

Civil War records give details about soldiers

Information ranges from dates enlisted to pensions

Having fought on the losing side, S.C. veterans of the Civil War were not eligible for the benefits that were offered Union veterans. Before 1889, South Carolina provided no disability benefits or pensions for military service.

On the other hand, the veterans of the lost cause were held in the highest esteem. Parades, pulpits, political platforms, holidays, songs and plays were used to honor the living and eulogize the dead Confederate soldiers.

Finally, the state began to recover financially from the war, and the plight of many old men and widows resulted in legislation that established classes of disability. Much of the pressure on the legislature came from veterans and their children.

For people interested in doing research, there are three major sets of Civil War records on individual soldiers, each set duplicating the others in basic information but offering information that cannot be found in other records. The three sets of records are federal, state and county in origin.

Confederate records of soldiers are in the National Archives of the United States. Also, the Army and Navy kept prison records of the Confederates captured during the war.

From the official Confederate records, one can discover much about a soldier. For instance, the National Archives record on Marion DeKalb Rodgers, Catawba Township, York County, shows that he enlisted as a 17-year-old private on Aug. 28, 1861, in Capt.



Nearby history

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Cadwallader Jones' Company of Dunovant's Regiment, S.C. Volunteers, subsequently known as Co. H., 12th Regt., S.C. Infantry.

Rodgers enlisted for the duration and reported to Lightwood Knot Spring, near Columbia. The company roll shows when he was paid. He was absent from the roll in November and December 1862, with a notation 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 Southerland 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."

York County has a more complete record of identifying its veterans by branch of service, time in service and residence after the war than most S.C. counties.

The confederate Enrollment Book of York County (1902) in-

cludes the dead, as well as the living. An entry example: "Page 1, Bethesda Township, Abshear, Joseph, Co. K, 17th S.C.V. Evans Infantry Private, 30, killed at Petersburg, 1864." And, "Broad River Township, Hope, J. Albertus, Jasper Co., 5th S.C.V., Jenkins Infantry Vol., Sergeant, 30. Remarks: Transferred to Postmastership, Richmond, Va. Dead."

South Carolina published the names, addresses and amounts of payment to the veterans and widows who collected pensions beginning in 1889.

These are reported in the yearly "Reports and Resolutions of the South Carolina 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." Class A recipients were those who were most needy and deserving. In 1914, the only Class A recipient in York County was "Harvey, R.B., Filbert (Co. F., 5th) Blind; Entered on Roll, 1912."

In 1901, there were 287 York County pensioners on the state rolls. The total of their pensions was \$1,205.40.

For all but the blind and limbless, the amount of the pension was \$3 per month and the number of York County widows who collected the pitifully small pension outnumbered the Confederate veterans 2-to-1.

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