

Steps to “proving” a Revolutionary War ancestor’s service.

Step 1: Determine if your ancestor is “of age” to have service.

- 1) Military Service: The typical soldier was aged between 16 and 60, although some were younger. For more information, review Christopher Geist, “A Common American Soldier,” *Colonial Williamsburg* (<http://www.history.org>: accessed 8 March 2018).
- 2) Patriotic Service: The age of those with patriotic service varies by the type of service. Those taking an oath usually had to be at least of legal age, while those giving supplies to the cause could be younger.
- 3) Civil Service: Those with civil service had to be old enough to have status in the community, usually in the late twenties or older. This kind of service is most common for financially stable men in their 50s and 60s.

Step 2: Determine if your ancestor is known to have been a loyalist or to have service.

- 1) Loyalist: Visit the website of the United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Canada at <http://www.uelac.org/>. Click on the loyalist directory and follow the screen prompts.
- 2) Revolutionary War service: Check the listings of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Go to <http://www.dar.org>, click on GRS, and use the “Ancestor” search. If a source of service is listed, the DAR already has information on that service on file. If needed, you can use the source information to locate a copy. (The SAR has a similar – and growing – database at <https://sarpatriots.sar.org/>.)

Step 3: Determine if some service has yet to be documented.

- 1) Federal service sources:
 - a. Compiled Military Service Records (CMSR): These index cards list the service of anyone who served on a federal level during the American Revolution. They have been digitized and are available on *Fold3*, available for free through the Connecticut State Library.
 - b. Pension files: These files include documentation of both militia and federal service as part of soldiers’ attempts to file a pension. They have been digitized and are available on *Fold3*, available for free through the Connecticut State Library.
- 2) State service sources:
 - a. Consult Deb Duay’s *Learn Webskills* site for an overview of the commonly used sources: <http://www.learnwebskills.com/patriot/revservice.htm>.

Step 4: Demonstrate that the service belongs to your ancestor by establishing their residence during the War.

- 1) Vital or church records may show that the ancestor married or had children during the War.
 - a. Use the *FamilySearch* catalog as a starting point for finding appropriate records.
- 2) Land records may show the purchase or sale of land.
 - a. Use the *FamilySearch* catalog as a starting point for finding appropriate records.