

A Guide to the Orange County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1758-1900

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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2024

History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Orange County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1758-1900

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Author: McKenzie Long

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by McKenzie Long, 23 May 2024

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Orange County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

.45 cu. ft. (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Orange County.

Processing Information

Military and pension records, 1758-1900, were separated from Orange County court records and processed by Library of Virginia staff.

Encoded by M. Long: May 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also the [Orange County \(Va.\) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1818-1836](#) at the Library of Virginia.

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

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 "publick 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: Orange County, according to most accounts, was named for William of Orange, the Dutch prince who became King William III of England in 1688. It is more probable, however, that it was named for William IV, prince of Orange-Nassau, who married Anne, eldest daughter of King George II, in 1734—the year that Orange County was formed from Spotsylvania County. The county court first met on 21 January 1735. The county seat is Orange.

Scope and Content

Orange County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1758-1900, consist of military service records, accounts and vouchers, and claims for reimbursement by civilians and service members. These include:

Revolutionary War certificates of service and claims papers, 1813-1854, include mostly pension certificates and claims for Revolutionary War federal pensions. Most certificates include regiment, commanding officer

names, and other details about wartime service. Some certificates also contain details about property the applicant currently owns and debts owed as a way of proving current income. Several documents relate to the widows of soldiers. Also includes 1780 discharge papers from the continental army.

County militia papers, 1757-1862, include militia commissions and resignations, service certifications, appointments and nominations, militia oaths, an 1821 pension schedule, orders to summon magistrates to fill vacancies in the militia and militia officers, and 1861 receipts and accounts of supplies for soldiers.

Commutation applications, 1877-1888, consist of applications for commutation money and artificial limbs for Confederate soldiers wounded during the Civil War.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- **Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1758-1900**, arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1758-1900

Extent

.45 cubic feet (1 box)

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Barcode number 1171436: Military and Pension Records 1758-1900

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