



Finding Your Connection: A Guide to Genealogical Research on Andersonville Prison

MEMORANDUM FROM PRISONER OF WAR RECORDS. No.									
(This blank to be used only in the arrangement of said records.)									
NAME	RANK	ORGANIZATION				INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM—			
		No. of Reg't.	State	Arm of Service	Co.	Records of—	Vol.	Page	Vo
Isaac Baker, J.	Pvt	13 th	Tenn. Co.	9 th		Miss	41	52 1/2	16 21 2
Captured at _____, 186 _____, confined at Richmond, Va., _____									
Admitted to Hospital at Andersonville, Ga. Aug 4/64									
where he died Aug 11, 1864, of Dysentery Co. Grave 5294									
Paroled at _____, 186 _____; reported at Camp Parole, Md., _____									

Compiled Military Service Record

In only fourteen months of operation, approximately 45,000 Union prisoners of war were held in the Confederacy's Camp Sumter military prison at Andersonville. In the 150 years since the Civil War, the experiences of the men confined here continue to resonate with each succeeding generation. Documenting these prisoners and preserving their experiences is a way for descendants and historians to connect with those who were held at Andersonville.

What records exist?

Many Andersonville descendants and researchers are surprised to find that so few original records that exist. It seems impossible that the Confederate Army did not maintain and preserve lists of men held here. Some of the records were originally kept, but given how fast the prison grew and the hapazard way that it ended, it is not all that surprising that many of these documents were lost. However, some records survive today in the National Archives, including:

- Burial Register
- Hospital Register
- Partial listing of prisoners transferred to other prison camps
- Record of Escaped Prisoners and Prisoners who enlisted in the Confederate Army
- Military Service Records
- Pension records

The burial register, published in 1866, provides the most thorough accounting of prisoners held at Andersonville. It contains the names and burial locations of more than 95% of the 12,920 men who died in captivity.

Record Group 249 of the National Archives contains a copy of the hospital register, a partial listing of prisoners transferred to other camps, a roster of soldiers that escaped from captivity, and a record of Union soldiers that enlisted in the Confederate armies. These documents from RG 249 were used in the late 19th century to create Compiled Military Service Records for each individual soldier. These service records are available through the National Archives.

Documenting Prisoners

Military service records and pension records allow descendants to document prisoners and guards at Andersonville.

- To verify an individual as a *known/confirmed Andersonville prisoner* we require military service records indicating Andersonville as a place of captivity.
- To designate an individual as a *possible Andersonville Prisoner* we utilize pension records, diaries, memoirs, letters, secondary sources stating that the soldier was held at Andersonville, in the absence of military service records.

- To verify an individual as a *prisoner held at a facility other than Andersonville* we require military service records which clearly indicate that a soldier was a prisoner of war, but was not held at Andersonville.
- To verify an individual as *known Confederate Staff* we require military service records which clearly indicate that the soldier was stationed at Camp Sumter.
- To designate an individual as *Possible Confederate Staff* we utilize pension records, diaries, memoirs, letters, secondary sources, and regimental rosters for known guard units.

Acquiring These Documents

The best source of service records and pension records are the National Archives. Copies can be requested by visiting www.archives.gov. Military service records can be requested using form NATF86 and pension records can be requested using form NATF85. If the National Archives has the records you are looking for, they will charge a fee to make copies. The National Archives website at www.archives.gov has further information on these fees and services.



Researchers often look for individual graves.
NPS/C. Barr

Some records are available online through genealogical research companies. These companies charge a fee and there is no guarantee that they will have the records that you are looking for. In most cases they are simply providing records held at the National Archives. The most prominent of these sites are www.ancestry.com and www.familysearch.org, which are basic genealogical research assistance sites, and www.fold3.com, which specializes in military records.* Ancestry and Familysearch's prisoner of war records include documents from National Archives Record Group 249. Fold3 has digitized service and pension records for many, but not all, Union and Confederate soldiers.

**The National Park Service neither endorses nor sponsors these websites.*

Researching at Andersonville National Historic Site

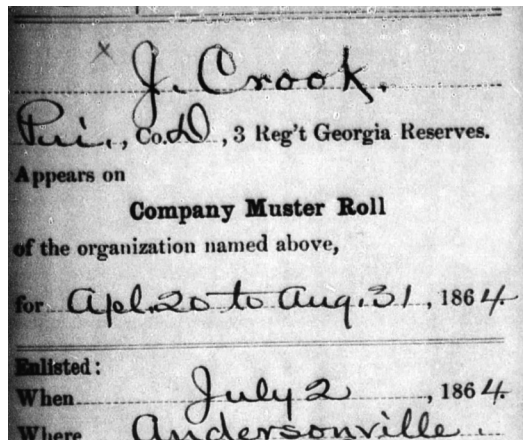
The park has very few records related to individual prisoners. In most cases contacting the National Archives is the best course for researchers to take. However, the park maintains a database that is available in the museum lobby. This database contains information about burial locations in the national cemetery, and basic information about many of the men held in the prison in 1864 and 1865. In addition to the database, the park has files containing limited information and copies of service records for some prisoners.



Visitors using the museum database to locate a prisoner. NPS/E. Leonard

Documenting Guards & Confederate Staff

In order to research an individual who may have been a guard, begin by checking the soldier's unit. Just because a soldier was from the local area does not mean he was a guard. The only units that served as guards were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Georgia Reserves, and elements of the 55th Georgia and the 26th Alabama Infantry. A battery of Florida artillery was also stationed at Andersonville. If a soldier was not a part of one of these units, he was probably not a member of the guard force at Andersonville.



A service record confirming a guard at Andersonville

The National Archives maintains limited Confederate service records, accessible by contacting the National Archives or through www.fold3.com. However, most records from various Confederate units are maintained by their respective states. At the end of the war some Southern states' records were lost or destroyed, and as a result there is significant inconsistency in the availability of Confederate service records, especially among reserve and militia units.

To obtain service records of Confederate soldiers you should contact the appropriate state archives and request Service & Pension records.

- **Georgia**
www.georgiaarchives.org
- **Alabama**
www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/military.html
- **Florida**
www.floridamemory.com/collections/civilwarguide/

Contact Information

Submit information to the park to update the database or resource file to:

Andersonville National Historic Site
ATTN Civil War Records
496 Cemetery Road
Andersonville, GA 31711

or by email:
ande_information@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/ande

Contact the National Archives to order service or pension records at:
www.archives.gov
or by phone 1-866-272-6272

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