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# NEARBY HISTORY:

## York County Confederate veterans' pensions

*After the Civil War, York County veterans weren't eligible for benefits, until the state could afford to help*

Having fought on the losing side, York County veterans of the Civil War were not eligible for the various benefits for which the Union veterans were eligible. Before 1889, the state of South Carolina provided no disability benefits or pensions for military service.

On the other hand, veterans of the Lost Cause were held in the highest esteem. Parades, pulpits, political platforms, holidays, songs, plays - every means known to man - were used to honor the living and eulogize the dead.



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Finally, the state recovered enough to do something about the obvious plight of many old men and their widows. Legislation established classes of disability. Much of the pressure on the legislature came from the veterans themselves, the Sons of Veterans, and the Confederate Daughters.

There are three major sets of war records on individual soldiers, each set duplicating each other in the basic information but each also offering information that cannot be found in the others. The three sets of records are federal, state and county in origin.

Official Confederate records of individual soldiers are in the National Archives of the United States. (The S.C. Department of Archives and History has copies

of the records of S.C. companies.)

The U.S. Army and Navy kept records of the Confederates they captured or who surrendered at the end of the war.

From the official Confederate records, one can discover much about the individual soldier and his company as well. For instance, the record of Marion DeKalb Rodgers, Catawba Township, York County, shows that he enlisted as a private, age 17, on Aug. 28, 1861, in Capt. C. Jones' Company, Dunovant's Regiment, S.C. Volunteers. An asterisk points to the note that this company "subsequently became Company H, 12th Regiment, South Carolina Infantry."

Rodgers reported to Lightwood Knot Spring, near Columbia. He enlisted "for the war." The company muster roll shows when he was paid. He was absent from the roll in November and December 1862. The notation is made that he was sent to a hospital in November.

The last two sheets of Rodgers' records were filled in by Union officers. One is headed "Prisoner of War at Hart's Island, New York Harbor." Rodgers, still a private, was captured April 3, 1865, at Southland Station, Va. The last record states that Rodgers signed the Oath of Allegiance to the United States on June 16, 1865. It gave his place of residence as York District, S.C., and the officer filled in the description: "Complexion Fair; hair Dark;

Eyes Blue; height 5 ft. 8 in."

In the matter of identifying its veterans by branch of service, time in service and residence after the war, York County has a more complete record than most S.C. counties. In 1902, in response to the state association of Confederate Veterans, York County made a concerted effort to enroll all veterans by township.

The Confederate Enrollment Book of York County includes the dead as well as the living. An entry example: "Bethesda Township. Page 1 Abshear, Joseph 'K' 17th S.C.V. Evans Infantry Private 30 Killed at Petersburg 1864."

The state published the names, addresses and amounts of payment to the veterans and their widows who collected pensions from the state. These are published in "Reports and Resolutions" by the S.C. House of Representatives. A 1910 example: "Class B. Perry, W.C., Fort Mill (Co. B, 6th S.C.T.), lost left hand; wounded right hand," entered payroll 1901.

In 1901, there were 287 York County pensioners on the state rolls. The total of all of their pensions was \$1,205.40. For all but the blind and limbless, the amount of the pension was \$3 a month. The number of York County widows who collected the pittance outnumbered the veterans 2 to 1.

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