

WAR OF 1812 RECORDS: WHERE TO FIND WHAT

Service, pension, and bounty land records, with a real Ohio pension file as the example. Companion to "Reading a War of 1812 Pension File, Page by Page."

FIRST QUESTION REGULAR ARMY, MILITIA, OR VOLUNTEER?

Most Ohio men who served in the War of 1812 were militia. Some, like the soldier in our example file, joined the regular U.S. Army. The answer decides which service records exist. Pension and bounty land files cover all three, but only if the soldier or his widow qualified under a law.

WHERE TO FIND WHAT

RECORD	WHAT IT CAN TELL YOU	WHERE TO FIND IT
Pension application files	Declarations, marriage date and place, maiden name, death date and place, residences, witnesses, children, discharge papers	Index M313; many files free on Fold3 (Preserve the Pensions); others ordered from the National Archives
Bounty land application files	Service, age, residence; widow or heirs	National Archives; often filed with the pension
Bounty land warrants, 1812 acts	Warrant number, rank, unit, issue date, where located	M848 (FamilySearch); patents on the BLM General Land Office site
Registers of Enlistments regular army	Age, birthplace, description, occupation, enlistment date and place	M233 on Fold3, Ancestry, and FamilySearch
Compiled service records militia and volunteers	Unit, rank, dates of service; rarely age or birthplace	Index M602 on Fold3 and FamilySearch
Ohio militia rosters	Name, rank, company, commander	<i>Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War of 1812</i> (Ohio Adjutant General, 1916), online free
1883 List of Pensioners	Pensioners (and widows) living Jan. 1, 1883, with post office and certificate number	Published list, online free; a widow who died before 1883 will not appear

Key rule: Search the index under every spelling. One file can hold several claims, each with its own number: S.O. or S.C. (survivor's original or certificate), W.O. or W.C. (widow's original or certificate), and B.L.W. (bounty land warrant).

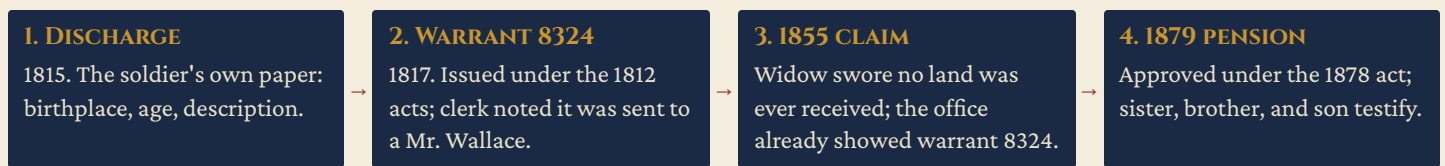
THE LAWS THAT CREATED THE RECORDS

DATE	WHAT HAPPENED
1811 and 1812	Regular army enlistees promised extra pay and 160 acres in the military tracts; Michigan dropped for Missouri in 1816
1814	Bounty doubled to 320 acres for later enlistees
Sept. 28, 1850	Bounty land for militia and volunteers too, in 40 acre steps by length of service; widows eligible
March 3, 1855	160 acres for 14 days' service; earlier recipients could claim the balance
Feb. 14, 1871	Service pensions for 60 days' service; widows only if married before February 17, 1815
March 9, 1878	Service cut to 14 days; widows eligible no matter when they married

READING A PENSION FILE: WORKFLOW

- 1 Find the soldier in the pension index under every spelling (Morrow, Murray, Marrow) and note every claim number.
- 2 Get the full file, not just the index card or a few "selected" pages.
- 3 List every document by date and type, and note which claim it belongs to.
- 4 For each page, ask: does this really belong to my soldier? Files can hold misfiled papers from a different man of the same name.
- 5 Line up dates and places from each statement side by side. Let conflicts point you to the next record.
- 6 Research every witness and agent. Witnesses are often parents, siblings, children, or in laws.
- 7 Follow each lead out of the file: the enlistment register or muster rolls, the warrant and patent, county marriage, probate, census, and burial records.

ONE FILE, SEVERAL CLAIMS: THE WILLIAM MORROW FILE



Private William Morrow, 22nd U.S. Infantry; widow Ellener, born Pifer; WO 35,383, WC 25,205, BLW 8324. She married him after the war, so she could not apply for a pension until the 1878 act, and she was dropped from the rolls after her death on August 7, 1882. A sworn statement records what someone believed, years later. It is evidence, not proof. In the example, the widow's two statements give two marriage dates and two death places; a son's affidavit places the death in Jay County, Indiana, with burial at Fort Recovery, Ohio.

COMMON RESEARCH TRAPS

- Same name, different man:** The example file holds papers about a Captain William Morrow, an officer who was not entitled to the private's warrant.
- Regular army vs. militia:** Regular soldiers are in the enlistment registers, not the militia compiled service records.
- Sold or assigned warrants:** A warrant in his name does not mean he settled on the land. Follow the warrant to the patent.
- Late claims:** A widow who married after February 17, 1815 could not get a service pension until 1878.
- Missing from the 1883 list:** Check whether the pensioner died first; a "pensioner dropped" report gives the date.
- Generated visuals:** Illustrations help explain the process but are not evidence. Use the record images for specific claims.

WHERE TO SEARCH

Fold3 · War of 1812 pension files (Preserve the Pensions), free	fold3.com
National Archives · War of 1812 records guide and ordering	archives.gov/research/military/war-of-1812
FamilySearch · War of 1812 pension index; bounty land warrants (M848)	familysearch.org
Bureau of Land Management · General Land Office Records, patents	glorerecords.blm.gov
National Archives, Prologue · "War of 1812" records guide (1991)	archives.gov/publications/prologue/1991/winter/war-of-1812.html

MORE OHIO AND MIGRATION RESEARCH GUIDES: BRICKWALLSBUCKEYES.COM

Keep pushing past your brick walls.