion-conscious men also wore corsets, more generally associated with women, in order to enhance their physiques.

An elegant appearance was important to men in certain circles, especially those in major urban centers like New York or New Orleans. While a certain sobriety accompanied the appearance of professional men in the smaller cities and towns, more ostentation could be found in the garb of big city dwellers (for example, fur-trimmed cuffs and collars).

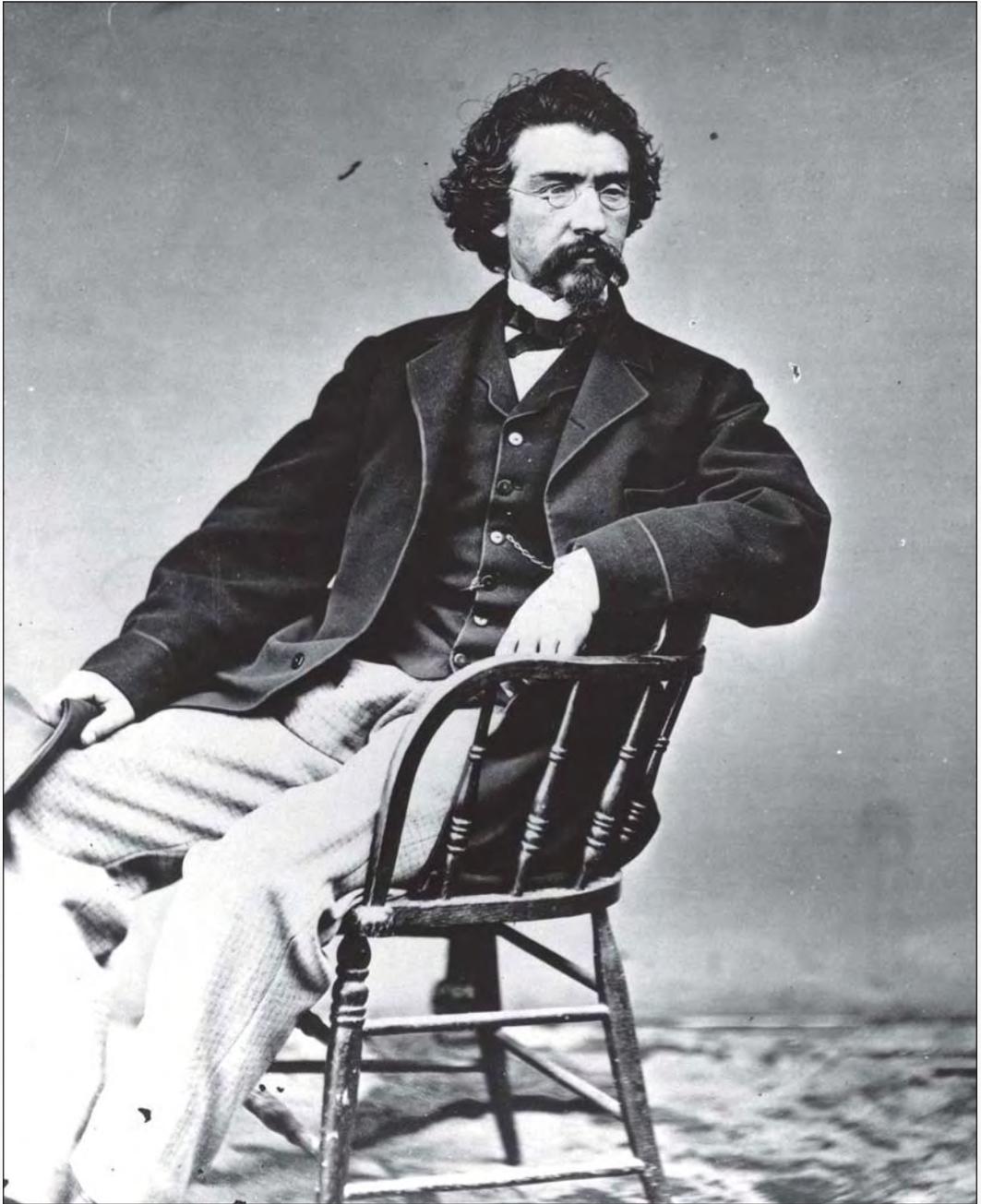


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Most clothing was still hand-sewn during this period. A simple, one-layer gown, for example, could be completed by hand in a day or so.



Life in Civil War America



Male fashion was designed to create the impression of distinction and substance. This self-portrait of Civil War photographer Mathew Brady typifies the style of the era.

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This political poster shows the wide variety of fashions men would have worn in various occupations. It features a farmer, military officer, engineer, doctor or pharmacist, politician, lawyer, merchant, and clergyman.

Work clothing was less formal but not much less conventional, and typically included trousers, boots, and a double-breasted wool pullover shirt that buttoned up only from the waist to the collar: Depending on the sort of work they did, men's garb also frequently included a jacket or sack coat. Nonetheless, many farmers, clerks, and other lower-middle-class or working-class men were sensitive to their image and attempted to appear prosperous or ambitious through their apparel.

Foremost among men's accessories were hats, among which top hats and derbies predominated. Top hats, generally worn for business and formal occasions, came in a variety of shapes, brim widths, and crown heights, and included bell crowns and stovepipes. Derbies, including bowlers, were hard, round-crowned hats that originated in the 1850s. Such hats were less formal than top hats and popular with all classes of men. The most expensive men's hats were made from beaver



The prevailing philosophy toward garb was to make the body fit the clothes, not make clothes to fit the body, so waist training, or tightlacing, was a way of life for women of all classes. There were also special corsets for pregnant women and to accommodate breastfeeding.



fur felt (which contributed to the expansive North American fur trade). Other popular accessories included canes and suspenders.

## Women's Clothing

Women had very little flexibility of dress in the years leading up to and including the Civil War, and slavishly imitated European fashions, drawing many of their rules of attire from the popular *Godey's Lady's Book*.

The prevailing philosophy toward garb was to make the body fit the clothes, not make clothes to fit the body, so waist training, or tightlacing, was a way of life for women of all classes (albeit to a lesser degree for women of the working classes). Young women were encouraged to make their waists as small as possible and might have started the practice of tightlacing even as young girls.

Victorian-era morality had a huge influence on clothing of the period and prudery was taken to the extreme in many circles and the look was generally demure, prim, and genteel. Respectable women wore several layers of clothing even in the hottest months.

Formal ball gowns and hoopskirts, of the sort worn by Vivien Leigh in *Gone With the Wind* or Deborah Kerr in *The King and I*, are the women's clothing most popularly associated with this era but were the exception more so than the rule. Many different variations came into style, and women would have been judged, or sensitive to judgment, for their fashion sense as much as anybody today. Generally, such dresses had a tightly fitting bodice that rode low on the shoulder and had a V-shaped neckline. Gowns were cinched tight around the waist, and then mushroomed out to several feet wide at the floor, stiffened, pushed outward, and given their characteristic shape by hoops and specialized undergarments called **crinolines**.

Other female undergarments, many worn for day-to-day use, included **petticoats, camisoles, chemises, corsets, corset covers**, pantaloon-like drawers, and stockings. Such garments could be made of cotton, wool, or silk, and were often patterned, in keeping with prevailing fashions.

Even working-class women wore corsets. Poor women used reed or cane for stays, stiffened material like canvas, or several layers of material quilted together. Whalebone stays were used by those who could afford it. There were also special corsets for pregnant women and to accommodate breastfeeding.

Naturally, working-class women and those whose activities took them near battlefields, did not wear cumbersome hoop dresses and lace on

## Chapter Eight



This illustration from *Harper's Weekly* shows women's fashions in 1864.

a daily basis, if at all. Plain, long skirts, blouses, bonnets, and completely-hidden petticoats were standard garb. Aprons were also typical and appeared in many styles, from those that simply tied around the waist to ones worn like smocks.

Garibaldi shirts, reminiscent of the shirts worn by the followers of Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi, were another popular style of women's garb, and featured dropped shoulders, bloused bodices, and puffed sleeves. A variation on this theme was the Garibaldi dress, which featured a bodice similar to the Garibaldi shirt.

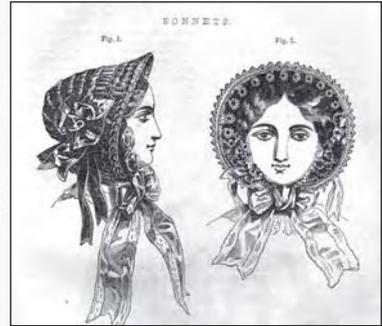
Once the war began, military-style dresses came into fashion for informal or day-to-day wear.

### Women's Accessories

**Parasols** were probably the most important women's accessory during the Civil War. Such small umbrellas came in all appearances and materials, and were imported from as far away as Europe or China.



This illustration from *Godey's Lady's Book* shows women's fashion from the 1850s.



Lavishly-trimmed bonnets were fashionable throughout the period.



Female undergarments (from top): a chemise, drawers, and nightgowns.

Practically, the main function of a parasol was to help protect the delicate female complexion from the sun—a pale-to-fair skin being considered attractive and a sign of social standing (because upper-class women did not have to spend time in the sun working).

Other popular accessories included bonnets, fans, snoods, reticules, shawls, and cloaks, often with hoods large enough to accommodate a bonnet. Lavishly-trimmed bonnets were fashionable throughout the period, and an eye-catching accessory of this sort was another one of the means used to draw attention away from an otherwise drab ensemble.

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These children's fashions were typical of the upper-class in the 1870s. Note the boy's military-style suit, which became fashionable during the war.

Women also wore detachable white collars and false sleeves called *engageantes* to emphasize the look of primness. These accessories were decorated with a type of embroidery called white-work (one of the ways women spent their time), which could enhance the appearance of an otherwise drab outfit.

In all classes of society, a certain modesty was expected of women. The limits of such strictures could be, and were, however, tastefully stretched. While the parasol, for example, did have a practical function, it was also used in rather elaborate flirting rituals. And, while the petticoat was an undergarment that was generally hidden, at times it was also fashionable to wear a decorative petticoat that was meant to be glimpsed.

Women also frequently carried fans in hot weather for cooling themselves. Like parasols, the use of fans went beyond their practical applications, however, and they too played an important role in flirting.

Hard times forced many women, especially in the South, to sell their jewelry or to donate it in support of the war effort. Nonetheless, women still wanted things with which to adorn themselves and made new jewelry from available items. In the absence of precious metals, broaches, bracelets, necklaces, and rings were fashioned from bone, wood, brightly-colored scraps of yarn and fabric, seeds, fruit pits, palmetto, **gutta-percha**, and even shiny fish scales.

Combs were another accessory that could be expensive to replace if lost or broken, and replacements were made from wood, horn, and bone. Hairpins could also be made from these materials, and even from large thorns.

Hair switches—pieces of hair used to augment women's own hair—were generally manufactured in Europe and became harder to obtain as a result of the blockade, forcing women to either make substitutes or make do without them.

### Children's Clothing

Children's clothing was not quite so conventional as adult clothing, and imitated military uniforms increasingly after the onset of hostilities. Indeed, little soldier and sailor outfits were especially

popular for both boys and girls during the Civil War. Photographs and other media exist depicting boys wearing military-style shirts, coats, and jackets, and girls wearing Garibaldi shirts and Zouave-style outfits.

Children—both boys and girls—were often placed in corsets because it was believed that these would improve their posture.

### Cloth

Cotton, being a plentiful prewar crop, was a primary component in many clothes. Wool and silk were other important clothing materials, especially for imported goods.

Shortages for cloth and clothing seem to have been nearly as acute as for food and other commodities. In the South, some cloth was produced at a handful of textile mills, but the rest of it had to be imported. This made cloth and clothing more difficult to obtain for those with means, and out of the reach of the less affluent.

Once shortages began to take their toll on the Confederacy, many Southern women who could not afford to buy cloth or clothing, or simply balked at the inflated prices, learned to make their own cloth, thread, and yarn. Just as most people today consider such activities a thing of the past, so did many Civil War-era women, who had to pull old spinning wheels and looms from attics or storerooms and learn how to use them from people of their parents' or grandparents' generations.

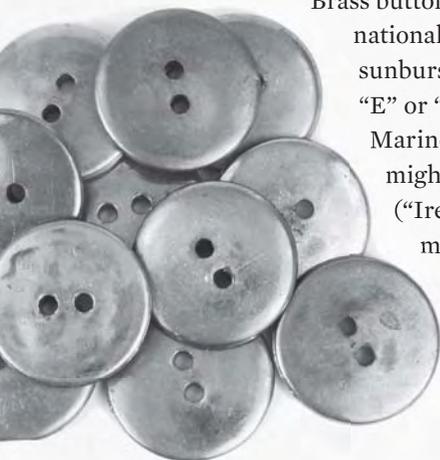
Although many women turned to carding fibers, spinning thread and yarn, and weaving cloth themselves, these activities were impeded by many obstacles. For one, many farmers had stopped growing cotton in lieu of food—something many large plantations were not forced to do—and there were fewer sheep than before the war, so the raw materials needed for thread and cloth were often hard to obtain. Hair from cows, dogs, horses, rabbits, and raccoons was mixed with cotton or wool to make it go further, and fibers from nettles were used instead of flax to make a fabric akin to linen.

### Buttons

Buttons were made from a wide variety of materials, especially brass, pewter, tin, bone, wood, and mother-of-pearl.

Brass buttons predominated for military uniform jackets and generally bore some national or state symbol, such as a Federal eagle, Texas star, or North Carolina sunburst. Confederate buttons might also bear a branch marking, such as an “E” or “M,” as worn by the Confederate Army Engineers or the Confederate Marines, respectively. And, in ethnic units, such as an Irish regiment, they might bear a foreign phrase or slogan, such as the Gaelic “Erin Go Bragh” (“Ireland Forever”). Brass buttons were also used on some military equipment.

Pewter buttons were used on heavier garb, such as great coats, as well as other heavy-duty gear. As with brass buttons, pewter buttons



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were also often emblazoned with characteristic symbols, such as a Louisiana pelican or Scottish thistle.

Wood, bone, and mother-of-pearl were typically used for shirt, frock, trouser, or blouse buttons. Tin buttons were used for men's trousers or military equipment like shelter halves.

After the war began, machine-made buttons were no longer available in the South, and buttons had to be recycled from old garments or made by hand. Wood, bone, horn, peach pits and other large seeds, bark, pasteboard, balls made from stuffed squares of fabric, and pieces of dried gourd covered with cloth were all used for homemade buttons. Some of these would be ruined by immersion in water and had to be removed before laundering the garment to which they were attached.

"There seemed to be no scarcity of dry-goods of ordinary kinds. Bombazines, silks, etc., are scarce and very high. Carpets are not to be found, since they are too large to run the blockade from Baltimore."

—Judith McGuire, a Southerner, November 1863

### Thread

Because yarn and thread became increasingly scarce during the war, Southern women often had to make their own. Such thread was adequate for hand-sewing, but was too coarse for sewing machines, which required much finer, machine-spun thread. Thus, Southern women who owned sewing machines were often unable to use them for want of proper thread.

Hair of various sorts was also sometimes used as substitute for regular woven thread.

### Dye

One of the significant technological advances of the period was the introduction of aniline dyes—starting in 1856—which could produce more vibrant colors than those typically achieved with natural dyes.

Commercially-produced dyes became scarce during the war, particularly in the South, necessitating a return to the use of natural dyes. Butternut, for example, was used to create dye that could be used to give cloth a brownish-gray color that was widely used for Confederate Army uniforms.

## Other Shortages and Substitutions

Shortages and inflation forced people in both the North and South, but especially the latter, to devise substitutes for many common items and the components of which they were comprised, including clothing, dye, cloth, and thread (discussed above); fans, jewelry, and other accessories; and toiletry items and medicines.

People also wanted to maintain the illusion or pretense that they were able to look as nice or live as well as they always had, despite the effects of the war (recall the episode in *Gone with the Wind* where Scarlet O'Hara has a dress made from draperies). Often, however, conditions conspired to make this impossible.

As it became more difficult in some parts of the country to obtain new clothing and accessories, people made much more of an effort than they had before to take care of the things they had and

make them last as long as possible; even the affluent in the South were considerably less likely or able to discard items from previous years for the latest fashions from London or Paris.

In addition to the ways people dealt with clothing shortages, they devised substitutes and replacements for most other types of dry goods that became difficult or expensive to obtain. Some examples follow.

## Toiletries

Hygiene remained as important during the war as it ever had been (perhaps even more so, as cleanliness helped impede the diseases that claimed so many, although most people in the mid-nineteenth century, even physicians, did not understand this).

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**Bed linens, cannibalized for bandages and clothing, often could not be replaced in the South, and many families had none at all by the end of the war.**

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Soap in its simplest form could be produced from water, lye, and grease (rosin and salt were other possible components) and had long been made at home by women in the country. When lye became hard to obtain, it could be produced at home by filtering water through a tray filled with wood ash. As meat became less common, so did grease, and chinaberry and cottonseed oil could be used instead. Soap root and yucca root could also be used as satisfactory substitutes for soap itself.

Tooth powder—rather than paste—was made from mixtures of many different items, including arrowroot, chalk, charcoal, cuttlefish bone, honey, myrrh, orris root, salt, and soda. Toothbrushes could be made from hog bristles or from twigs or licorice roots, the ends of which had been frayed like brushes by chewing them.

Substitutes for many sorts of cosmetics were devised. These included face powder, which could be replaced with rice flour, and hair oil, which was made from lard that had been left to melt in the sun and then scented with rose petals.

## Furnishings and Housewares

Refugees and other people who had been driven from their homes or had them destroyed often had trouble replacing their furniture, tableware, and other items. Soldiers in winter quarters might also have employed many of the following to make their lives more comfortable.

Bed frames were fitted with poles or ropes pulled taut. When down or feathers were unavailable for pillows and mattresses, they were instead stuffed with things like corn shucks, leaves, moss, palmetto, and cotton (which was considered the best substitute). Blankets were replaced with rugs and carpeting. Bed linens, cannibalized for bandages and clothing, often could not be replaced in the South, and many families had none at all by the end of the war.

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China and glassware were replaced with clayware, which was cheaper and sturdier. Tin cups were often unavailable, so emptied tin cans were used instead, and tumblers were made from bottles that had been cut off at the necks. Broken, lost, or stolen silverware was replaced with knives, forks, and spoons made of wood. Bowls, cups, dippers, and ladles were made from gourds. Boxes and other containers were replaced with handwoven baskets.

### Heat and Lighting

Sources of lighting, such as whale oil, kerosene, and candles, were in short supply in the Confederacy, all of them having been imported from the North. Firelight was one substitute, but was not always practical or available, especially as coal and wood became more expensive—notably in urban areas—necessitating fuel substitutes like “**fireballs.**”

Candles were made at home, ideally from beeswax, but more often from **tallow** (which produced more smoke than other candle components) or a combination of both. Wax could also be extracted from myrtle berries, blackberries, and prickly-pear pads by boiling them, although very large quantities were needed to obtain a reasonable quantity of wax.

“Confederate candles” were one method of stretching limited quantities of wax. These were made by impregnating strands of twine with a mixture of tallow and beeswax or beeswax and rosin or fresh turpentine. A strand would then be wrapped tightly around a bottle and a few inches of it pulled above the mouth of the bottle, which could be lit and pulled upward as it burned down (six inches would typically burn for about twenty minutes).

Kerosene for lamps was replaced with a mixture of cottonseed oil, peanut oil, and melted lard. Other means of producing light included burning knots from pine branches and stalks of candle-wick plants that had been soaked in grease or tallow, and “**fairy lights,**” makeshift lamps made by floating sweet, burning balls of gum in saucers of melted lard.

### Pen, Paper, and the Like

Paper, ink, pens, and pencils were often unavailable during the war, especially in the South.

Once the conflict began, much of the paper produced in both the North and South tended to be lower in quality than people were accustomed to using for correspondence or journals. It was often



Letter writers conserved paper by turning a page 90 degrees once it was covered with words and then writing across them until it was full again, a method called “cross-hatching.”



## Life in Civil War America

brown, coarse, or very soft. Old business forms, wallpaper, and other scrap papers were folded into envelopes. Blackboards or slates and chalk were used for temporary work.

Letter writers conserved paper by turning a page 90 degrees once it was covered with words and then writing across them until it was full again, a method called “cross-hatching.” This technique made letters a bit harder to read, but they were still generally legible and allowed someone to get twice the words onto a single sheet of paper. People also wrote letters in pencil so the recipient could erase the writing and use the paper again. Subsequent writing was, however, harder to read, the paper eventually wore out, and this method did not allow letters to be kept.

Ink could be made from logwood extract or berry juice, especially from elderberries. Pencils could be made using coal or even lead rather than graphite, although the latter did not leave much more than a faint gray streak on paper.

Newspapers dealt with shortages by printing smaller issues or by using paper other than newsprint (for example, some wartime newspapers were printed on wallpaper). Nonetheless, many Southern newspapers went out of business during the Civil War.

Glue was made from cherry, peach, or plum tree gum, or from egg whites mixed with lime. Paste was made from a mixture of water and flour, and a type of putty was made by mixing flour with a warm, mashed, sweet potato.

### Other Items

People had to devise substitutes for many other items, especially in the unindustrialized South. Metal goods especially, including pins, needles, scissors, fishhooks, screws, nails, and locks, could not be replaced easily or at all, and this impeded seamstresses and other people attempting to manufacture their own clothing or other items.

Thorns or splinters of wood were sometimes used instead of pins, and needles made of porcupine quills or bone were used when necessary.

Starch was made by soaking grated green corn, potatoes, or wheat bran until it fermented, skimming the surface and straining the remaining solution. It could then be used to starch clothes or other cloth items.

Wooden pegs and joints were used whenever possible instead of screws or nails.

Tobacco pipes, ideally made from briarwood or meerschaum, could instead be made from clay or carved by hand from other woods, such as dogwood, hickory, mahogany, or walnut.

Gold

	1849	1860	1862	1863	1864	1864	1870
gold, per ounce	\$21	\$21				\$30	\$23

## Costs of Goods and Services

As with food, the cost of other goods and services also increased dramatically during the course of the war. Cost for dental services in 1863 were: \$120 for a gold filling and \$1,800 to \$4,000 for an upper set of dentures on a gold or vulcanite base.

As the value of goods increased and the value of money decreased, many people—especially women—tried to sell or trade homemade items, like soap, for food and other necessities. Soldiers often acquired items that were in short supply in some areas (such as pins and needles from housewives or buttons from uniforms) and then used them to trade with the locals, whether friendly or enemy, for food, money, or other items.

Prices were affected throughout the country. In the North, this was due to the costs of supporting the war effort, and, in the case of some goods, because of shortages of goods that had normally come from the South (cotton and indigo, for example). In the South, however, which produced almost nothing other than cash crops that it had previously been able to export, such price increases were the worst.

Following are examples of costs of goods and services in the South year-to-year during the war, along with some from years following it for comparison purposes (those from 1872 are from the first Montgomery Ward catalog). Prices in the North for most items would not have changed much after the start of the war, probably not even quite doubling over a four-year period, with the exception of cotton goods, which would have been even more expensive or completely unavailable. The cost of living for a family of five in a major Union city was \$1,333 per month in 1863.

### Household Goods

	1849	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1870
bed, bureau, and commode							\$15
beeswax (per pound)		21¢ to 26¢					
blanket	\$25 to \$80						\$3
buggy							\$75
cartridges (per box)							50¢
chair							\$1.25
coal (per bushel)					\$1.75		
coal (per year)							c. \$80
Colt .45 Peacemaker revolver							\$17
Colt .45 Peacemakers, matched set of pearl-handled with holsters							\$100
cookstove							\$25

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# Household Goods

	1849	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1870
firewood (per cord)		\$2.50	\$20	\$40	\$100	\$100 to \$150	
harness							\$50
kerosene (per gallon)							15¢
lantern							\$1
laundry (per dozen pieces)			\$3				
quinine (per ounce)			\$60				
rifle, seven-shot Sharps repeater							\$50
rifle, single-shot muzzle-loader (army surplus)							\$8
saddle							\$30
saddle, cowboy							\$60
shotgun, breach-loading							\$60
soap (per cake)			\$1.25				
soap, common (per pound)		3.5¢ to 10¢		\$1 to \$1.10			
tallow (per pound)		4¢					
tea set	\$24						
toothbrush				\$2.50			
wagon							\$65

# Clothing

	1849	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1870
bonnet, new				\$25 to \$60		\$200	
bonnet, used						\$70	
boots (four pairs)	\$96						
boots (per pair)			\$30	\$50			
boots, Balmoral						\$250	
boots, women's Morocco (pair)					\$110		
cloaks						\$1,000 to \$5,000	

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A period illustration showing children's fashion typical of the very rich.



More examples of ladies' fashion from the 1850s.

# Clothing

	1849	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1870
dress		\$9 to \$30		\$50 to \$195	\$150 or more		
dress, fine wool						\$800	
dress, merino				\$150			
gloves, French kid (per pair)						\$125 to \$175	
handkerchiefs (each)	c. 92¢	50¢		\$5			
hat, men's					\$75		
hat, women's						\$600 to \$1,500	
flannel shirts (24)	\$192						
pants (six pairs)	\$108						
shoes, men's (per pair)			\$18	\$25 to \$50	\$125 to \$800		
shoes, resole (per pair)				\$10	\$50		
shoes, women's (per pair)			\$15	\$25 to \$50	\$125 to \$800		
stockings, fine cotton				\$6			
uniform jackets (four)	\$128						
uniforms, officers' (each)					\$2,000		

Life in Civil War America

**THE  
FLORENCE  
Sewing Machine**  
*Will sew everything needed in a family, from the heaviest to  
the lightest fabric.*  
**IT DOES MORE WORK,  
MORE KINDS OF WORK,  
AND BETTER WORK,  
Than any other machine.**  
**FLORENCE SEWING MACHINE Co.**  
FLORENCE, MASS.  
39 Union Square, New York.

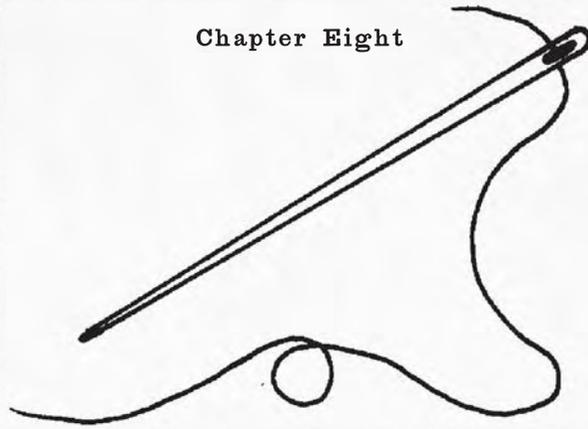
**W** JUST OUT! OUR NEW  
**HEELER & WILSON  
SEWING MACHINE.**  
**BUY NO OTHER!!! IT IS THE BEST!!!**  
**PETERSON & CARPENTER,**  
GENERAL AGENTS,  
No. 914 CHESTNUT STREET, Philadelphia.

These period trade cards advertise home sewing machines.



This 1850s daguerreotype shows a seamstress at work. The cost of clothing skyrocketed during the war.

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# Fabric & Sewing

	1849	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1870
calico (per yard)			75¢ to \$2	\$2.50 to \$4		\$25 to \$35	10¢
cloth				\$2.25 to \$5.50	\$15 to \$45		
cloth, blue (three yards)	\$36						
fabric, alpaca dress (per yard)						\$60	
fabric, bleached cotton (per yard)		12.5¢		\$3.50		\$15 to \$50	15¢
fabric, muslin dress (per yard)			\$6 to \$8				
gingham, black-and-white (per yard)				\$4.50			
ginghams, domestic							15¢
homespun, plain (per yard)			\$1				
linen (per yard)					\$22		
linen, Irish						\$50 to \$100	
ribbon (per yard)						\$25	
sewing pins (per pack)					\$5		
thread (five pounds)	\$5						
thread, cotton (per spool)				50¢	\$5 to \$10		
towelings (per yard)				\$1.25			
wool (per pound)		23¢ to 33¢					

## Terms

**BAREGE:** A sheer, woven fabric generally made from cotton, but also sometimes from silk or wool, used for women's clothing.

**BOMBAZINE:** A fine, twilled fabric made of silk and cotton or wool that was often dyed black and used for women's mourning clothes.

**CALICO:** A coarse cotton cloth often printed with bright designs.

**CAMISOLE:** A women's undershirt, typically sleeveless and made of cotton or silk.

**CASSIMERE:** A contemporary variant of cashmere.

**CHEMISE:** A women's undergarment that typically rode low on the shoulders and fell to just below the knee.

**CORD:** A unit used for measuring cut fuel wood equivalent to 128

cubic feet (i.e., a stack four feet wide by eight feet long by four feet high).

**CORSET, CORSET COVER:** Undergarments that emphasized the feminine form by constricting the waist and accentuating the bust. Corsets, which were often noted for their discomfort, were typically worn over a chemise, fastened in the front, with a clasp and then tightened with laces in back or one of the sides.

**CRINOLINE:** A women's undergarment, cinched around the waist and extending to just a few inches above the floor, that was worn under a dress to give it body. Such devices could be made simply of padded material, such as cotton, but more often consisted of about two-dozen connected hoops, held together like a beehive-shaped cage.



**EBONITE:** See vulcanite.

**ENGAGEANTE:** A false sleeve that was a popular feature of women's garments in the nineteenth century.

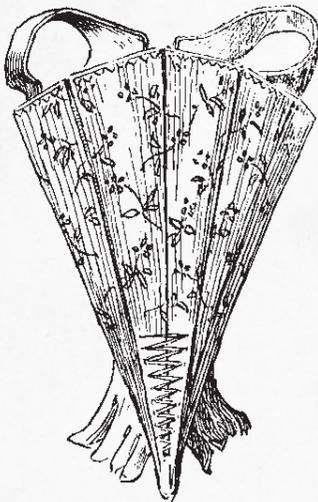
**FAIRY LIGHT:** A lamp made by floating sweet, burning balls of gum in a saucer of melted lard. Used mostly in the South.

**FIREBALL:** A substitute for coal and wood used in the South. Made from a mixture of sawdust, small pieces of coal, water, clay, and sand, which was rolled into small balls and allowed to dry and harden.

**FLOUNCE:** A strip of gathered or pleated material attached to the hem of a dress, gown, or crinoline to help protect it from contact with the ground.

## Chapter Eight

**GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK** (a.k.a., *Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book*): A magazine founded in 1830 and published in Philadelphia that was a popular guide to fashion in the era of the Civil War and contained articles, poetry, patterns, and engravings. In 1860, it had 150,000 subscribers who paid \$3 a year for the monthly publication. Its publishers deliberately made no reference to the war, however, and this ultimately cost the magazine about a third of its subscribers.



**GUTTA-PERCHA:**

A rubbery material derived from raw latex and used to make containers waterproof (e.g., collar boxes) or to fashion small items.

**HOUSEWIFE:**

A sewing kit often owned by soldiers, containing needles, thread, pins, buttons, and other items for repairing clothing and uniforms.

**LUCIFERS:** a term for matches, particularly the non-safety type tipped with potassium chlorate and antimony sulphide.



**MERINO:** The fine wool taken from merino sheep, used especially for knitting hosiery, undergarments, and other items of clothing.

**PARASOL:** A small umbrella carried by women made of cloth or paper and with a frame of cane or wire. Such accessories could be plain or decorated with ruffles or fringe, and varieties for many different occasions existed (e.g., the plain paper parasol used for a stroll in the country would be replaced by a more frilly cloth one for a more formal occasion).

**PETTICOAT:** A women's underskirt.

**RETICULE:** A drawstring purse or

handbag, often of netlike fabric.

**SNOOD:** A cloth net covering for women's hair.

**TALLOW:** The tasteless, solid white fat rendered from cattle, horses or sheep and used as a component in food, candles, leather dressings, lubricants, and soap.

**TOWELING:** A cotton fabric used for making towels.

**VULCANITE:** A period term for hard rubber, which was used for items like buttons, pocket combs, cups, denture bases, flasks, pipes, soap boxes, and syringes.

# The Unknown Soldier

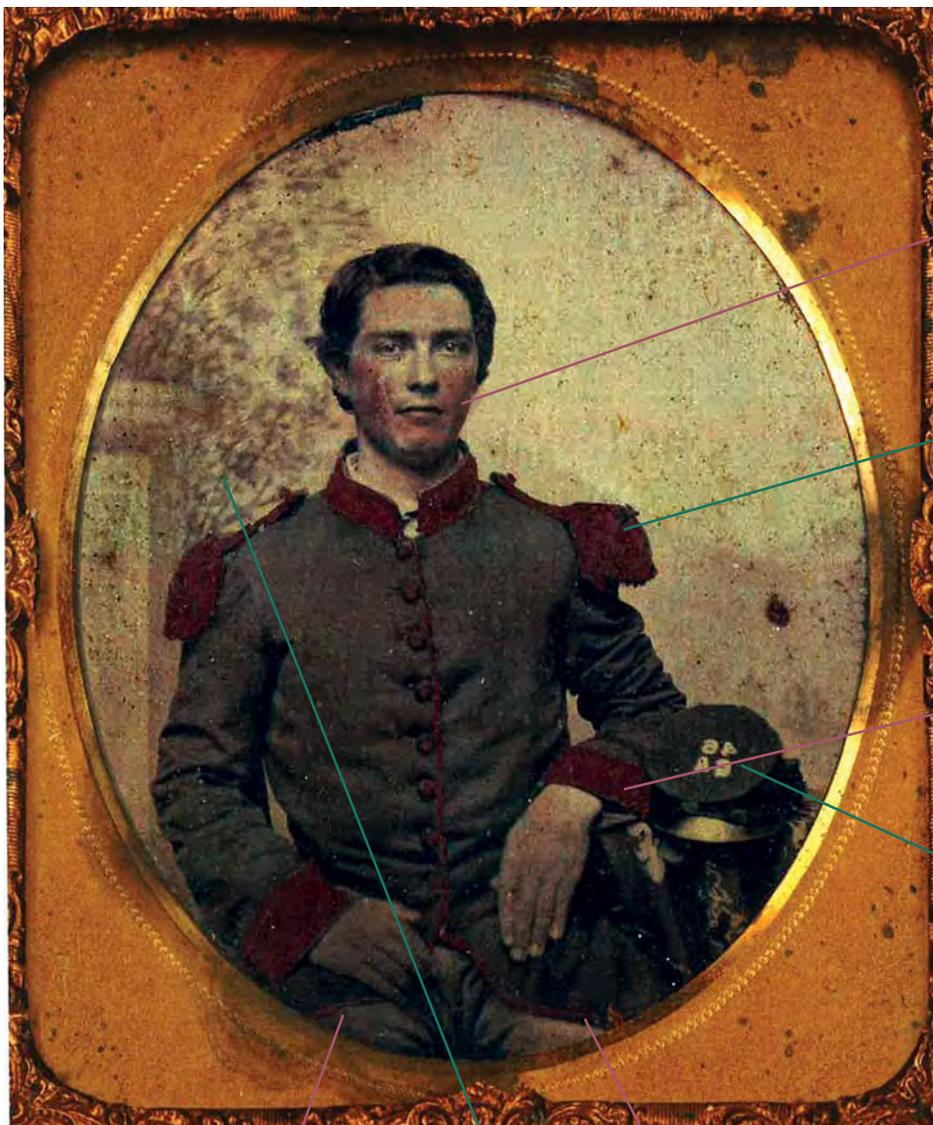
🌿 **THE CIVIL WAR** did more than divide a nation—it made photographs an integral part of our ancestors’ lives. William Darrah’s *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth-Century Photography* (self-published) claims every Civil War soldier had at least one portrait taken—an exaggeration, perhaps, but photography did become a craze. Thousands of photographers sought customers in hometowns and encampments. Men flocked to studios—makeshift or established—to pose in their new uniforms or before a major battle, then proudly sent the images home to relatives anxious for news. Today, some of these portraits are cherished in family collections.

Ambrotypes, paper photographs and tintypes were the images of choice during the war. The picture here is an ambrotype, which is a piece of glass coated with photo chemicals that created a “negative” image, then backed with a darker material to make it appear “positive.”

Ambrotypes (and some tintypes) often were placed in velvet-lined cases with the image, a mat, a glass covering and a strip of brass that held it all together.

Pat Layton’s relatives passed this image down through the generations but never named the soldier. Now she wants to identify him. Each detail of the portrait, from the photographic method to his fringed shoulder epaulets, is a clue, says Craig Scott of Heritage Books <[www.heritagebooks.com](http://www.heritagebooks.com)>, a military records expert who helped analyze this photo. The evidence says the soldier is a Georgia Confederate who sat for the picture after 1862—but who is he?

To find out, Layton will need to determine which relatives were the right age by inspecting other family photos and consulting historical records.



Pat Layton’s relatives preserved this photo throughout the generations, but the soldier’s name has been forgotten. Clues in the photo point to him being an officer in the 46th Georgia Infantry.

Images of soldiers, famous folks and families all clamored for attention in homes and albums.

The backdrop features a column and trees, which soften his formal pose. The presence of the backdrop suggests the photo was taken in a studio rather than a makeshift setup at an encampment.

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404-768-5698 | JoAnn Ross

The soldier stares into the distance with a slight smile on his face. His pink-tinged cheeks add vitality. The lack of facial lines suggests he's young, probably in his late teens or early 20s. Comparing his dark, deep-set eyes, small mouth and narrow chin with facial features shown in other family photos will help the owner identify him.

A soldier's coat and cap were designed to identify the unit he served in. Hashmarks on sleeves, insignia on headgear or shoulder ornamentation tell you his rank and unit. In this case, the epaulets signify he was probably an officer.

Forget blue and gray: Civil War uniforms are much more colorful than you learned in school. This handsome man paid extra to have the photographer hand-color his uniform to show its red cuffs, trim and epaulets.

Atop the cap, the photographer placed white letters and numbers. Zooming in on the photo shows a reversed (remember, ambrotypes are negative images) but clear "46 GA," indicating this man served with the 46th Georgia Infantry, a regiment formed in March 1862. ■

Have a Civil War portrait in your collection? Submit the image and your story following the instructions at [familytreemagazine.com/submit-a-mystery-photo](http://familytreemagazine.com/submit-a-mystery-photo). It may appear on the Photo Detective Blog [blog.familytreemagazine.com/photodetectiveblog](http://blog.familytreemagazine.com/photodetectiveblog).

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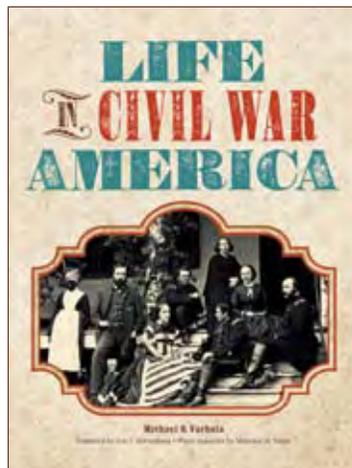
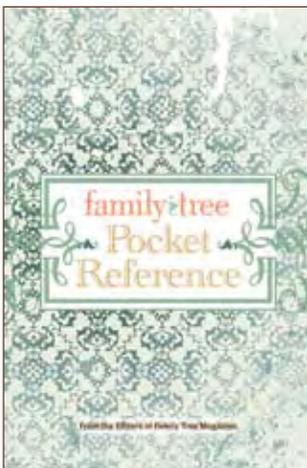
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