This program gives a researcher some quick tips along with electronic and print resources that can be used to research Civil War soldiers. Much of the information in this guide can be used for researching soldiers from any state that send men off to the Civil War. The focus of several of the research strategies and resources are Connecticut specific. If you have a Civil War ancestor or an interest in researching men who enlisted during the year’s 1861-1865 this resource guide will offer you several starting points for beginning as well as expanding your research. During the 150th Commemoration of the Civil War, researching the men and women of that gallant generation allows us to make personal connections with our past as a nation. In reaching back we gain an understanding our past and inform our future. Civil War history is all around us. Honoring it we may gain an appreciation for those who have gone before us to make our current lives possible. All honor to those volunteer sons of Connecticut. Their history is too precious to be neglected or forgotten. Enjoy your journey into the past lives of those who preceded us and defended our nation in the hour of its greatest crisis.
What Information Do You Have & Where Do You Start? The Internet, Of Course!


The Internet has revolutionized genealogical research. Search engines and databases such as Ancestry.com have opened doors to the past. New information is being added daily. There are several quick tips for searching relate to Boolean syntax, which is the language used by search engines such as Google. You can increase your chances of finding the information you want by using “operators” to refine your search. The most common operators are the plus sign (+), minus sign (-) and quotation marks (“”). Using the plus sign tells the search that the words you are linking with the + must appear in the search; The minus sign tells the search that a word must not appear in your results; surrounding words with quotations marks tells the search that the results must appear as a phrase.

Six Web-savvy strategies defined by genealogist, Nancy Hendrickson, for Family Tree Magazine are:

1) Master search-engine math (syntax & operators)
2) Refine your search to find the best sources
3) Scout out smaller sites
4) Look for places, not people
5) Try multiple databases (and search engines)
6) Go beyond Genealogy sites

One of the best sources for initially researching any soldier, North or South, is the American Civil War Research Database. A subscription is only $25 a year and provides access to all sorts of personnel, state, town, regimental, information. Many libraries have subscriptions to this database that can be used. You can try the guest demo (free) or the Descendants/Ancestors Database for $10. This Database is especially useful if you have not yet located the Individual’s regiment. This database can be used to search a state for individual names, regiments and town/city information and statistics. They also have a photo directory and tons of specifics on every hometown and regiment in the US and CSA. A terrific first place to begin research.
A Research MUST: Identify the Man’s Regiment & Company

A Civil War Regiment was the basic unit of personnel management. Regiments were numbered and attached to states. Their full complement of men was 1000 upon recruitment and they were led by a Colonel. In order to learn everything you can about your ancestor you must know his state, regiment, and company. This information can be found through letters, diaries, veterans activities, etc.

If you have no other leads, the internet is the first logical place to run a quick regimental listing and can be done in several ways. Look for rosters, etc., and any other clues. Once you know the regiment you have an open door to more specific information about where your ancestor was, what experiences and battles he may have participated in, where he may have been camped, who he may have fought with, etc. You will also have a much better chance of completing information for a National Archives request for pension records and compiled military service records. A quick way to locate a soldier’s regiment is to use the free Civil War Soldiers and Sailors database offered by the National Park Service and detailed in the next slide. The American Civil War Research Database on the previous slide offers this information as well as more in-depth regimental experience records, statistics, details about cities and towns that sent men off to war, etc.
Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System
Free Internet research tool for searching the records of the soldiers and sailors who fought in the Civil War from the National Park System

CWSS – the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, maintained by the National Park Service has more than six million names in the system. The entire population of the US at the time (North and South) only came to about 32 million. The Civil War would, indeed, as Lincoln stated, touch every heart and hearth stone. CWSS shows the information on the General Index Card. Cards were prepared from unit and regiment musters as a soldier or sailor’s service record. The cards were used after service to determine eligibility for pensions. The cards can also be obtained from the National Archives.

The National Park System offers this research database free of charge to researchers. The General Index Cards, can also be ordered as part of Compiled Military Service Record from the National Archives. The CWSS offers the information detailed in the snapshot of the webpage.
You can order online and pay with a credit card in advance for pension records and compiled military service records. The cost of the complete pension record is $75 and CMSRs are $25. When filling out the electronic form in order to get the best results you need to fill out as much as you know about the soldier you are researching. Name, rank, regiment, company at least. Birth dates, death dates, state of residence, etc., all help ensure that you will receive the documents you request. Shipping can be up to 142 days for pension records, however, they usually come in a few weeks. There is no charge if the search for records is unsuccessful. The new electronic form takes the place and is similar to the old NATF form 85 that used to have the attached carbon copies.
Order On-line: View of a Completed Electronic Pension Record

Order of Kady Brownell, a woman who experienced combat with the 5th Rhode Island Regiment and lived at one time in Bridgeport, CT - Fill out as much information as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran's Identification</th>
<th>Service Description - General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran's First Name:</td>
<td>Branch of Service in Which he Served:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kady</td>
<td>Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran's Middle Name:</td>
<td>Rank:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran's Last Name:</td>
<td>Kind of Service:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brownell</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Birth (YYYY):</td>
<td>Beginning Year of Service (YYYY):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Death (YYYY):</td>
<td>Ending Year of Service (YYYY):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War in Which he Served:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union, Civil War (1861-1865)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State From Which he Served:</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pension File Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be Certificate 279843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Widow or Other Claimant:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Brownell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your ancestor was on the military payroll you can order their Compiled Military Service Record. If your ancestor applied for and collected a pension, or if he left a widow who did, you will want the information which can include eyewitness testimony, medical records, marriage records, and a wealth of other personal information. Pension records are $75 and worth every penny most of the time. If the researchers at the National Archives do not find any information there is no charge. Above is the very unusual case of a woman who experienced combat with the 5th Rhode Island Regiment after following her husband into the service. Kady Brownell lived in Bridgeport, Connecticut after the war and applied for and gained membership with the local Elias Howe Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. She also applied for and received a U.S. Soldier’s pension and her records are available at the National Archives.
Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs) - Don’t assume that because your ancestor was in a regiment that fought at Gettysburg that he was there without proof from the CMSR file from the National Archives.

CMSRs are $25 and worth every penny. You fill out the same electronic form on-line at the National Archives as you do for pension files. CMSRs prove where a soldier was at any given time that the roll is made. You can find a lot of surprises in the CMSRs. You can verify or rule out whether your ancestor was present for duty when his regiment was in battle or whether he was on furlough, hospitalized, etc. These cards and records don’t represent all of the information about a soldier but are invaluable when comparing them against the record of the soldier’s regiment and his pension records.
Some items you might find in a soldier’s CMSR file would be re-enlistment papers, casualty sheets, hospital stays, furlough dates, and definite proof if he was present for duty during battle. Don’t overlook this information.

These forms for re-enlistment and casualty accompanied the CMSR for a Seymour, Connecticut soldier, John Harpin Riggs of the 7th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry.
Pension records contain information of birth, marriage, death, children, and health issues. They are a wealth of genealogical information about the soldier and often his family as well. You may find sworn statements from friends and neighbors. Sworn statements from comrades from the regiment, and the soldiers own sworn statements, make pension files a wealth of personal information about military service and the veteran’s life after the war. Often the men relay information in their own words about their lives and health, combat experience, and family and these statements are made under oath and attested to by a notary. In the case where a soldier is collecting a pension for being wounded in action, sworn testimony from members of the regiment who witnessed the wounding are included along with surgeon’s certificates and the results of examinations. If you are researching a soldier a copy of the pension file is a must.
Discharges can provide valuable information about the soldier. Besides the usual name, rank, and regiment, discharges give the term of enlistment, date and place of discharge, and reason for discharge. They also give a physical description of the soldier for identification purposes and the man’s occupation when he enlisted. Fold marks on many original discharges indicate where soldiers probably folded them up and carried them in a pocket or wallet. This copy of Selah Blakeman’s discharge (17th Connecticut Volunteers, Company D) arrived in the envelope with his pension records from the National Archives. It gives the date he was discharged, his rank at the time, the geographical location of where he was discharged, i.e., Hilton Head. The discharge describes his height, complexion, the color of his eyes and his hair. It states his profession as farmer. It also gives the amount he was paid upon discharge. Discharges are wonderful reference documents.
Vital Records, Town Halls, State and Local Historical Societies are Goldmines for Historical Information on the War and the Home Front

Vital Records come in a variety of forms and are available in libraries, town halls, state and local historical societies. Some vital records are available in print form. Many are available on microfiche. There are many initiatives to digitize this information as well. There are several LDS Family History Centers in Connecticut that welcome the general public and offer assistance and free resources, including vital records which can be ordered upon request for genealogical research. This was an interesting photo taken with a digital camera right from the microfiche reader screen. It’s the vital record of births recorded the day after the Battle of Antietam for the town of Derby, Connecticut. I found it while researching a Derby soldier from the 20th Connecticut, Co. B. On September 18, 1862 a young couple in Derby named Frederic and Laura Huntley had triplets, he was 23 and she was 18 years old. This view of the vital record for that event shows the town clerk had bracketed the margin of the record of this unusual event with the word Triplets and three exclamation points. In addition to the unusual event of the birth of triplets was the fact the couple chose names for their three boys and the names were recorded in the town record. (many birth records of the period did not give the child’s name, but simply the names of the parents, their ages, race, sometimes father’s occupation, and the sex of the child) There was apparently a great deal of patriotism displayed in the choice and recording of the names of these three boys chosen to honor three Union generals: Burnside, Sumner and Hooker Huntley. -- It is interesting to note these three generals all participated in the great battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day in our nation’s history, which had been fought only the day before, on September 17, 1862. Did the town of Derby already have news of the battle or would it be days before the news reached the valley? When doing research always take a digital camera. This image was made using a photograph of the screen of the microfiche reader displaying the Derby Vital Records at a Church of the Latter Day Saints Genealogy center in Woodbridge, CT.
Union and Confederate soldiers alike realized the historical significance of their participation in the War. Everyone wrote letters if they were literate. Literacy rates were extremely high. Spelling was creative and phonetic, and handwriting, a century and a half later, is often difficult to read. It may take a great effort to decipher some of the handwriting and faded words, but it’s worth the effort. To be able to read a soldier’s letters is a remarkable opportunity. Sometimes soldiers sent packages of letters home with specific instructions for their families to preserve them. Other times they kept the letters with them carrying them through battle. Some soldiers took measures to protect their written legacy in letters and diaries. In February 1863, Pvt. Friend Smith, 20th Connecticut, Co. B, would write his wife: “I assure you your letters are read and reread over & over again. I send them back because I want them preserved & I find some others do the same.”

Many thousands of these fragile written papers have been lost, damaged, and destroyed due to careless treatment over the years. Almost every soldier who took part in the war, North and South, was conscious they were participating in a cataclysmic event of National magnitude. Even soldiers who were moderately literate wanted to document their experiences and communicate them to loved ones back home. Psychologically, they wanted to leave something behind for their families to know. It was the letters that held all their feelings and thoughts. Reading Civil War letters today it is apparent these feelings were especially acute because of the insecurity, unpredictability, and danger of the soldiers’ experience both in camp and in battle. All were conscious of their finite mortal existence in an infinite cause. Tens of thousands of soldiers kept diaries of their experiences; millions of soldiers sent their letters home to be preserved. Tragically many did not survive the years. Private Smith not only numbered every letter he wrote for future reference but he kept a diary as well. On New Year’s Day, 1863 he mailed it home to his wife. Some soldiers and families dressed up their mail with colorful, patriotic stationery as you see above. All who wrote hoped their loved ones would keep them in their thoughts and return their written words with news of home. Almost every letter home asked for families to write back often. Requests for stamps, paper, envelopes from home were common. Letters, if available, shed so much light on the lives of this great American generation.
Copy of the first and last pages of a letter from July 4, 1863 from Pvt. J. Henry Blakeman, 17th Connecticut Infantry, to his mother describing his wounding and the death of his best friend, Stephen Crofutt on the first day of the battle

This July 4, 1863 letter was written the day after the Battle of Gettysburg ended in Union victory. The entire town and surrounding areas were what historian Gregory Coco would call “a vast sea of misery” in a “strange and blighted land” in the aftermath of the battle. From the 11th Corps Hospital on the George Spangler farm at Gettysburg, on July 4, 1863, J. Henry Blakeman would write home to his mother describing his wounding, and the death of his best friend, Stephen Crofutt (photo insert) on the first day of the battle:

Dear Mother, I think I shall have a chance to send a letter this afternoon and knowing your intense anxiety will write a little. You know we have had a terrible fight and men are slain by hundreds but thanks to our preserver I escaped with my life though pretty severely wounded. I was hit the first day before I had time to fire my gun, taken prisoner and kept one day and then taken to the city and the next day our folk took the town and I was taken to our hospital some three miles back. Here we have to lie on the ground and last night we had a terrible rain so I am as wet as water can make me but that is good for the wound. I was struck by a rifle ball in the left side between the hip and ribs passing through the flank. Dr. says he thinks it did not enter the cavity and if not it will heal soon. Do not worry about me for it will do no good. I don’t mind it much can get up and walk around quite spry and have a good appetite. I can hardly bring my mind to tell you that Stephen was killed by the same volley that wounded me. He was within three feet of me was shot through the head and killed instantly. Stephen was liked by the whole co. and will be much mourned. I know it will almost kill his mother but reality is better than suspense and what I tell you you can depend upon. I saw Selah yesterday morning a few minutes he escaped unhurt. Our Regt is badly cut up they numbered only eighty yesterday. Co. D. only five besides Lieut. Peck. Col. Arrived yesterday morning and had command of the Brigade. Dol. Fowler is killed Maj Brady is wounded and Capt Burr in command of the Regt. I lost everything I had but my canteen and little water. Even lost my cup. I got this sheet of paper of Stiles Wells. It was in a small portfolio in his breast and a ball passed through the whole fifty thickness but did not hurt him it probably saved his life. He was afterwards wounded in the leg. Sylvester is hurt in the shoulder not seriously. There are twelve of us from Co. D here together wounded they say this morning that the Rebs are getting off as fast as possible and I guess they are pretty badly whipped. The 11th Corps did not run much this time as their cas. Plainly shows. I cannot tell you where to direct to me now for I don’t know where we shall be taken. I will write again as soon as I am established in a hospital. Don’t worry about me I am feeling as well as circumstances can permit. So with much love and many good wishes for your welfare I remain you Son in good spirits. Henry P.S. Tell them I was hit face toward them no reb saw my back. Henry
Photographic images of people were common during the war. By 1861 photographic technology evolved and images could be printed and reproduced on card stock using glass plate negatives. These small, 3 ¾ x 2 ½, photographic cards were called CDVs, short for Cartes de Visite. CDV photographs were imported from Europe to the U.S. about 1859. When the war began hundreds of thousands of new recruits flocked to hometown photographers to have their images made in uniform. Millions of soldiers had their portraits taken upon mustering into service, on leave, and in the field. Their loved ones also flocked to hometown photographers. Of the millions of these soldier images produced, hundreds of thousands still exist. However, so many of the existing images are unidentified and unidentifiable. Unidentified images abound and if you are searching for a photograph of your ancestor you will need fine research skills and very good luck. Soldier images abound in family albums, local libraries, the Connecticut State Historical Society, the Connecticut State Libraries. They may appear in regimental histories or even on dedicated websites. Many of the images taken during the war have tax stamps affixed to the back of the card and were cancelled by hand. Many have back marks listing the photographer. In the examples above, from left to right, each images is shown with its reverse photographer’s mark. Connecticut men from left to right: Lt. Col. David Torrance, 29th Connecticut Colored Regiment; Connecticut Governor William Buckingham in 1865; Captain Samuel W. Fiske, 14th Connecticut Volunteers, Co. G, wounded May 6, 1864, Wilderness, Va., died May 23, 1864; top: General Joseph K. Mansfield, 12th Corps, Killed September 17, 1862, Antietam, Md.; bottom: Lt. Col. William Burr Wool, 20th Connecticut Volunteers, 1864, Colonel 29th Connecticut Colored Regiment.

The newspaper clippings above are taken from the Bridgeport Evening Standard and the Hartford Courant dated, 1862 the second year of the Civil War. Many newspapers have on-line archives. In Connecticut the Hartford Courant, the oldest operating paper in the nation, has all of its issues on-line and searchable since it was founded in 1764. To access the Hartford Courant for free with your library card (as long is it from a Connecticut library) you can log onto the Connecticut Digital Library and go to the Heritage Quest and/or ProQuest search engines under ICONN. Local newspapers from the Civil War years can be found nationwide both on-line and at local libraries on microfilm. They are a tremendous and rich historical record. Eyewitness accounts of the battles, letters home, casualty lists, etc. Beware, however, of the possible inaccuracy of contemporary accounts. To read the article titled “The Latest News” (above right) today we know Stonewall did not lose an arm at Antietam. Eight months later in May of 1863, he would indeed lose his arm and subsequently his life at Chancellorsville.
Above is the casualty list printed in August 1863 in the Hartford Courant after the Battle of Gettysburg. Newspapers were sought after both at home and by men in the service. Albert F. Sherwood describes in *Memories of Old Derby* that he was 19 and working in an old wood turning shop in the fall of 1861. “The war was on and all were eager for news from the front. The paper arrived at the shop promptly at 7. It was brought by a long lean man named Thompson. His head was drawn by some sort of contraction of neck muscles to one side, almost to his shoulder. He came loaded down with New Haven morning papers, the Palladium and Journal-Currier and whatever the weather, rain or snow, it never hindered his arrival which was as prompt as that of an express (train) today. I have often wondered at the amount of his endurance. He walked from New Haven over the turnpike to Derby, nine miles, across to Birmingham, thence to Ansonia disposing of his load all the way and then returned, passing our shop at about two o’clock in the afternoon on his way home only to repeat the round the next day and every day….” There were five hundred soldiers in the war from our town. Most of them we knew and the Daily Palladium often brought news of the death or severe wounding of some of these. Those were sober hours and we talked of the horrors of war and of the brave boys who were risking their lives for (our) country, many of whom we would never see again. When reverses were announced with lists of killed, and among them close friends and acquaintances, we often spent days of gloom working in silence and wondering when it would all be over. Then again when it chronicled news of victory we were glad, but even victory had cost the precious life of some friend and the load was at our heart’s door.”

Above right is a page from the Connecticut War Record, a paper started in 1863 to compile all the war news from all the regiments in the state. It was published by Peck, White & Peck in New Haven and cost $1 per year, paid in advance. After the war it was bound and indexed. It is a precious, contemporary archive, rich in regimental experiences and details. The Connecticut State Library and other local libraries have copies. It may soon be digitized for use on the Internet. Until it is digitized, this source is well worth a research trip if you are looking for information on individuals and regiments.
Obituaries are some of the most informative research finds. Often they are a short narrative of the life and service of the deceased. If a man died after 1900, when technology could finally print photographs in the newspapers, a photograph may be printed as part of the obituary. Obituaries are sometimes a way to identify an image of the man. Obituaries can provide insight into so much, for example while researching a soldier from the 20th Connecticut and still in the early stages of trying to put his life together, I found his obit after a trip to the local cemetery to see 1) if I could find a stone 2) if the stone had exact dates of death so that I could locate them in the microfiche of the local paper. Using that information I found an exact account of his wounding, including the fact that he carried the bullet home with him in his neck after release from the hospital and subsequently one Sunday after eating dinner and feeling like he swallowed a fish bone, he coughed up a minie ball. Local libraries may have local papers on microfilm and with the dates which you can get from vital records, the tomb stones, regimental histories, a variety of places you can begin the search for more information. If you are looking for the obituary of a prominent Connecticut personality or high ranking military man, such as Col. William B. Wooster, above right, the Hartford Courant is a good place to search.
There is no one way, step-by-step, method to locating graves and obituaries. The good news is that there are many, many resources for research. For obituaries you often have to have access to a local newspaper with historical archives. Heritage Quest has a number of these as well as Ancestry.com. Some are available through local libraries. By 1900 newspapers had the technology to print photographs and often did print them of local veterans who participated in the political and public lives of the towns where they lived. Records of veteran burials abound on a local, state, and national level.
The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was an organization composed of veterans of the Union Army. The GAR was the first organized veterans groups in American politics. With the death of the last Civil War veterans the GAR became The Sons of the Union Veterans. (SUVCW) which exists today. These organizations offer venues and on-line resources for researching Civil War Soldiers. Almost every Union soldier joined a local GAR post after the war and was a member.
Many of the GAR posts had large memorial record books often donated by the citizens of the town so that the members of the post could record their service. These books, if they still exist, often are in the local libraries, historical societies, or town halls. Many are gone forever. If you know what GAR post your ancestor belonged to and if you can locate the memorial record you may find that the man listed his service or recorded a memory. These books are fascinating windows into the lives and service of veterans. The book above from Kellogg Post No. 26 in Derby, Connecticut As the old veterans passed away their service to the nation was commemorated in these memorial volumes. The page shown records the passing and service of Col. William Burr Wooster, Colonel of the 29th Connecticut Colored Regiment. The words below his name, underlined in red, state: The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death!
Google has digitized many rare, historical and research volumes that are otherwise extremely difficult to find or consult without a great deal of travel to research facilities, various libraries, and historical societies. Many of these volumes are simply too expensive for the casual researcher to purchase from rare book dealers. If the book is digitized on Google Books it is also fully searchable and is a boon to locating information. This is an outstanding research tool and several historical volumes are highlighted and available for Connecticut specific research, including some of the rare regimental histories.
This book provides exactly what it states in the title. It is the military and civil history of Connecticut. It gives narrative descriptions of the soldiers of Connecticut in the field, and brief descriptions of the patriotic support furnished by the citizens of the Connecticut home front. Almost every town in Connecticut has some reference. In it you can find descriptions of every regiment and a listing of service information on every son of Connecticut that served. There is information on the role that various Connecticut men and regiments played in battles. It has many steel engraving portraits. It is an excellent and fully searchable resource.
Connecticut Volunteer Organizations is another fabulous resource for Connecticut Research. This complete book, fully searchable on Google Books provides comprehensive information on infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments in the service of the U.S. from Connecticut. It also provides brief summaries showing the operations and service of these regiments and batteries. You can search for soldiers by name. Regiments are listed in order followed by companies from each. Information on each soldier including dates of muster, if they were KIA, wounded, taken prisoner or survived the war. Substitutes and draftees are also listed under the regiment they were assigned to.
Regimental histories are a rich source of information if one was published. Regimental Histories vary in quality depending on the author or authors. Some are considered nothing more than the reminiscences of old men. Some are first class records of service. These volumes are invaluable if you are aware of their flaws. If you are researching a regiment one of the first things to do is to see if there is a published regimental history. Often they are available at local libraries in the original. You can purchase reprints from the Higginson Book Company. Google books has several full length Connecticut regimental histories scanned and fully searchable. If you prefer, you can purchase regimental histories on CD ROM. Some are sold as single books on a single CD or there are CD Rom products that contain all of the published Connecticut regimentals on a single disc. Before you purchase, be sure the CD Rom is searchable.
This Volume is a Modern Print Must for Connecticut Research

A one volume reference that presents for the first time the only concise and comprehensive history of Connecticut’s involvement in the Civil War. The book is divided into two parts. The first lists every regiment and regimental experience in the war. The second half lists every town in Connecticut that sent men to war along with statistics on how many men the town furnished for the war effort, the casualty rates, most costly battles for the home front, etc.

About the Author (from Amazon)
Blaikie Hines, a passionate Civil War historian and artist, is the great, great grandson of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was raised in Darien, Connecticut and inherited an extensive Civil War collection from his father.

Connecticut Civil War History at the Centennial – Fifty Years Ago

John Niven’s, Connecticut for the Union: The Role of the State in the Civil War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) was written at the request of Connecticut’s Civil War Centennial Commission. The book is now out of print, and though it offers a solid primer to the state’s Civil War history, a great deal has been written in the Civil War field since its publication. The availability of resources, both nationally and within Connecticut, has increased dramatically.
From the book jacket:

A riveting account of Connecticut’s involvement in the Civil War

Connecticut in the American Civil War offers readers a remarkable window into the state’s involvement in a conflict that challenged and defined the unity of a nation. The arc of the war is traced through the many facets and stories of battlefield, home front, and factory. Matthew Warshauer masterfully reveals the varied attitudes toward slavery and race before, during, and after the war; Connecticut’s reaction to the firing on Fort Sumter; the dissent in the state over whether or not the sword and musket should be raised against the South; the raising of troops; the sacrifice of those who served on the front and at home; and the need for closure after the war. This book is a concise, amazing account of a complex and troubling war. No one interested in this period of American history can afford to miss reading this important contribution to our national and local stories.
The Connecticut State Historical Society has many research avenues and Civil War exhibits on line, digital collections, a Connecticut Civil War Monument database with pictures and statistics on the State’s monuments. The Civil War manuscript holdings can be searched on-line, alphabetically. Solders with materials in the collection also have their regiments listed. Click on the links above and explore. CHS has historical, digital journeys and educational materials that are fascinating. CHS is definitely worth a visit.
Visit the Connecticut State Library at: http://www.cslib.org

Research Guide to Civil War Materials at the Connecticut State Library

The Connecticut State Library contains a wealth of information useful to genealogists seeking Civil War ancestors as well as to historical researchers examining political, economic, social, and military aspects of the Civil War. For convenience this research guide is divided into the following categories:

- Introductory Materials
- Archival Materials
- Artifacts
- Battle Flags
- Bounty Claims
- Conscientious Objectors
- Discharge Papers
- Genealogical Information
- General Histories
- Newspapers
- Payrolls and Muster Rolls
- Peninsals
- Photographs
- Prisons
- Regimental Histories
- Service Records
- Soldiers' Homes and Hospitals

Introductory Materials
An introduction to Civil War genealogical research may be found in:

The Library of Congress provides us with primary source images that allow us to “see” and “witness” events through the eyes of the people who took part in them. During the Civil War it was not possible to reprint photographs in publications. Photography could not record action scenes. Therefore, the illustrated papers of the day sent out battlefield artists who took notes and drew images on the spot, often in the heat of battle. Alfred Waud, photographed here by Alexander Gardner, in Devil’s Den at Gettysburg followed the Army of the Potomac from Antietam to Appomattox and many of his drawings and notes record the exact scenes that an infantry man diarists or letter writer recorded in words. These on the spot drawings are amazing resources. Use them with your research especially when you have written information in letters about battles, encampments, marches and the recorded experiences of the men and women of the Civil War generation.
The Civil War Trust Provides Resources for Education, Research & Preservation

http://civilwar.org/
Throughout The 150th Commemoration Keep Current 
With All Things Connecticut And Civil War 
http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=2296

Connecticut & the Civil War: 
A Sesquicentennial Commemoration

April 12, 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the American Civil War. In the Great Rebellion, as it is often known, some 620,000 Americans, both Union and Confederate, lost their lives. When the war began Connecticut regiments were called to arms by decrees from both President Abraham Lincoln and Governor William Buckingham, who served as the state’s chief executive throughout the war. Connecticut offered 55,000 men, 47% of its male population between the ages of 16-60. This was the most massive war mobilization in state and nation’s history.

Connecticut troops served in every major engagement of the war, from Bull Run, to Antietam, Gettysburg, and on to Richmond.

Connecticut’s industrial capacity, especially its arms industry, was instrumental to the North’s success. The state was home to such notables as Colt, Sharps, the Collinsville Company, as well as Hotchkiss & Sons, which produced artillery and shells, the Hazard Gun Powder Factory, and many more war related industries. State industry also produced a wide variety of non-lethal items, from brass insignia to rubber tents and raincoats, and many textiles.

Connecticut women made the war possible by procuring and shipping every conceivable item to the front lines, so that the soldiers would not do without. Women met every train that returned home, often loaded with wounded and dead soldiers.

Yet there was also considerable opposition within Connecticut to both the war and the Lincoln administration. The state was hardly united in its devotion to the Union, and politics during the war was fierce and closely contested.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Slide 2: slide and text from Information from: Your Ultimate Guide to Genealogy On-Line, Essential Tips and Tools to Trace Your Roots on the Web, from the Editors of Family Tree Magazine

Slide 4: image of Selah G. Blakeman letter, March 15, 1863, courtesy of the Stratford Historical Society, photo by author

Slide 5: screen clips from CWSS -- the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, image of general index card, Cpl. John Harpin Riggs, 7th Connecticut Volunteers, photo by author


Slide 8: copies of Compiled Military Service Record, National Archives copies, Cpl. John Harpin Riggs, 7th Connecticut, photo by author

Slide 9: reenlistment and casualty sheet from Compiled Military Service Record, National Archives copies, Cpl. John Harpin Riggs, 7th Connecticut

Slide 10: pension records from Cpl. John Harpin Riggs, 7th Connecticut, pension file, National Archives copies

Slide 11: discharge papers from Sgt. Selah G. Blakeman, 17th Connecticut, copied from pension file, National Archives

Slide 12: Vital record of births, Town of Derby, CT, September 18, 1862, photo by author


Slide 16: Newspaper clipping from the Bridgeport Evening Standard, microfiche, Bridgeport Public Library; Report on the Battle of Antietam, Hartford Courant, September 29, 1862, ProQuest Historical Newspapers

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Slide 18: Hartford Courant, September 21, 1900, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Evening Sentinel, December 19, 1924; microfiche, Seymour Public Library; Blakeman cemetery plot, Riverside Cemetery, Shelton, CT, photo by author

Slide 19: Evening Sentinel, April 19, 1926, microfiche, Seymour Public Library; Riggs cemetery plot, Union Cemetery, Seymour, CT

Slide 20: Grand Army of the Republic, badge image from Wikipedia

Slide 21: Grand Army of the Republic, Kellogg Post 26 Memorial Record, Derby Public Library, photos by author

Slide 22: Photo of author’s bookshelf; screen clip of Google Books


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Slide 25: Selection of Connecticut Regimental Histories from author’s library

Slide 26: Image of Volunteer Sons of Connecticut, description of text, author bio from Amazon.com

Slide 27: Image of Connecticut for the Union, photo from author’s library; description of text from http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=3732


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