

MILITARY RESOURCES IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

by Ron Darrah

“*There are no important military records between the Revolution and the Civil War!*”

Buzz!! Wrong!! If you have not searched in this 80-year time frame, say 1781 to 1861, because you had the above idea, you may just be overlooking a significant group of records that can fill in several family holes, especially since many census returns for this period are so iffy.

Or maybe you have looked at the War of 1812 and perhaps the Mexican War and came up empty. Are you done? Not if you're determined to cover all your options and especially if your folks were frontiersmen migrating westward as the country developed.

The United States exercised its *manifest destiny* and moved from sea to sea in less than a century. This process was not painless and was certainly not without bloodshed and conflict. The military effort required to accomplish that settlement generated a long and constant stream of records, and those records may aid you in your three to four generation search for that elusive family.

It is important to know the history of the specific area where your folks lived, because they were part of that history. The **FIRST KEY** to most of the conflicts in all these periods is to *THINK LOCAL!* Most mini-wars, rebellions, and disputes were in small areas and were primarily fought by local residents.

The **SECOND KEY** to these early conflicts is to always be aware of the difference between the *FEDERAL* and *STATE* military forces. The federal units were composed of intermingled men from all over the country, and they had titles like “1st United States Infantry.”

The state units were mainly comprised of men from just that state, and they had the state name in their title, such as the “5th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.” Sometimes they were even more local, such as “The Marion County Mounted Dragoons.”

The federal unit records are in the National Archives, and the state unit records are *mainly* in the respective state archives.

Keeping these keys in mind and also that the following list is in no way exhaustive, especially as concerns U.S. Navy and Marine actions, let us scan through these decades and see what you might uncover.



*Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown
by John Trumbull. Oil on canvas, 1820.*

1781–1800

LATE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Contrary to some opinions, when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in October of 1781, the American Revolution was **not** over. The

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official ending date of that war was 1783, and lots of fighting took place in 1782 and 1783, especially on the frontier. Remember, it wasn't over until it was over!

SHAY'S REBELLION, MASSACHUSETTS, 1786-87

WHISKEY INSURRECTION, PENNSYLVANIA, 1794

President George Washington led nearly 13,000 Pennsylvania and Virginia militiamen into western Pennsylvania to suppress this challenge to the new government.

FIRST NORTHWEST INDIAN WAR, OHIO, 1790-95

General Anthony Wayne's forces at the battle of Fallen Timbers near Toledo were composed of Regular army men and a group of Kentucky mounted militia, who were a long way north of the state boundary. Were your people there? Remember—separate the federal troops from the state troops!

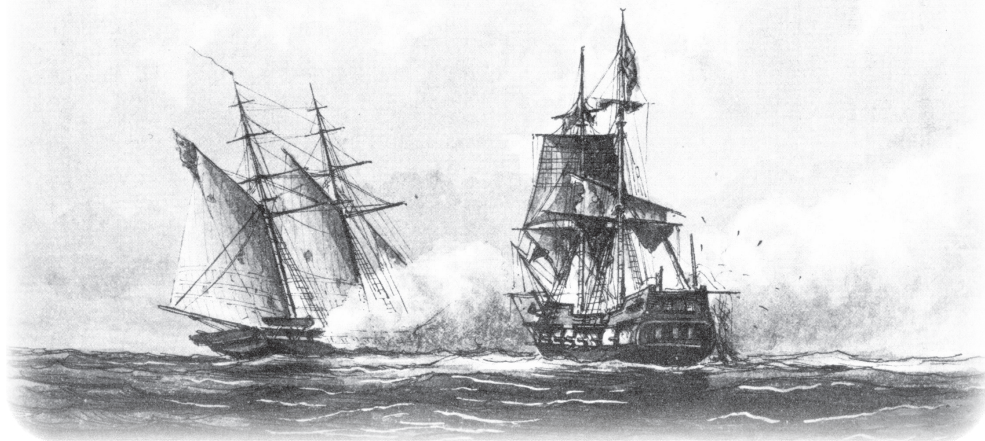
QUASI-WAR WITH FRANCE, NAVAL, 1798-1800

The United States Navy got its feet wet with this conflict, and the Navy was in almost constant action for the next 200 years! The Navy was entirely a regular federal force, and the officers and men generated innumerable records since they functioned as the cutting edge of American foreign policy. Check the National Archives for Navy records—and don't forget that the Marine Corps was always part of the Navy.

1801-1810

TRIPOLI WAR, AFRICA/NAVAL, 1801-05

You know that Marine song that says "to the shores of Tripoli?" Well, this is it, and the first time that the U.S. got involved in the Middle East and fought a Muslim group. It was mainly a Navy show, with the Marines doing the land portion. If any of your folks were in the sea forces in this time period, they were probably involved.



*U.S. Schooner ENTERPRISE Capturing the Tripolitan Corsair TRIPOLI, 1 August 1801.
From a drawing (circa 1878) by Captain William Bainbridge Hoff,
U.S. Navy, in the collection of the Navy department.*

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BURR'S INSURRECTION, MISSISSIPPI VALLEY, 1806-07

CHESAPEAKE AFFAIR, VIRGINIA/NAVAL, 1807

The HMS *Leopard* boarded the USS *Chesapeake* and removed four sailors; this was a preliminary round of the War of 1812. Did you have a family member aboard the *Chesapeake*? Are you sure?

1811-1820

SECOND NORTHWEST INDIAN WAR, INDIANA, 1811

You may have heard of William Henry Harrison and the Battle of Tippecanoe. There are many Hoosier files on this early state conflict. Most of the participants are known.

FIRST SEMINOLE WAR, FLORIDA/GEORGIA, 1812

If you have Deep South roots, there are several conflicts on this list that you might find interesting. And, if you have Native

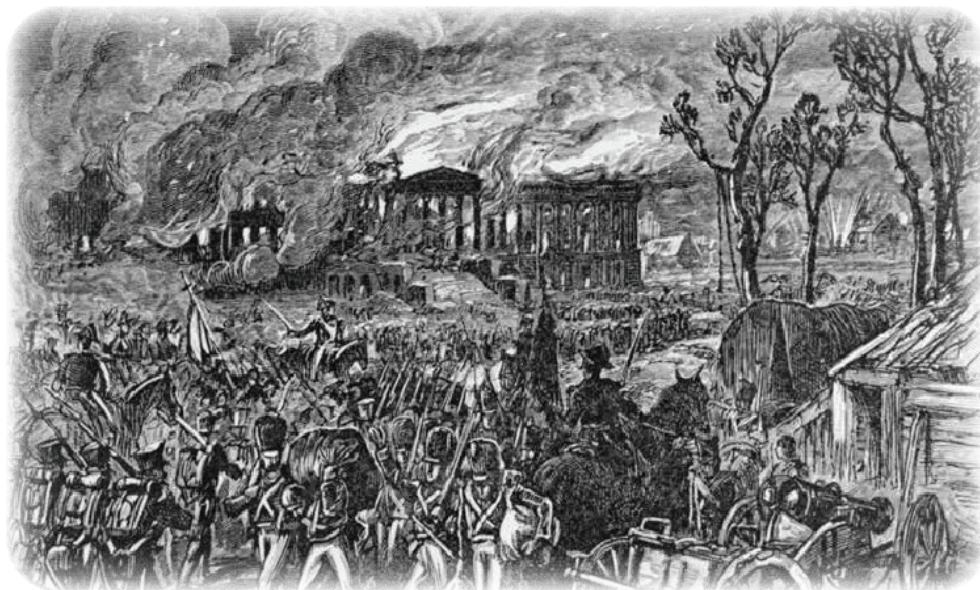
American ancestry or just want a different perspective on American expansionism, remember that there were always two sides to these innumerable Indian wars. Many Native tribes were, and are, highly developed cultural entities of their own. Check out their websites for the rest of the story.

The Seminoles, among others, did not take kindly to being dispossessed; visit them at <http://www.seminoletribe.com>.

WAR OF 1812, GENERAL, 1812-15

Sometimes called the Second War of Independence, this was a major event. You might want to start with the book *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files* (Revised Edition), transcribed by Virgil D. White. It's available in most good genealogy collections. [See **General Resources** on page 109.]

On the Ohio Historical Society website you can search the full text of the roster from the Adjutant General records. Ohio



Capture and burning of Washington by the British, in 1814.

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furnished 1,759 officers and 24,521 enlisted men for this war. For every state look for ADJUTANT GENERAL RECORDS. The AG is the top state military position, and his office always created reports for all conflicts where his state forces participated.

You might want to check out *Indiana War of 1812 Soldiers* by Charles M. Franklin, a compiled list of the militia soldiers who served in the eight regiments (78 companies) of Indiana during the War of 1812. Counties from which these regiments were formed were Clark, Dearborn, Franklin, Harrison, Jefferson, Knox, and Wayne. These were the only counties in Indiana Territory at that time and had different boundaries.

PEORIA INDIAN WAR, ILLINOIS, 1813

The Access Genealogy website has a good section on Native American history and census records (to help balance the account!)

CREEK INDIAN WAR, SOUTHEAST, 1813-14

Look for state records like this entry from the Tennessee State Archives:

Military Records, 1813-1836. 1 reel.
TSLA Mf. #RG 158.

Muster rolls and payrolls for Creek War 1813-15 and Seminole Wars 1818 and 1836. Arranged by Captain's name.

Tip: Follow the officers, not the privates!
Also: Visit the Creeks at <http://www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov>.

BARBARY WAR, AFRICA/NAVAL, 1815

ROUND TWO OF THE TRIPOLI DISPUTE (see above)

SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, FLORIDA/GEORGIA, 1817-18

Round Two here also; the Seminoles are still in Florida—so who won?

1821-1830

Remember THINK LOCAL!

LAFITTE'S PIRATES, GALVESTON, 1821

RICKAREE INDIAN WAR, MISSOURI RIVER/DAKOTAS, 1823

At first I thought this was something Al Capp made up, but there were Rickarees and the Americans did fight them.

WINNEBAGO INDIAN WAR, WISCONSIN, 1827

The Wisconsin Historical Society has lots of good material on this *disturbance*. Go to <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>. One thing that is seldom mentioned in the various Indian wars is the presence of Native Americans fighting for the United States against other Indians. Look for this in the National Archives.

Smith's Company. Mich.
(Menominee Indians.)

O-ge-maw-mo-ke-w.
(Signification: The chief rising from the earth.)

Warrior, { Capt. Smith's Co. of Menominee Indians in the Military service of the United States.*

Winnebago War, 1827.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

(Not dated), 1827.

Period of service:

Commencement Aug. 23, 1827.

Expiration Sept. 16, 1827.

This muster card of a Native American soldier is in the National Archives.

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1831-1840

SAC AND FOX INDIAN WAR, ILLINOIS, 1831

BLACK HAWK INDIAN WAR, ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN, 1832

Look for materials such as this file listed by the Illinois State Archives:

Black Hawk War Records. Ca. 1832-1891.

1 cu. ft. No index.

Files contain both original muster rolls of Illinois volunteers who served in the Black Hawk War and copies of muster rolls filed with the federal government. Copies of federal muster rolls were made pursuant to an 1881 act of the General Assembly which provided for the transcription of these records (L. 1881, p. 30). Original muster rolls are filed by brigade, while federal muster rolls are grouped by county. Entries on each muster

roll include: soldier's name, rank, date and length of enrollment, county of residence, amount of pay due, and number of traveling rations drawn. For mounted soldiers the rolls also give the value of arms and equipment issued and the value and description of horses issued. Files also contain a small amount of correspondence concerning men who served in the Black Hawk War and material relating to a reunion of those veterans in 1891.

Hoosiers were involved in this one. Check out this collection at the Indiana State Archives:

Indiana Black Hawk War Militia Index, May-July 1832

Alphabetical card file includes name, rank, unit, term of enlistment, and by whom enlisted.

TOLEDO CONFLICT, OHIO/MICHIGAN, 1835-36

There's a good discussion in Wikipedia on this to get you started! Some folks think this was the start of the Ohio State-Michigan football rivalry, but I don't think so!

TEXAS WAR, SOUTHWEST, 1835-36

This wasn't all about the Alamo; there was fighting in several places, and much of it was done by American citizen-volunteers.

CREEK INDIAN WAR, GEORGIA/ALABAMA, 1836-37

Again look for state or local compilations, such as *Index to Compiled Service Records of Alabama Units, Creek War, 1836-1837* by Benjamin Achee and Margery Wright, 1971. This two-part reference is in the Indiana State Library, among other locations.

THIRD SEMINOLE WAR, FLORIDA/GEORGIA, 1835-42

Yes, they're still hanging on!



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BLANCHARD, HIRAM B.	IOWA WAR
Capt. T. M. Howard's Co. No. 4 (Inf.) 74th Regt., 2nd Brig., 14th Div., M. M., Lewis County.	
Mustered into service DEC 2 1839	
Discharged	
from records of State Historical Society Columbia, Missouri	

My relative was in the Lewis County, Missouri Militia.

CHEROKEE WAR, 1836-38

The Tennessee State Archives has this file:

Index to Compiled Service Records of the Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the Cherokee Disturbances and Removal in Organizations from Tennessee and the Field and Staff Officers of the Army of the Cherokee Nation. 2 reels. National Archives M908. TSLA Mf. #865.

Index is arranged alphabetically by soldier's surname. Also includes rank and unit.

Related print material:

The Cherokee Wars, Hays, 1987. (F 208. H39) and card file in Archives Reading Room.

MORMON WAR, MISSOURI, 1838

The Missouri State Archives has lot of material on this conflict. See **Iowa War** entry in the next column.

AROOSTOCK INDIAN WAR, MAINE, 1839

IOWA WAR, IOWA/MISSOURI, 1839

What? You didn't even know Iowa had a war? Actually I didn't either until I found a Missouri relative who almost had to attack the Iowa militia. The Missouri State Archives has a great searchable online database of Missouri service cards from the War of 1812 to World War I. Go to <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives>.

1841-1850

Check for both FEDERAL and STATE records!

DORR'S REBELLION, RHODE ISLAND, 1842

MORMON WAR, ILLINOIS, 1844

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MEXICAN WAR, SOUTHWEST/MEXICO, 1846-1848

Indiana was a large part of this major and largest conflict in the time frame. There are lots of resources for the Mexican War, and they are relatively easy to find. See this collection at the Indiana State Archives:

Indiana Mexican War Volunteer Index, 1846-1848.

This is an alphabetical card file for five Indiana Volunteer Regiments. Information given is name, rank, muster in and muster out dates.



*Lands
gained in
the Mexican
Cession*

1851-1860

CALIFORNIA INDIAN WAR, CALIFORNIA, 1851-1852

Also called the Mariposa Indian War; visit the California Military Museum website for a good discussion at <http://www.militarymuseum.org/Mariposa.html>.

UTAH INDIAN WAR, UTAH, 1850-1853

NICARAGUAN WAR, NAVAL, 1854-1858

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps were active around the world throughout this Early Republic time period. I did not list the dozens of events, but be aware of them.

KANSAS CONFLICTS, KANSAS, 1854-1859

YAKIMA/KLAMATH INDIAN WAR, OREGON/WASHINGTON, 1855

FLORIDA INDIAN WAR, FLORIDA, 1855-1858

JOHN BROWN'S RAID, VIRGINIA, 1859

This, of course, was one of the preliminaries to the Civil War, but not part of it.

GENERAL RESOURCES:

1. *Index to Old Wars Pension Files 1815-1926*, transcribed by Virgil D. White

The "Old Wars" pension application files are for service based on death or disability incurred in service in the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Marine Corps between the end of the Revolutionary War and the first year of the Civil War in 1861. The claims are for service in the Mexican War, the Indian Wars, the early part of the Civil War, and a few are for service in the War of 1812.

These files are for regular federal military members, not state militia. This book is in the Indiana State Library and many good genealogical collections.

2. *Index to U.S. Military Pension Applications of Remarried Widows 1812-1911*, transcribed by Virgil D. White

This index was prepared from records located at the National Archives. Many of the entries will contain the name of the remarried widow, date claim was filed, application and certificate numbers, name of husband upon which her claim was based, names of other husband or husbands, military service of each husband as well as application and certificate numbers for each husband when applicable, and cross-references to other claims filed by the widow. Also inter-filed in this index are some claims by

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minor or helpless children, mothers, fathers, and sisters of serviceman.

3. *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files*, transcribed by Virgil D. White

This is an index for those veterans, and widows of veterans, who filed applications for pensions based on military service in all branches of the military during the War of 1812. This is one of the most informative indexes ever published on national military records. This revised edition also contains a cross-reference index of 58,126 entries to the wives, widows, and other family members as shown in the main index. The wives and widows are indexed under their maiden name when it was available.

4. *Index to Volunteer Soldiers, 1784-1811*, transcribed by Virgil D. White

This 747 page compilation was taken from National Archives microfilm.

5. *Index to Pension Applications for Indian Wars Service Between 1817 and 1898*, transcribed by Virgil D. White

The compilation was taken from microfilm group T318, 12 rolls of 16 mm microfilm at the National Archives. Much of the material is post-Civil War, but much is in our study range.

[Do you think Virgil White has an apartment in the archives?]

6. Indiana Constitution, Article VII, 1816

Sect. 1st. The Militia of the State of Indiana shall consist of **all free able bodied male persons; Negroes, Mulattoes and Indians excepted, resident in the said state, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years, except such persons as now are, or**

hereafter may be exempted by the laws of the United States, or of this State; and shall be armed, equipped, and trained, as the general Assembly may provide by law.

Sect. 2. No person or persons conscientiously scrupulous of bearing arms, shall be compelled to do Militia duty; provided such person or persons shall **pay an equivalent for such exemption**; which equivalent shall be collected annually, by a civil officer, and be hereafter fixed by law, and shall be equal as near as may be, to the lowest fines assessed on those privates in the Militia, who may neglect or refuse to perform Militia duty.

Sect. 9. **All militia officers** shall be commissioned by the Governor, and shall hold their Commissions during good behavior, or until they arrive at the **age of sixty years**.

[Emphasis added.]

All states had militia laws similar to Indiana, derived from the U.S. Constitution. Many militia censuses taken in the early years of the republic survive. Many militia units were organized, and a number of their muster rolls survive. Note this one:

Militia Census, 1793; Department of Defense, Adjutant General's Office (SDEA0004); New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

Is this important? Well, the 1790 Census of New Jersey was destroyed, so this can fill in some holes.

7. *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the Indian Wars and Disturbances, 1815-1858*, M629, 42 rolls.

MILITARY RESOURCES IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC (continued)

This microfilm series in the National Archives may be something you should take a look at. Look for indexes and digitizations based on parts of the film done by local genealogists and historians.

8. Manuscript Collections

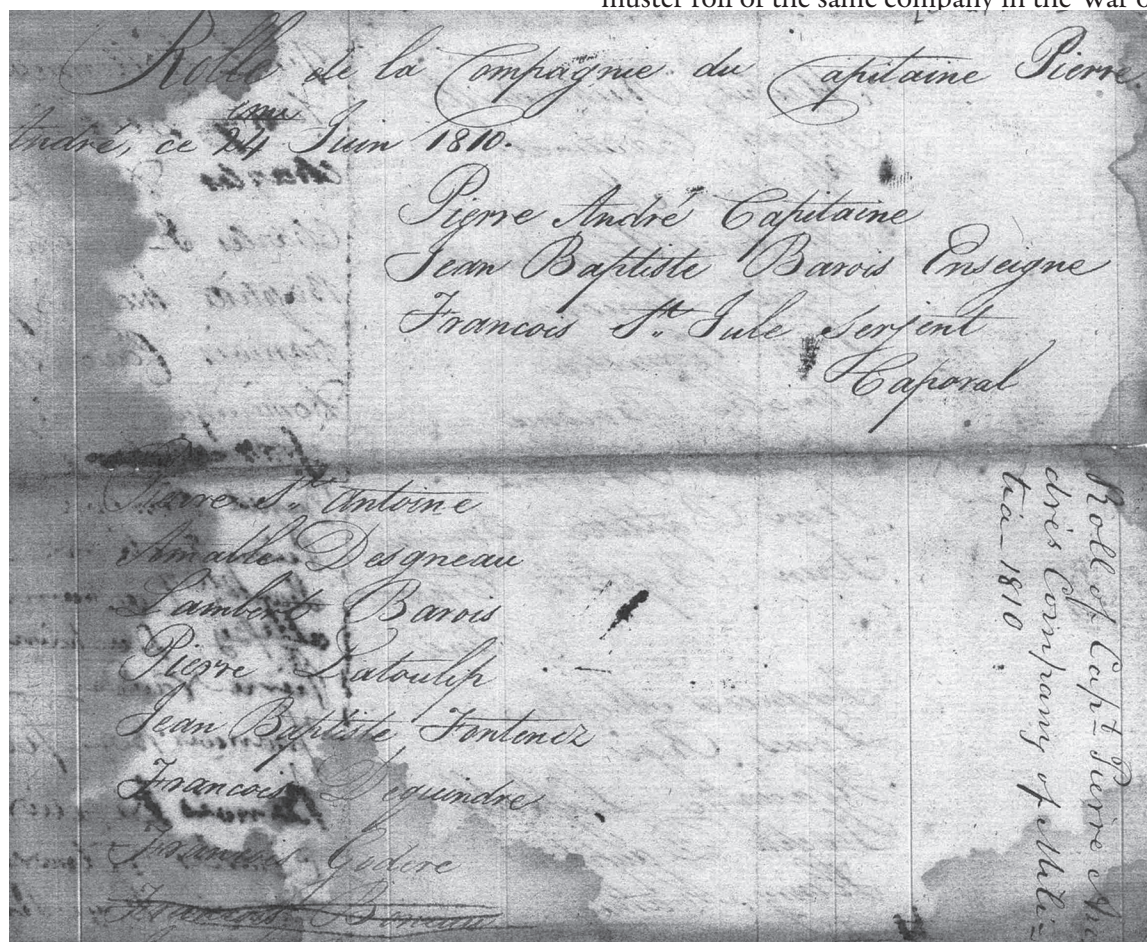
Many early military records are buried within manuscript collections in state and local libraries, state and local historical societies, and college and university libraries. Use the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC), at <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc>, and other search engines to uncover these gems.

You might want to extract some of these for your genealogical society quarterly!

Note this example from one such collection:

Lilly Library Manuscript Collections, Indiana University. *Holland Manuscript*.

The papers of Levi Luther Todd (1812-1858) include: the original and negative microfilm of his War of 1812 orderly book, Aug. 15, 1812-Feb. 14, 1813, for Captain Nathaniel G. S. Hart's company of Kentucky light infantry; a muster roll of the same company in the War of



This 1810 Vincennes muster roll is in the Manuscripts Department at the Indiana State Library.

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1812 made by him from memory in 1851; his commissions as Captain of the Lexington Light Infantry, 1st battalion, 42nd regiment, dated Apr. 16, 1813, as aide-de-camp to Brigadier-General James Shelby, Oct. 13, 1817, and as Captain of the Montgomery Independent Rifle Company, Aug. 10, 1819; and George Caldwell's morning report of Captain Bean's company of U.S. Rangers, Apr. 11, 1833.

9. Ancestry.com has several databases that can help in this area. Check out these and others on your library computer:

American Militia in the Frontier Wars, 1790-1796, Clark, Murtie June.

Florida War Death List, 1836-1842; Gage, Sandra S., compiler.

Michigan Military Records, 1775-1836
Naval Pensioners of the United States, 1800-1851, Bockstruck, Lloyd de Witt.

Officers of the Continental and U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, 1775-1900

Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War of 1812

Returns from Regular Army Regiments, 1821-1916

The General Society of the War of 1812, 1976 Bicentennial Supplement to the 1972 Reg., R. G. Thurtle, Editor.

U.S. Army Historical Register, 1789-1903, Vol. 1 & 2

U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1940

U.S. Pensioners, 1818-1872

U.S. War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858

War of 1812 Pension Application Files Index, 1812-1815

10. Digital Book Index (<http://www.digitalbookindex.org>)

I like this site, but there are others similar to it. There is a good article in the May 2008 *Internet Genealogy* magazine. These works are scanned copies of books that you can search page by page and word by word. Most references are free and usually in Adobe format. Give it a try and see what you can find. This type of resource is an exploding area for research—keep monitoring these sites when you find them.

11. Newspaper, Microfilm, and Scanned Images

Most of the conflicts in this time frame were heavily covered in the local newspapers of the era. See what papers were extant in the time period and see what articles and lists were published. The Indiana State Library has most of the Indiana papers; the Ohio Historical Society has most of the Ohio ones; and so on.

Good Luck and Good Hunting!

EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT

CHARLES BRYANT DROWNED

Submitted by Meredith Thompson

Indianapolis Star, Monday, August 14, 1911—page 1, column 5

MORRISTOWN, Ind., Aug. 13—Charles Bryant, 23 years old, a bricklayer, was drowned in Blue River near here today while bathing.

He was unmarried and had been working in Rushville for some time. The body was recovered and brought here.