

A Guide to the Henrico County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942

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History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Henrico County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Henrico County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

.8 cu. ft. (3 boxes, 1 folder, and 1 rolled map)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The militia rolls and military maps in this series are unprocessed. These records remain folded, rolled, or in original bundles, and may be fragile. Contact Archives Research services for availability.

There are no restrictions on the rest of the series.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Henrico County under an undated accession.

Processing Information

Military and pension records, 1790-1942, were partially separated from Henrico County court records and processed by Library of Virginia staff. The militia rolls and military maps in this series are unprocessed.

Encoded by M. Long: February 2025.

Preferred Citation

Henrico County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942. Local government records collection, Henrico County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also:

[Henrico County \(Va.\) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1839](#) at the Library of Virginia.

[Henrico County \(Va.\) Muster Roll in the War with Germany, 1917-1918](#) at the Library of Virginia.

Additional Henrico County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult "[A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm.](#)"

Henrico County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Henrico County Court Records may be found in the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available on the Library of Virginia website.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Keeping large bodies of militia in the field required an elaborate system of support based on the purchase of goods and services from civilians, in addition to the usual pay and allowances to officers and soldiers. The result was the creation of a large number of records concerning the state's disbursements to both soldiers and civilians. Many claims for payment went unsatisfied until 1821. Locality military and pension records consist largely of pay and muster rolls, accounts and vouchers concerning supplies, claims for reimbursement for services rendered, and military pension applications. Pension applications summarize the applicant's service record and may include medical evaluations; information about income and property; and, in the case of widows, the date and place of marriages.

During the Revolutionary War, commissioners were appointed in each county to impress supplies and non-military services (such as driving cattle or wagons) for the war effort. Officials provided certificates or receipts so that individual suppliers could be reimbursed by the state government. Beginning in 1782, claims for reimbursement could be submitted to county courts. These "public claims," known as court booklets and lists, exist for almost all Virginia counties. Between 1777 and 1785, the Virginia General Assembly passed several laws authorizing pensions for disabled soldiers and for widows of soldiers who died while on active duty.

Throughout the Civil War, the principal responsibility for Virginia's indigent soldiers' families lay with the locality. The Virginia State Convention in 1861 gave the responsibility entirely to counties and incorporated towns and authorized whatever actions had already been taken. Acts of Assembly in 1862 and 1863 expanded the localities' powers to provide for their needy, and in 1863 some minimal state assistance was added in. The Virginia General Assembly passed several Confederate pension acts beginning in 1888. The initial act provided pensions to Confederate soldiers, sailors, and marines disabled in action and to the widows of those killed in action. A 1900 act broadened the coverage to include veterans disabled by "infirmities of age" and widows whose husbands died after the war. African Americans who had served "faithfully" as servants, cooks, laborers, hostlers, or teamsters for the Confederate army were eligible for pensions beginning in 1924. District of Columbia residents became eligible in 1926; previously, all pension applicants were required to be residents of Virginia.

Locality History: Henrico County was named for Henry, Prince of Wales, eldest son of King James I. The county was one of the eight original shires, or counties, first enumerated in 1634.

Lost Locality Note: Henrico County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. All county court records prior to 1655 and almost all prior to 1677 are missing. Many records were destroyed by British troops during the Revolutionary War. Post-Revolutionary War county court records exist. Almost all circuit superior court of law and chancery and circuit court records were destroyed by fire during the evacuation of Richmond on 3 April 1865 in the Civil War. The county's circuit court held its sessions at the state courthouse in Richmond.

Scope and Content

Henrico County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942, consist of military service records, accounts and vouchers, and claims for reimbursement by civilians and service members. A portion of these records are unprocessed. Records include:

Pension papers, 1790-1900, consists of records related to veterans and their families seeking reimbursement, service rewards, or other support promised by the government in recognition of their time in the military. Most papers include regiment, commanding officer names, and other details about wartime service. Records include applications for pensions, certificates, affidavits, proof of descent, orders concerning heirs, lists of pensioners, and bounty land warrant claims for veterans of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican American War, and the Civil War. Notable records include an 1832 letter to soldiers and officers of the Revolutionary War that was published in the Whig, which outlines the process of obtaining a federal military pension.

County militia papers, 1798-1859, includes officer qualifications, oaths, certificates, officer recommendations, and an 1833 letter from the adjutant general regarding the 33rd regiment of the Virginia militia's failure to affect an organization by the election of officers. Also includes unprocessed militia rolls from the upper and lower districts of the county.

Civil War issues papers, 1861-1863, includes reports of the committee to inquire into the expediency of arming the county and a letter to the county from executive department regarding the requisition of enslaved Black individuals to serve the Confederacy.

A photostat of an 1867 military map of the City of Richmond.

Commutation applications, 1878-1887, consists of applications for commutation money and artificial limbs for Confederate soldiers wounded during the Civil War.

World War II issues papers, 1942, consists of four unprocessed maps outlining potential military objectives in the county.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- **Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942**, separated between different boxes and interfiled with general Henrico County records. Folders in these boxes are arranged by subject.

Contents List

Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1790-1942

Extent

.8 cu. ft. (3 boxes, 1 folder, and 1 rolled map)

Arrangement

Separated between different boxes and interfiled with general Henrico County records. Folders in these boxes are arranged by subject.

Barcode number 1047781: Court Records, Land Records, Miscellaneous Records, County Administrative Records, Military and Pension Records, Tax and Fiscal Records, Election Records, Bonds/Commissions/Oaths, 1801-1880 circa

Barcode number 1023310: Militia Papers (1798-1834, 1859); P, 1790-1884

Barcode number 1146210: Oversize Pension Papers, 1832

Barcode number 1140210: Oversize Pension Papers, 1852

Barcode number 1131577: Military Map of Richmond (neg. phot, 1867

Barcode number 1133436: County Highway plans, Military Obj, 1928-1934; 1959

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