

HOW TO USE CONFEDERATE PENSION RECORDS

In 1899, thirty-four years after the close of the Civil War, the Texas Legislature enacted the Confederate Pension Law, awarding benefits to disabled or indigent Confederate veterans and their widows who had resided in Texas since 1880. For those researching the post-Civil War era, the related pension records may provide invaluable information on a veteran's military service, birth and death, family connections, occupation and residency.

USING THE STATE ARCHIVES COLLECTION IN PERSON

Confederate pension records are available through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in Austin. Their offices are located in the Lorenzo de Zavala Building east of the Capitol, and their main phone number is 512/463-5455. Please call or check their web site (<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/>) for hours of operation. Once there, you can access *Indexes to Confederate Pensions*, a listing of all those who applied for confederate pensions in Texas. The indexes are organized into several columns:

- Application Number: This column lists the individual's pension number. The letters "rej" will appear here if the pension application was rejected.
- Name: The names are indexed alphabetically. Full names are often used, although some names only appear with the surname listed along with the first and middle initials.
- County: This is the county of residence when the application was submitted.
- Husband: This column is only filled for widows' applications.
- Pension: This column is only used for widows' applications and displays the application number for that individual's deceased husband if they had received a pension at one time.

ACCESSING THE COLLECTION ONLINE

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission offers the same indexed information through its web site.

1. Access the following web address, which will take you to the pension application page of the Texas State Library web site (<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/pensions/index.html>)
2. You can search for veterans and widows by name, county and application number.
3. The results will display the same information listed in the *Indexes to Confederate Pensions*.

INFORMATION IN THE CONFEDERATE PENSION FILES

Once you locate the records in the indexes for the person you are researching, the Texas State Library staff can make copies of the information, and copies may be requested by phone, regular mail or email.

Several different documents may be found in the files. Occasionally, pieces of correspondence, death records and other types of helpful information may be present. However, the following three records are most common:

- **Veteran's Pension Application:** This document should contain the veteran's name, place of birth, length of residency in Texas, county or residence, post office address, occupation, state of enlistment, length of service, discharge date, military unit designation, branch of service and other information.
- **Widow's Pension Application:** This document should contain the widow's name, age, birthplace, length of residence in Texas, length of time at present address, where and when married, and the husband's name, date of death, county and state where he died, and military information.
- **Confederate Mortuary Warrant:** This document should contain the veteran's date of death, place of death (city or county), where the death occurred (home, clinic, etc.), relation of person in whose home the veteran died, relationship of the applicant, and the physician's and undertaker's certifications.

ADDITIONAL TIPS REGARDING CENSUS RECORDS

- Beginning in 1917 mortuary warrants were issued, authorizing payments to help pay for burial expenses.
- A number of pension records have been lost. An asterisk (*) beside a name in the index indicates the application is missing.
- Some applications are more complex or more complete than others, and they may include correspondence.
- If you cannot find the name you are looking for in the indexes, it could be because that person never applied for a pension, or because of a name misspelling or change of name (in the case of a widow).

For additional information on Confederate pension records, please contact the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

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