

# A Guide to the Fairfax County Civil War Pensions, 1876-1943

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## History

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## Descriptive Summary

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## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

The Collection is open for research.

### Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

### Acquisition Information

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# Biographical/Historical Information

In 1867, the State of Virginia began its first Confederate veteran aid program by offering artificial limbs to disabled veterans who had lost a limb as a result of war-time injuries. An act in 1872 allowed for artificial legs to be provided to veterans, and an amendment to this act also allowed African American veterans and 'employees' to receive legs. Beginning in 1873, the State offered commutations (one-time payments) to veterans whose artificial limbs were badly-fitting or unusable. Officially called Artificial Limb Commutations, these payments were eventually offered to veterans whose wounds completely disabled or paralyzed their limbs but did not result in amputations. Further acts in 1876 and 1882 provided aid for veterans who couldn't perform manual labor owing to wounds wholly or partly disabling their limbs, and finally, for wounds disabling any part of their body. These qualifying wounds included loss of eyesight. A final act passed in 1884 superseded the Artificial Limb Commutations with Aid to Citizens of Virginia Wounded and Maimed during the Late War. This act provided \$60 to veterans with generally disabling wounds, and \$60 to veterans for each limb or eye lost.

Realizing that a one-time payment would not provide permanent relief for the many disabled veterans who couldn't support themselves or their dependents, the General Assembly passed the first Confederate pension act in 1888. This act allowed a wounded veteran to apply for an annual pension if his total annual income was less than \$300 and his personal and real property was valued at less than \$1000. Widows whose husbands had died during the war, who remained unmarried and whose income and property values met the same requirements as those of veterans, were also entitled to apply.

The pension act of 1900 allowed veterans disabled owing to old age to apply. Widows whose husbands died after the war, and whose annual income was less than \$100, were also eligible for application. This act dramatically increased the number of Confederate pensioners and, therefore, added to the strain on Virginia's economy; as a result of this, the General Assembly passed a further act in 1902 which placed more severe restrictions on income limits. Veterans and war-bereaved widows could not earn more than \$150 per year or have more than \$500 worth of real and personal property. In addition to this, widows whose husbands had died since the war had to have been married before May 1866.

Each subsequent act enlarged the eligibility quota. In 1908, former Confederate nurses, known as matrons, were included. Unlike the widows, the matrons had to be married to receive their pension. A further addition was the introduction of one-time disbursements of funeral expenses (\$25). The 1912 act allowed women who had been widowed, remarried to another Confederate veteran and widowed again to apply. The 1924 and 1926 acts opened up pensions for former slaves and freemen who had acted for the Confederate Army as body servants, cooks, guards, hostlers, teamsters, blacksmiths, hospital and railroad workers, and who had buried the dead. Former Virginia residents who had moved to D.C. were also eligible under the 1924 act.

The required dates of marriage for widows also changed as time progressed. The 1912 act changed the date to before May 1868, the 1918 act to before May 1870, the 1922 act to before May 1877, the 1924 act to before December 31st 1882, the 1926 act to before 1886, and the 1927 act to before 1890. In response to inflation, the General Assembly gradually increased the maximum salary and property values allowed for eligibility. By 1926, the salary limit was \$400, and the total property limit was \$2000.

The Confederate commutation, aid and pension processes in Virginia relied on county circuit courts to collect, vet, accept or deny applications. The circuit court clerk collected applications and made a certified list of applicants, one of which was sent to the judge, one sent to the local pension board and one displayed on the courthouse door. The clerk also handed the applications to the court. From 1888 to 1900, county judges decided pension eligibility. In 1900, the pension act required counties to elect a five-person pension board to determine eligibility and send applications to the State Pension Board for further examination. In 1902, judges became the deciding authorities again, and the county pension board's purpose was relegated to assessing each applicant's eligibility and passing their recommendations to the deciding judge. Judges examined applications, determined eligibility and made an Order to certify or disallow a claim. The clerk then sent a list of allowed and certified pension claims to the State Pension Board, and, later, to the Auditor of Public Accounts.

The local pension board's commissioners other duties were to report the deaths of pensioners and discover and report pensioners who no longer met eligibility criteria, so that their names were removed from the State Pension Rolls, and their pensions not overpaid.

In 1958, the Federal Government also began issuing pensions to Confederate veterans and widows. The last Virginia Confederate veteran died in 1959; Virginia and the Federal Government continued to pay pensions to widows and unmarried children into the 21st century. In 2009, Virginia Code Section 51.1-900 (governing Confederate pensions) was repealed and Confederate pensions ceased to be.

**Sources:** The collection, Google Books, Encyclopedia of Virginia, Library of Virginia

# Scope and Content

**Series 1:** Applications, 1876 - 1943, contains one Union pension application, applications for Artificial Limb Commutation (Confederate), applications for aid (Confederate), Confederate pension applications and supporting paperwork

**Series 2:** Confederate Pension Board of Fairfax Co., 1900 - 1933, contains oaths and appointment statements, reports and correspondence

**Series 3:** Circuit Court and Pensions, 1902 - 1933, contains judges' orders, Confederate pensions rolls, correspondence with the State Pension Clerk and State Auditor of Public Accounts

**Series 4:** Miscellaneous, 1902 - 1930, contains lists of applicants, correspondence and notices

**Series 5:** Publications by State Auditor of Public Accounts, 1922, 1924, 1926

**Series 6:** Roster of Confederate Pensioners of Virginia, 1909, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1925

[Click here to view Appendixes I through II \(See pages 4-8\).](#)

## Index Terms

Confederate Pension Board of Fairfax Co., State Auditor of Public Accounts, State Pension Clerk, Fairfax County Circuit Court

Confederate and Union civil war pensions, disabilities

Primarily Fairfax County

Pension applications, blank forms, letters, pension rolls, judges' orders, reports

Paper, cardstock, ink, graphite

## Contents List

### 1: Series 1: Applications

#### 1: Subseries 1: Confederate Applications for Aid

**Surnames: B- H, 1876 - 1887**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 1

**Surnames: L - T, 1876 - 1887**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 2

#### 2: Subseries 2: Confederate Pension Applications and Related Correspondence

**Surnames: A and B, 1896 - 1938**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 1

**Surnames: C, 1888 - 1936, (see oversized Folder 1)**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 2

**Surnames: D and E, 1888 - 1925, (see oversized Folder 1)**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 3

**Surnames: F and G, 1909 - 1943**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 4

**Surnames: H - K, 1914 - 1936**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 5

**Surnames: L - N, 1888 - 1933, (see oversized Folder 1)**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 6

**Surnames: O - R, 1909 - 1933, (see oversized Folder 1)**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 7

**Surnames: S, 1904 - 1928**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 8

**Surnames: T, 1913 - 1938**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 9

**Surnames: W and Y, 1914 - 1923**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 10

**Clerk Certified Lists of Confederate Pension Applicants, 1902 - 1932**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 11

**Pension Applicants Approved by Confederate Pension Board of Fairfax Co., 1900 - 1920**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 12

**Blank Forms, 1905 - 1932**

**Container** Box 1, Folder 13

## **2: Series 2: Confederate Pension Board of Fairfax Co.**

**Oaths and Appointments, 1900 - 1924**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 1

**Reports, 1902 - 1909**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 2

**Correspondence with Circuit Court, 1933**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 3

## **3: Series 3: Circuit Court and Pensions**

**Judges' Orders for Confederate Pensions, 1902 - 1923**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 1

**Correspondence with State Auditor of Public Accounts, 1902 - 1933**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 2

**Correspondence with State Pension Clerk, 1918 - 1933**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 3

**Confederate Pensions Rolls for Fairfax Co., 1902 - 1931**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 4; See Oversized Folders 2, 3, 4

## **4: Series 4: Miscellaneous Documents**

**Miscellaneous Lists, no dates**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 1

**Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1925 - 1930**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 2

**Miscellaneous, 1902 - 1930**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 3

**5: Series 5: Publications by Auditor of Public Accounts**

**Virginia Pension Law, 1922, 1924, 1926**

**Container** Box 2, Folder 1

**6: Series 6: Roster of Confederate Pensioners of Virginia, 1909, 1916, 1917, 1919 - 1921, 1925**