



Researching Revolutionary War Ancestors

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When one thinks of the American Revolution, Massachusetts often comes to mind before Michigan. However, some scholarly research places Michigan more prominently in this conflict because of the Great Lakes. This shift in geographical emphasis is more apparent if the French and Indian War is viewed as a precursor to the Revolution, an argument sustained by the contributors to *The Sixty Years War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (Michigan F 551 .S53 2001), which focuses on Michigan and the struggle for control of the region.

Beyond the forts at the Straits of Mackinac and Detroit, Fort Pitt, a hub of activity during the Revolution, was well linked to Detroit. After the western Pennsylvania-based Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, many Pittsburg residents migrated west and can be found in Detroit records and documents. Where the military dwelled, American families soon followed. Regardless of origin, many Michiganians may be able to trace their family back to the Revolution.

Resources at the Library of Michigan

From New England to the South to the Great Lakes states, the Library of Michigan has a number of resources on the Revolutionary War, its soldiers and its records. To search these holdings, use ANSWER, www.answercat.org, the Library's online catalog. Below are sample searches that will return worthwhile materials:

Keyword Search

- Maryland Revolutionary (substitute any state)
- Militia revolution
- revolution soldiers

Subject search

- Pennsylvania -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 (substitute any state)
- United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- Regimental histories.
- Soldiers -- Maryland -- Registers

Online Resources

- Databases available on site at the Library of Michigan:
 - Ancestry Library Edition: www.ancestrylibrary.com/default.aspx
 - Footnote: www.footnote.com/institution-index.php
 - New England Historic Genealogical Society: www.newenglandancestors.org/
- HeritageQuest is available to all Michigan residents through MeL, the Michigan eLibrary, mel.org.
- Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania: digital.library.pitt.edu/hswp/

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