



# War of 1812 Records: *Preserve the Pensions* Project

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## INTRODUCTION

We are currently in the midst of celebrating the bicentennial of the War of 1812 – sometimes referred to as the “Forgotten War.” A host of records still exist for this time period and are scattered throughout national, state, and local archives. So voluminous are some of these record collections that until now, efforts to digitize them and make them available online have been low priority. Users of libraries and archives throughout the country are often unaware of the depth and breadth of the content of these records.

## FEDERAL RECORDS

Records held at the Federal level are held in a number of Record Groups (RG). The most valuable of the set are the Pension and Bounty Land files (RG 15) comprising the applications of over 180,000 soldiers currently held at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. (NARA). Over the years, numerous indexes, finding aids, and research helps have been created to research the records of the War of 1812.

### **1. VOLUNTEER ARMY, COMPILED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS (CSMR)**

- *Index to Compiled Service Records of the Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812*. M602 and Ancestry.com
- Service Records are textual at NARA. Request at the desk or at [www.archives.org](http://www.archives.org).
- RG 94, Entry 55: Muster Rolls of Volunteer Organizations: War of 1812
- Watch for State-specific CMSRs on microfilm.

### **2. BOUNTY LAND APPLICATIONS**

- RG 15: Records of the Veterans Administration, Bounty Land Applications. Textual.
- “Unindexed” Bounty Land Application series (*Case Files of Bounty-Land Warrant Applications...*). Online index at [fold3.com](http://fold3.com), up to J. Must know name and unit to order.

### **3. BOUNTY LAND WARRANTS & PATENTS**

- RG 49: Records of the General Land Office, textual
- *War of 1812 Military Bounty Land Warrants, 1815 – 1858*, M848, see index on roll 1
- Index of U.S. War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858, Ancestry.com
- Bureau of Land Management, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/>

### **4. FEDERAL PENSIONS**

- *Index to the War of 1812 Pension Application Files*. NARA microfilm pub. M313; Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org
- *Index Pension Application Files of Remarried Widows... War of 1812*. NARA microfilm pub. M1784; Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org
- *Old War Pension Index, 1815-1926*, NARA microfilm pub. T316; FamilySearch.org, <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1979425>
- Original files: NARA, RG 15: Records of the Veterans Administration, textual
- Qualifications for pensions: Pre-1871 based on disability or to widows. Act of 1871 for soldiers who served 60 days or their widows (married before 1815). Act of 1878 for soldiers served 14+ days or their widows.

## 5. FEDERAL PENSIONS ONLINE – WAR OF 1812 PRESERVE THE PENSIONS PROJECT

- <http://go.fold3.com/warof1812/>
- [www.preservethepensions.org](http://www.preservethepensions.org), [www.facebook.com/1812pensions](https://www.facebook.com/1812pensions)
- Donations needed to complete the project
- Brochures and educational material available, email [1812@fgs.org](mailto:1812@fgs.org)

### THE PRESERVE THE PENSIONS PROJECT

A bicentennial project led by the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) in conjunction with *fold3*, *Ancestry.com*, *FamilySearch*, and the National Archives, FGS is leading the effort to digitize the 7.2 million pages contained in the War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Files housed at the National Archives. As the records are being digitized, they are being placed online for **free**, indefinitely! These records contain vital historical information for genealogists, historians, and students. You can help make this \$3.7M dollar project a reality. You and groups you participate with can add your \$25, \$45, \$100, or \$500 gift today. Reach out to those in the community whom you know that have a special interest in this period of history and want to help.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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2. Butler, Stuart L. "Genealogical Records of the War of 1812," *Prologue*, Winter 1991, Vol. 23, No. 4. <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1991/winter/war-of-1812.html>
3. Eales, Anne Bruner and Kvasnicka, Robert M., editors. *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States, Third Edition* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000).
4. Glasson, William Henry, Ph.D. *History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States* (New York, New York: Columbia University, 1900); online images, GoogleBooks, <https://archive.org/details/historymilitary00glasgoog>.
5. Pendell, Lucille H. and Bethel, Elizabeth. *Preliminary Inventory 17* (National Archives, Heritage Books, 2007).
6. Rose, Christine. *Military Pension Law, 1776-1858, from the Journals of the Continental Congress and the United States Statutes-at-Large* (San Jose, California : Rose Family Association, 2001).
7. \_\_\_\_\_. *Military Bounty Land, 1776-1855* (San Jose, California : CR Publications, 2011).
8. White, Virgil D. *Index to the War of 1812 Pension Files* (Waynesboro, Tennessee: National Historical Publishing Co., 1989).

### USEFUL WEBSITES

1. Ancestry, <http://www.ancestry.com/>
2. Bureau of Land Management, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search/>
3. Council of State Archivists, Directory of State and Territorial Archives and Records Programs, <http://www.statearchivists.org/states.htm>
4. Cyndi's List, <http://www.cyndislist.com/1812/records/>, for additional links and research guides
5. FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/>
6. Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS), <http://www.fgs.org/>
7. fold3, <http://go.fold3.com/warof1812/>
8. General Society of the War of 1812, <http://societyofthewarof1812.org/>
9. Library of Congress, "Statutes at Large," <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/index.php>
10. National Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.archives.gov/>
11. National Society United States Daughters of the War of 1812, <http://www.usdaughters1812.org/>